Paris Gibson—A Montana Yankee

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PARIS GIBSON
Pioneer-Statesman—First President Montana Wool Growers Association
July 1, 1830—December 16, 1920
PARIS GIBSON - A MONTANA YANKEE

by

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Chairman of Board of Examiners
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Bring me men to match my mountains,
Bring me men to match my plains,
Men with empires in their purpose,
And new eras in their brains.  
- Samuel W. Foss -

PREFACE

Though Paris Gibson is known as the father of Great Falls, Montana, little has been written to explain what he did to earn such a title. He has been depicted as a pioneer, but what made him such has long been buried in old newspapers and letter files. Study of these old records reveals much about the kind of a man he was, much about his accomplishments. Perhaps the reason so little has been known in the past of his plans and work is due to the fact that he was primarily a promoter. Only as an investor in real estate did he carry on a life-time activity. As an entrepreneur he was instrumental in the development of the sheep industry, mining, and water power. He was also one of the main advocates of railroad expansion into Montana. Gibson was never fully remunerated for all these services, owing to the fact that he was more visionary than realistic.

As a politician he was at times quite influential, although he never held the state-wide power and reputation of such men as Senator Thomas Carter, Martin McGinness, Governor Samuel Hauser, William A. Clark, and Marcus Daly. Paris Gibson climbed the political ladder slowly. He was a member
of the Mela legislature at the age of twenty-one. Then at the age of fifty-three he became the first mayor of Great Falls. In 1889 he represented Cascade County at the Constitutional Convention and later became a state senator. In 1901, when he was seventy-one years of age, he received his greatest honor, being elected United States senator by action of the state legislative assembly called in special session. After his term expired in 1905, Gibson's political activity declined, mainly because of his advanced age and his desire to devote the remaining years of his life to unfinished business at Great Falls. He then returned to the Falls, where he spent the last fifteen years of his life in real estate and civic affairs.
CHAPTER I
FROM MAINE TO MONTANA

Paris Gibson was born on July 1, 1830, at "Gibson Place," the family homestead on the Saco river near Brownfield in Oxford County, Maine. He was the son of Abel and Anne (Howard) Gibson, both of pioneer families. Captain Abel Gibson, the ninth child of Timothy and Margaret (Whitman) Gibson, was born at Henniker, New Hampshire, on March 23, 1790. He became a gentleman of marked ability and enterprise, member of the Maine legislature of 1842, holder of other civil offices, and prominent agrarian and lumberman. He was also a captain in the militia and fought in the War of 1812. (1) His ancestors on both sides had been in America since early in the seventeenth century. His first American ancestor, John Gibson, was born in England in 1601 and had settled in Massachusetts in 1631. (2) According to one account his paternal grandfather served under the British flag in the French and Indian War. (3)

On the maternal side also the family had been in America from earliest days. The first of this line to migrate to the New World was James Howard, who was born in England and became a resident of Duxbury, Massachusetts, as early as 1643. His descendant, Sam Howard, was a member of the famous Tea Party one hundred and thirty years later. Anne's Grandfather Howard served as a soldier in the Revolution, and his son, Anne's father, also fought in the Continental army. The latter was present at the Battle of Saratoga and the surrender of Burgoyne and distinguished himself at the Siege of Yorktown.

Paris Gibson later said: My grandmother Howard, before her marriage was Rebecca Gleason, and, it is worthy to note that, when a girl, she saw the excited farmers rushing past her home, armed at best they could be, and soon after heard the shots at Lexington.

Abel and Anne Gibson were the parents of seven children, four of whom were girls. The oldest son, Augustus Abel Gibson, was a colonel in the United States Army and was assigned to the defense of Washington, D.C., in 1864.

The second son, Howard, was born about 1820 or 1821.

In later years he lived in California. He died of the Panama fever in Boston, however, on December 28, 1852.

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(4) Tom Stout, Montana. Its Story and Biography, III, p. 657
(5) Helen Fitzgerald Sanders, A History of Montana, III, p.1102
(6) The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography, New York: 1900, VIII, p. 73
(7) From a family memo. dictated by Paris Gibson to Donald Gibson
(8) See Appendix A, Nos. 2 & 3
(9) Mehitahle C.J. Wilson, John Gibson of Cambridge, Massachusetts and His Descendants 1635-1899, pp. 148-52
Little record of the boyhood of Paris Gibson is available, but he was doubtless moulded by the events and achievements of his age. The United States was then beginning a great advance in scientific discoveries and industrial progress, and Paris matured with the growing American nation. During this great era of development (1830-1920), Gibson was an outstanding example of the American spirit of progress. At the time of his boyhood the American union had a population of approximately fifteen million people. During this period steam power, which was to revolutionize nautical and land travel, lay in its infancy. The steam railway was looked upon by many as an absurd novelty. The pioneering Baltimore & Ohio had just laid the first railway track; and although the first cars employed on it were hauled by horses, soon an engine generating steam was used to pull the cars. The first railway cars were then constructed like Concord coaches, for up to this time stage coaches had handled the passenger traffic over the most highly populated areas of the land.

The power loom did not come into existence until during Gibson's infancy. All the work connected with the clothing of the farmer's family at that time throughout the New England and Middle States was done on the farm itself by the ever industrious mother of the household. Gibson later related how, in his boyhood, his clothes were spun and woven

(10) See Appendix A, No. 4.
by his mother. The electric telegraph and the telephone were not in existence then, and a vast number of later discoveries that have contributed greatly to our nation's development were yet unknown. The advent of the railroad and the development of textile machinery were to affect his career profoundly.

Paris received his college preparation at Fryeburg Academy, where his mother had been educated, between the years 1844 and 1847. Here he acquired recognition for his excellent academic work. He then matriculated at Bowdoin College, where he took high rank as a student. He was liked in social circles and was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon Fraternity. He excelled in outdoor sports. The young student gave early promise of those powers which in future years were to hold him in good stead along the lines of business enterprise and public spirit. Some of the future leaders in law and diplomacy and related spheres were also students at Bowdoin during this period. They included Melville W. Fuller, who was later Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and future United States Senator William P. Frye of Maine. In 1901, as a tribute

(11) Great Falls Tribune, November 22, 1914.
(12) See Appendix A, No. 5.
(14) Progressive Men of The State of Montana, Chicago, 1910,
to his great achievements as a pioneer statesman, business-
man, and humanitarian, his alma mater granted to Gibson,
then United States Senator, the honorary degree of LLD. (15)

During his youth Paris had been urged by his father
to travel westward and found a home in the "new western
land of opportunity." He accepted his parent's advice
and in March of 1852, after graduating from Bowdoin, jour-
neyed westward for the first time, setting his sights on
the Illinois country. While in Illinois he stayed at his
sister's home in McDonough County. Gibson later related
that the journey had required more than two weeks and that
he was much impressed with the difficulties encountered
along the way. He commented that Chicago was then a hust-
ling city of twenty-nine thousand, alive with the activity
and determination which have always characterized it. There
was no appreciable amount of railway trackage west of Chi-
cago at that time since the bulk of passenger traffic was
handled on stage lines. (16)

Some months after young Gibson arrived in Illinois,
his father died, and the son returned to take over the man-
agement of the family farm. (17) He entered politics at

(15) Tom Stout, Montana, Its Story and Biography, III,
p. 657.
(16) Great Falls Tribune, November 22, 1914.
(17) Ibid., July 1, 1920.
once, and, in the September election of 1853, he was chosen a member of the lower house of the Maine legislature to represent the counties of Fryeburg, Brownfield, and Porter.\(^{(18)}\)

The next year he made a second trip west and visited the Falls of St. Anthony in Minnesota.\(^{(19)}\) The potential power of these falls impressed him greatly, an impression which remained with him through life. The source of power at the falls of the Missouri was later a major reason why he desired to found a community at that location. His energetic mind was no longer satisfied with farming.

In August, 1858, Gibson married Valeria G. Sweat, who was born in Brownfield, Maine, on November 30, 1839. She was a woman of many accomplishments, had an aristocratic bearing, and was considered quite beautiful. \(^{(20)}\) She bore Paris four children, two of whom died at an early age. The second born child, Helen, died in 1862 at the age of one. Paris' namesake passed on in 1867 during his second year.

There is considerable material available concerning the other two sons, Phillip and Theodore, who were later closely associated with their father in some of his busi-

\(^{(18)}\) Kenneth J. Boyer, Librarian, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, a letter dated September 10, 1951, in response to the author's inquiry concerning the early life of Paris Gibson.

\(^{(19)}\) Saint Paul Dispatch, December 18, 1920.

\(^{(20)}\) Mrs. Warren Toole, wife of postmaster, Great Falls, Montana, Interview, December 11, 1951.
ness endeavors. Active in literary and educational circles, Mrs. Gibson was the founder of the Valeria public library in Great Falls. (21)

Gibson had a burning desire to make a home for his new bride in the virgin territory of the West. He saw the handwriting on the wall—the great opportunities for a young man of his caliber no longer lay east of the Appalachians, but west. And so, with all the vitality of youth, he and his young wife set out for St. Anthony's Falls, which was soon to be called Minneapolis. (22)

This Western country where the Gibsons were to make their future home was just beginning to feel the impact of the pioneer in the decade of the eighteen-fifties. St. Louis, still the great city of the Middle West, had been the principal commercial depot of the great fur trading country ever since President Jefferson had organised the Lewis and Clark expedition and started it in 1804. Year after year vast quantities of furs from the upper Mississippi River country and from the vast country east of the Rocky Mountains drained by the Missouri River and its tributaries had been brought to the St. Louis market. (23) But St. Louis was not destined always to remain the commercial center of the Northwest. Minnesota Territory was created in 1847, and in 1851 by two treaties with the Sioux Indians nineteen million acres west

(22) Great Falls Tribune, July 16, 1885
(23) Great Falls Tribune, November 22, 1914.
of the Mississippi were opened for settlement. Minnesota
was admitted as a state in 1858, but as far north as the
St. Anthony's Falls its settlements were confined almost
wholly to the banks of the Mississippi. Westward from
these settlements to the scattered settlements on the Paci-
fic coast was a wilderness left almost completely under the
control of the Indians. The Sioux, Crows, Blackfeet, Gros
Ventres, and others made an almost impenetrable barrier to
the settlement of the great Northwest. As late as 1862 the
irate Sioux raided the settlements of Minnesota, torturing
and killing many men, women, and children. (24) The massacre
resulted in driving the hostile tribes of Indians west of
the Missouri River. From that time until 1877 Montana be-
came the theater of fierce Indian raids and battles.

The new state of Minnesota was considered of little
value for agriculture, and until 1857 flour and wheat were
shipped to Saint Paul and Minneapolis from Iowa and Illinois.
At the beginning of the year 1860 the population of Minne-
apolis was about fifteen hundred. It had two or three "half
starved" retail stores, and its manufacturing embraced one
flouring mill. Its banking capital did not exceed twenty-
five thousand dollars, and there was not a wealthy man among
its residents. It was an isolated spot away out on the fron-
tier. War parties and tribes of wild Sioux frequently pass-

1924, pp. 109-46.
ed through the town on their way to meet their old enemies the Chippewas. People going east from Minneapolis in winter rode in stages to LaCrosse, a distance of one hundred and seventy-five miles. From fifty miles west of Minneapolis as far west as the Oregon coast there were only a few squalid settlements of trappers and lumbermen. Pioneer gold seekers had just commenced prospecting the mountains of western Montana. Dakota was a wilderness even when Jay Cook began the building of the Northern Pacific railway in 1872. At that time it was supposed that what is now the great agricultural state of North Dakota could never maintain a farming population. Gibson related:

I remember well, while living in Minneapolis, interviewing the commander of troops stationed at Fort Totten, where the city of Devils Lake is now situated, now Northeastern North Dakota, as to the agricultural prospects of that region and was told by him that North Dakota was absolutely worthless for agricultural purposes. Nor was that army officer alone in his opinion of that region, for General Hazen had already included it in his "great northwestern desert." (26)

Upon arrival at St. Anthony Gibson immediately became interested in the milling business. He and William Eastman, another New Englander, built the first merchant flouring mill in Minneapolis. It was called the Cataract. Next to the City Mill, which was converted from the old Gout Sawmill into a flour mill in 1857, the Cataract was the

(26) Great Falls Tribune, November 14, 1885.
first privately built mill on the west side of the river. Erected in 1859, it was situated at the corner of First Street and Sixth Avenue South. For that day it was a big mill—three stories high and measuring forty-five by sixty-five feet, with a capacity of three hundred barrels per day. It shipped almost all its products to Chicago. The Cataract Mill was still standing in 1920. Later it was torn down to make way for more modern structures. From 1859 until 1863 Eastman and Gibson operated the mill alone and then took into the partnership Judd and Brackett. Later it was sold to D. R. Barber, founder of the Barber Milling Company. The Cataract kept its fine reputation into the seventies and was a leader in the movement which revolutionized milling. The four erected the North Star Woolen Mill in 1862 upon the corner diagonally across the street from the Cataract Mill. Upon its completion the interests were divided; Judd and Brackett (later Barbers) keeping the flour mill, and Eastman and Gibson taking the woolen mill, the latter being the

(30) Fieldhouse, op. cit., pp. 10-11
first of its kind in Minneapolis. This Gibson, Tyler Woolen Company manufactured flannels, blankets, robes, and various other articles. The Star blankets were of the highest quality and were used in the palace cars of that day. They won the top prize as the best woolen blankets in the world at the Centennial Exhibition in 1876. Gibson's experience gained in woolen manufacturing in Minneapolis aided him immeasurable in his later sheep and wool ventures in Montana. Even during his residence in Minneapolis he was impressed with the opportunities that Montana offered for the sheep business.

Gibson's success attracted so much attention that the Minneapolis Times on Saturday morning, March 19, 1901, referred to him as follows:

Mr. Gibson was one of the pioneers in the development of this city and his energy and enterprise contributed in no small degree to the prosperity it now enjoys. He has always been the friend of the city in whose early industrial and commercial growth he took so prominent a part.

A very civic-minded citizen, Gibson was instrumental in establishing the public library of Minneapolis, which in early days was called the Athenaeum. He was one of the first trustees of the Church of the Redeemer (Universalist) and in 1862 was a member of a committee of ten appointed

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(32) Minneapolis, Metropolis of The Northwest, Minneapolis, 1887, p. 132
(33) Great Falls Daily Tribune, March 9, 1901
(34) Minneapolis Times, March 9, 1901.
by the citizenry to raise money for the benefit of the families of the men who enlisted in the Union Army. Gibson was a charter member of the Masonic Lodge of Minneapolis and was also a staunch advocate of a state university for Minnesota, which was chartered in 1868. He served on the University Board of Regents from 1871 through 1879, being elected Secretary-Treasurer of this distinguished body on May 3, 1875.

When the prosperity following the Civil War subsided as the century progressed, Gibson underwent heavy financial loss during the Panic of 1873. He didn't recover from the adverse effects of this depression while in Minnesota, and six years later, at the age of forty-nine, he migrated to Montana Territory. Having heard reports concerning the great advantage associated with sheep raising in northern Montana, he desired to try his hand at it. He decided to make his new home at Fort Benton, Montana, which was situated at the head of navigation on the Missouri River. At that time the bison of northern Montana were being rapidly exterminated. The cattle business had then only extended as far north as the Gallatin Valley. No railroad had as yet entered this section. Thus river shipment via steamboat east and south was the cheapest and safest means of transport. This was important to Gibson, for he intended to deal extensively with eastern markets, as Fort Benton was also a small trading post, the only one in northern Montana at that time. Gibson could purchase his supplies
and sell his products more readily there than anywhere else in northern Montana.

The Mullan Road led westward from Benton to Helena, Deer Lodge, Missoula, and Walla Walla, making Fort Benton also the center for westward trade and development.

In June, 1879, Gibson arrived in Fort Benton "from the States" as the expression went in those days. Though his real interest from the beginning had been to go into the sheep raising business, lack of funds forced him to postpone his contemplated large sheep purchases for a time. During this period he started a small lumber yard at Fort Benton and found a ready sale for building supplies. He bought building materials that season as long as the steamboats ran. Soon thereafter he sold his lumber business to a Mr. George Steel. Gibson also dealt in real estate. The Fort Benton Weekly Record said of him on March 5, 1880: "Paris Gibson manifests a staunch confidence in the future of Benton in a practical manner. Within the last week he has purchased not less than sixty lots inside the town limits, and he is yet in search for more."

Soon thereafter he bought the Ilges property adjoining the town and rented out apartments in Benton. In June, 1882, he purchased from Frank Deletraz for fifty-two hundred dollars, eighty lots in his contemplated addition to the townsite in Benton. Shortly afterwards he sold the same
lots to a syndicate for sixty-four hundred dollars. In October, 1881, he contracted with a James McDevitt for the hauling of ores from the Barker mine to a smelter at Gold Run.

During his residence in Benton, Gibson seemed continually on the go. He traveled frequently between Fort Benton and Helena and also made numerous trips into the Highwood and Belt country and to Fort Shaw, looking for a suitable location where he might enter a profitable business.

He brought his sons Theodore and Phillip to Benton in the spring of 1880. Al Wilkins stated that Gibson obtained land on the Missouri River six miles above the town, at what was called "Three Islands," and stocked it with sheep. He put his boys in charge of this ranch.

(35) Mr. Wilkins said that his father ran a road ranch and stage station at Eight Mile Springs at that time and that the Gibson boys were their nearest neighbors. He stated that they found them very fine neighbors indeed. (Great Falls Tribune, July 22, 1934).
CHAPTER II
SHEEP

Before Gibson arrived in Montana, there were few sheep raised in the Territory. The history of the sheep industry in "The Treasure State" dates back to the eighteen-sixties, when religion and gold provided the joint incentives that attracted sheep raisers to Montana. Priest and prospector alike created the early markets for wool and mutton. The representatives of the church were chiefly interested in clothing their congregation, while the "sour-doughs" were concerned with mutton production to appease their appetites for meat. (1)

The first sheep were brought into the state by the missionaries of St. Mary's mission at Steevenville in western Montana. In 1867 the Jesuits introduced three hundred sheep from Oregon into what was later Cascade county.

Large scale sheep production began in the mountain valleys and the Great Plains of Montana during the late seventies and early eighties. The first real attempt to

(1) The raising of sheep was a later industry than the cattle and horse business. It attained no considerable importance until the coming of the railroads in the eighteen-eighties. With the advent of sheep on the great, free ranges hitherto controlled by the cattle companies, a bitter feud grew up between the cow and sheep men. It was alleged by the former that the sheep ruined the range, shearing it clean of grass, and it was stoutly maintained by the latter that the sheep did nothing of the kind. (Helen Fitzgerald Sanders, A History of Montana, I, p.320.)

raise sheep on a commercial scale in Montana was made by John F. Bishop near Dillon in 1869, with sheep being driven into Beaverhead Valley from California. The early flocks of Merinos in western Montana were kept mostly in this valley and were owned by Orr and Poindexter.

The census of 1870 credited Montana with possessing only 2,040 sheep; being of the mutton type, many were brought into the Helena region.

For the next eight years, the sheep industry advanced steadily; in 1879 the number assessed for taxation within Montana was 168,891.

In northern Montana the promoter of the sheep industry was Paris Gibson, the first to bring sheep to this area and especially to Fort Benton. With his son Theodore he located his first sheep ranch on Otter Creek near Belt in 1879. Within a year after entering the Territory, he purchased the McGronan ranch near Fort Benton and fenced it in preparation for receiving a herd of blooded rams from the Campbell ranch of Vermont. Another band of sheep was also acquired by Paris Gibson & Son and moved nearer Benton. Finally Gibson purchased the East Ophir Ranch situated nearly opposite the mouth of the Marias River.

(3) Silver State Post, December 19, 1940.
(4) Wentworth, America's Sheep Trails, Ames, Iowa: 1948, p.564
(7) Wentworth, America's Sheep Trails, p. 564
(8) Fort Benton Weekly-Record, March 12, 1880.
(9) Ibid., June 18, 1880.
(10) Ibid., March 12, 1880.
After acquiring these ranches, he began to sell a number of his fine Vermont Merino rams. In October, 1881, he offered three hundred of these fine animals for immediate sale. Some of them were sold to the Star Sheep Company. Sales continued to be good the following year. Gibson sold Brooks and Hilger forty purebred rams within a period of three months. In June, 1881, he received on the steamer Josephine another band from Campbell. He continued to deal in purebred stock and in June, 1885, had one hundred and forty thoroughbred Delaine rams of the Campbell stock for sale.

During 1881, accompanied by a Minneapolis man, he left Benton to make his first annual visit to all the sheep ranches in the area, purchasing wool for various Eastern firms for which he was an agent. The following year, he and W.T. Eldridge bought from W. A. Woodson his clip of wool, amounting to eighteen thousand pounds. Through his experience as former head of the North Star Woolen Mill in Minneapolis, Gibson had acquired a connoisseur's regard for fine wool.

The main Montana wool market during these early days was a primitive affair at Fort Benton, where all the wool was assembled for shipment on the river, a practice which

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(11) Ibid., October 8, 1881
(12) Ibid., April 27, 1882
(13) Ibid., June 1, 1882.
(14) Great Falls Tribune, June 11, 1885.
(15) Fort Benton Weekly Record, June 30, 1881.
continued until the advent of the railroads, when the principal market for the wool of northern Montana was transferred to Great Falls.

In 1882 he had one loss. A fire burned down the building on his Butte sheep ranch, destroying all its contents.

During his last year in Benton, 1883, Gibson's ranches continued to prosper. In March he visited the ranch on Belt Creek with his partner, C. L. Spencer, and reported the shear that year would be heavier than ever before. That same spring he built a house on his Marias ranch and stocked this ranch with sheep for the coming summer. About this time, too, Paris Gibson & Son made another purchase, two hundred and fifty head of Vermont Merinos for their ranches near Benton. Concurrently they sold R. P. Walker, superintendent of the Dearborn Sheep Company on the Dearborn River, seventy Merino rams of the Campbell breed.

Concerning one of his numerous trips the Fort Benton Record on November 6, 1880, humorously remarked: "Mr. Gibson is in the country visiting his sheep." Another inkling of his extensive holdings can be gained by the announcement in the Fort Benton Record of that period that twenty-three thousand of Paris Gibson's sheep crossed on the upper ferry during September of 1883.

(17) Fort Benton Weekly Record, December 7, 1882.
(18) Ibid., March 17, 1883.
(19) Ibid., May 26, 1883.
(20) Ibid., October 27, 1883.
(21) Ibid., September 22, 1883.
The firm of Paris Gibson & Son was exceedingly active in sheep raising during the Gibsons residence in Fort Benton. But the elder Gibson was not entirely satisfied with his life in Benton, and in 1883 turned his attention to the Great Falls area up the river, where he located his main sheep ranches. Mrs. Crane, an early Benton settler, believed that Gibson moved from Fort Benton to Great Falls because he felt the change was best for his business. She stated:

Mr. Gibson may have been somewhat disgusted with his business relations in Benton, but if that was the case, he failed to make much disturbance about it. Gibson wanted to buy the island just up the river from Fort Benton for further business operations, but before he could acquire it Roosevelt (no record of this man is available) 'jumped claim' on it. Gibson was so angry he declared: 'I'll see the day that grass grows in Fort Benton's streets.' (22)

From the neighborhood of Belt, Gibson had made numerous trips into the Great Falls district, where he was so impressed with the potential use of the grasses for sheep pasturage that, by 1883, he had moved the greater part of his sheep there. He began raising sheep there in the spring of 1883, and during 1883-84 he moved his headquarters to the new location. (23)

By 1885 he had become one of the greatest sheep growers in Montana. During this period he and another large operator, Carpenter, pastured their flocks during the summers in the area between the Fort Peck Reservoir and the

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(22) Great Falls Tribune, February 14, 1932.
(23) Wentworth, America's Sheep Trails, p. 304
Canadian line. When winter set in, they drove their sheep into the breaks of the Missouri River, where the animals were protected from the icy winds and bitter cold of northern Montana.

The number of sheep in Montana for the years 1885- through 87 had risen to two million despite the fact that the winter of 1886-87 was one of the most terrible in the history of northern Montana. During that winter half the sheep raised the previous year perished.

Previous to the extreme winter of 1886-87, Gibson and Carpenter ran cattle with their sheep. But their cattle losses were so great that winter that they sold the remnants, crossed the Missouri River, and ran only sheep thereafter. A greater percentage of cattle than sheep froze to death or died because of lack of feed during that winter.

In August, 1886, Gibson, his son Phillip, and four other men organized the Great Falls Sheep Company, which included among its holdings a large band of sheep purchased the previous fall by the elder Gibson. The company prospered during the next two years despite the severe 1886-87 winter, and at its annual meeting in May, 1888, when Paris Gibson was elected president, a liberal dividend was de-

(24) Wentworth, America's Sheep Trails, p. 308
(25) First Annual Report of the Board of Sheep Commissioners of Montana, Helena: 1897, p. 6
(26) Wentworth, America's Sheep Trails, p. 308.
(27) Great Falls Tribune, August 14, 1886.
declared. The stockholders were greatly pleased with the flourishing condition of the company and the bright prospects of a heavy clip and large increase. Gibson continued to expand his interests and in 1887 was the leader in the formation of the North Montana Sheep Company. The object of this company was the buying, selling, breeding, and raising of sheep. The capital stock was fixed at fifty thousand dollars, divided into five hundred shares of the par value of one hundred dollars each. The maximum indebtedness that could be incurred was fifteen thousand dollars. The company's main office was located at Great Falls.

Gibson was persistent in impressing on the first flockmasters and those that succeeded them the importance of improving their flocks so as to produce a good quality of wool.

Believing that American Merino wool, like foreign wool, would be sold on the basis of its shrinkage, he advocated the breeding of hardier strains in order to improve Montana's output. He believed that the growers' lack of interest in improving their flocks might jeopardize the state's reputation for producing fine wool. With this improvement in mind, he purchased a number of

(28) Great Falls Tribune, April 11, 1888
(29) Great Falls Tribune, October 25, 1887
(30) Great Falls Tribune, October 23, 1886.
Delaine sheep, which he brought to Montana and crossed with the Merinos. This cross-breed formed the principal part of most of the flocks in the northern part of Montana. (31)

The improvement in thoroughbred Merinos from Vermont was quite noticeable after they acclimated themselves to the Western grasses and climate. He predicted that this progress would continue until the Montana Merino became "a distinct family unsurpassed and unequalled in the world." (32)

Gibson did not, however, give up his interest in the Merino, for in 1885 he and his son were listed as having the leading flock of registered Merinos in Montana. (33)

In October, 1888, he remarked:

About a year ago I sent to the North Star Woolen Mills the fleeces of two Merino rams and two ewes. Results prove that not only high grade wool can be produced here but also pure bred Merino wool can be grown in this territory that will not carry an excessive amount of grease and worthless yolk, and at the same time that will yield a large quantity of scoured wool.... During my experience as a manufacturer of woolens, I scoured many hundreds of fleeces from thoroughbred Merino rams, many of them having been sent to me to test with special care, but I never saw any that gave as large a per cent of clean wool as the four fleeces referred to above. (35)

(32) Great Falls Tribune, December 26, 1885.
(33) In Montana during the eighteen-eighties sheep were usually herded upon the arid range of the public domain where the rainfall was too light to admit the raising of crops of grass or even the usual grasses. During this, and the preceding decade free range growers could face scab, inferior wool and only four pound fleeces, and still report a profit of twenty-five per cent of their investment. Helen Fitzgerald Sanders, A History of Montana, I, p. 320.
(34) Wentworth, America's Sheep Trails, p. 304.
(35) Great Falls Tribune, October 23, 1886.
For his distinguished efforts, he had been elected the first president of the newly organized Montana Woolgrowers Association on January 12, 1883, at Fort Benton and served in this office for twenty-two consecutive years. This organization was continually looking out for the interests of its members. By 1883, the first transcontinental railroad was completed through Montana, and a large number of sheep were unloaded for rest and grazing in different parts of the Territory. Some of these had scab, which spread rapidly throughout the Territory. Severe losses were sustained by lack of enforcement of laws already on the Territorial statute books, and the Woolgrowers Association tried to secure amendments and enforcement of the scab law.

In July, 1885, Gibson was in Benton buying wool for a large Eastern woolen concern. While there he said that about two thousand, five hundred bales of wool, containing not less than seven hundred thousand pounds, had already been received at that place during the season. He stated that there would be five hundred thousand pounds more brought in, making a total for 1885, of one million, two hundred thousand pounds. This wool was bought and shipped almost wholly on account of Boston dealers and commission men and was shipped at a rate of $1.95 per hundred from

(37) *Great Falls Tribune*, January 7, 1938.
Fort Benton to Boston. Gibson asked if the *Tribune* readers or the wool growers of the Territory realized what a blessing the old Missouri River was to the Northwestern country. It it were not for its navigable water, he stated, the wool-growing industry of Montana could not exist. Rail rates, he believed, were too high, and until there was more railroad competition, it would be a sad thing for the woolgrowers and farmers if steamboats stopped running.

In 1885 he commented that the outlook for the sheep industry was excellent although it had just passed through a great depression. (38)

Delving into the economic effects of depression upon the industry, he wrote:

> When financial distress visits our country the manufacturer of woolen goods is among the first to feel its effects. The consumption of wool becomes less and less every day through the period of contraction, until a majority of the mills of the country either stop altogether or are run on greatly reduced time.

The result, he said, was the steady decline of wool prices until the rancher was forced to abandon his business. There were few buyers at the time and only the better portions of the flocks could be shipped to Eastern markets. This was no problem for the Eastern ranchers, who had large markets for mutton nearby. After sustaining losses for two or three years, he prophesied, a revival of the industries

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(38) *Great Falls Tribune*, July 16, 1885.
of the country would take place, and a sudden and rapid advance in wool would set in with returning prosperity for the sheep business. (39)

Gibson stated that the woolen mills were then running, however, and that nothing was likely to prevent good prices for wool and prosperity for the sheep interests unless there was a recurrence of general hard times throughout the country. He maintained that the preceding year had added much to the reputation of Montana wool and that it was unequaled among American grown fleeces. "Where can you find unwashed wool so clean and so free from burrs and dirt as our wool?" he asked.

Gibson commented on the fact that recently some of the sheep owners had expressed regret that they had not embarked in cattle raising instead of sheep. He believed that if they had done so five or six years before, their profit would doubtless have been from one to two hundred per cent. But looking to the probable future of these two branches of business, he drew the conclusion that the objection often raised that sheep raising required too much work would be heard in Montana less and less every year as men who went there to engage in the business expected and were willing to work. He thought that the superior quality of the wool and the great advantage which this Territory offered for sheep-raising were sure to attract the atten-

(39) Great Falls Tribune, December 26, 1885.
tion of capitalists, and that large amounts of money would be invested in ranches and permanent improvement, as had been done in other countries possessing similar advantages. It was doubtful, he contended, if there were any place in the world where the sheep business, by a proper expenditure of money, could be carried on more safely and with more profitable results than in Montana Territory.

Since even the majority of the early sheep ranchers had started their flocks with little financial aid, by 1888 they were quite well off, and he believed they could look forward to a prosperous future. He predicted great investments in the improving of the various breeds.

After devoting this embryro period purely to wool production, the Montana sheep rancher later raised more and more sheep for the mutton market. Gibson's Vermont Merino strain was an improvement over the popular flocks which were composed during the eighteen-seventies and eighties mainly of strong Spanish-Merino blood, yielding fleeces of greasy wool and very little meat. At that time producers were directing every effort to the production of wool, wholly ignoring the mutton product. As a result, the mutton produced was hardly fit to eat. As time progressed, mutton production increased with the removal of the tariff on wool. The large English strains of sheep then became popular.

(40) Great Falls Tribune, December 26, 1885.
About 1900 the days of the great range either for cattle or sheep were gone, and the tariff and other causes made the production of wool so uncertain a business venture that there had been a steady decrease in the number of sheep. For years raisers of sheep had given no attention to the mutton end of the business, but toward the end of the century it was the mutton breeds which came into prominence.

Gibson continued in the sheep industry at Great Falls and actively served its cause until 1905. But this direct participation slackened off with the passing of years because of his increasing obligations in regard to the new city at the falls. Real estate, political and civic ventures left him little time for sheep management after the year 1890.

He again became interested in cattle during the early years of the present century. At that time he had probably the first herd of pure-blooded Holsteins in Montana on his ranch adjacent to Great Falls. They were later sold to California interests.

(42) Interview with Mr. Lyman, Great Falls, Montana, April 13, 1952.
CHAPTER III
GIBSON FOUND A CITY

Paris Gibson became interested in the Great Falls area soon after his arrival at Fort Benton in 1879. During the same year he stopped at Fort Shaw for a few days and saw a copy of Lewis and Clark's records and maps. Noting the falls of the Missouri, he decided to visit them.

Through written and verbal reports plus in addition to actual visits to the area of the falls, Gibson learned much about its natural phenomena. He was much impressed with its grandeur. In his book, The Founding of Great Falls and Some of Its Early Records, he stated: "I can never forget the impression made upon my mind as I looked down for the first time upon these falls (1880) and beheld below them the deep canyon with its projecting cliffs far above the foaming current. I could readily understand the feeling of Captain Lewis as he gazed upon this scene seventy-five years before." The following year, when revisiting the falls area, he was impressed by the length and greenness of the grass and by the swarms of water birds that then covered the wide segment of the river just below Cascade Park.
Bands of antelope were detected grazing nearby. Here one saw nature at its best.

In earliest times this area surrounding the present city of Great Falls lay in the center of a huge glacial lake seven hundred feet deep. During the Pleistocene epoch the Keewatin ice sheet crept south from the glacial field west of Hudson's Bay, absorbed Canadian granite with which it ground down the hills, filled the valleys, and crept ever southward for thousands of years until it reached what are now the northern and eastern city limits of Great Falls, where it stopped.

At the edge of the ice sheet was formed a glacial lake, which geologists now call "Great Falls Lake," which began about where the town of Valier now stands, swung southeast in a giant half-moon and north again to the valley in which Arrow Creek flows, north of the present town of Denton. Directly over today's Great Falls township, this lake was about one hundred and thirty miles long and thirty miles wide at its widest point.

Ages passed. The lake disappeared; the Glacier receded and came again, but it did not extend so far. Before the ice came, the Missouri River meandered peacefully eastward through the coulee south of Great Falls in which Sand Coulee Creek now flows westward. As the lake receded, it filled the old southern channel of the Missouri with silt.

and drew the river northward with it. The Missouri now cut a new channel, made the bend in which Great Falls now stands, and pushed east through the Shonkin Sag. Later it returned to its approximate pre-glacial course near Virgelle and flowed north; but it remained in the big bend which now outlines the northern limits of the town later planted by Paris Gibson.

The history of this area was one of a primitive and warlike nature. At the site of Great Falls, where the Great Northern Railway bridge crossed the Missouri, was the favored ford on the Great North Trail. Here, for the northbound traveler, was the last still-shallow water, for below this point there were cascades and rapids, and the Missouri entered deep canyons. For him who traveled south, it was the first good crossing. Here the river narrowed at the end of the "Long Pool," and there was not another ford for forty miles. Judge Callaway said:


(3) Llewellyn Link Callaway-1868-1951-Born in Illinois, he later migrated to Montana. After graduating from the University of Michigan, he practiced law in southern Montana. Callaway became attorney for Madison County and later served three terms as mayor of Virginia City. After the turn of the century he became judge of the Fifth Judicial District of Montana, in which he tried many important cases, especially water suits. He was appointed Chief Justice of the Montana Supreme Court, where he served from 1922 until 1935. Callaway was also a member of American, Montana, and Cascade County Bar Associations, respectively. He served as president of the last two, and was a Republican and Mason of note. Callaway also served as president of the Great Falls Commercial Club (1922). He was a resident of Helena and an avid student and author of Montana history. Who's Who in America, XXVI, Chicago: 1950, pp. 410-11.
"This...ford was a gateway from all eastern Montana to the west. There the various tribes of the Siksika, going hunting, or going to war, and their enemies marching in reprisal, made their crossing. There the Nez Perces from the west, and later the trappers, and later still the pioneer settlers and stockmen crossed the river, where now two railways cross, and where stands the fine municipal bridge upon which the traffic of the city now passes." (4)

To the east as far as the territorial line there were located only scattered ranches, mining camps, and the bare beginnings of frontier towns. The country was a wilderness. Forty miles north was situated Fort Benton, which for forty years had been an outpost of civilization and head of navigation for the Missouri. Beyond the Missouri were the vast unoccupied plains and foothills, covering the area to the main range of the Rockies, over which John F. Stevens had not yet discovered Marias Pass, through which a transcontinental railroad was to pursue its course to the ocean.

This region between the Medicine, later called the Sun River, on the north, and the Missouri on the south and east, was the scene of many battles between roving bands of Indians. One of these conflicts has been portrayed by Charley Russell. Tradition also has it that a vicious conflict took place here between the mighty Black-

(4) Great Falls Tribune, July 2, 1930.
feet and a group of trappers, one of whom was Jim Bridger, who was entrenched upon the hill bordering on the city to the south.

In 1853, Governor Stevens, hunting a northern railroad route, made a painstaking study of the Great Falls area, and Captain John Mullan, who had been a member of his expedition, mapped it for a military road four years later. Thomas P. Roberts and a party engaged by the Northern Pacific Railway Company investigating navigation possibilities of the river visited the site of Great Falls in 1872. Roberts at that time discovered an aged black eagle which he believed to have been the same one mentioned by Lewis and Clark.

When Gibson first became interested in the Great Falls area, Butte had not yet discovered its copper bonanza. Montana had no railroads, although the Utah Northern was nearing the southwestern border. The population of the territory was twenty thousand in 1870 and by 1880 had doubled, but this was still a meager settlement for so vast an area as Montana. The few towns of the territory were hardly more than mining camps and trading posts located in distantly separated areas. Fort Benton at the source of navigation

(5) Great Falls Tribune, June 30, 1918.
on the Missouri was still a fur-trading post. All of the northern part of the territory was controlled by powerful Indian tribes. Scattered over this wide expanse of territory were isolated forts garrisoned by United States infantry or cavalry. Usually they were only of company strength. The shaggy bison were roaming the benches in great herds, and the antelope were seen in great numbers. But after the Indian wars had died down, cattlemen began entering the area in ever-increasing numbers. In a few years their herds roamed widely over Montana's fertile valleys. Sheep ranchers followed the cattlemen, but were more cautious than the latter in the beginning.

Gibson visualized this area as some day becoming very rich agriculturally. But during the first years of exploration and development (1880-85) he did not foresee the possibilities of power development there.

In the year 1880 he visited the future site of Great Falls for the first time. At that time he and his son Theodore traveled from their Otter Creek camp to the area of the falls. The following day they returned to Otter Creek camp, fully determined to visit the great falls again and continue their journey up the river, there to obtain a correct picture of all the falls and rapids above. This journey had encompassed the lower falls, where the Volta power station is now located.
In mid-November, 1881, on his next visit to the falls area the Gibson party followed the river bank from the great falls to the foot of crooked falls, where a halt was called because of a deep canyon known as Four Mile Coulee. They made camp at this location and in the early morning were awakened by a blinding snowstorm. Harnessing their horses, they started for home with the aid of a compass.

During May of 1882 Gibson again journeyed back to the falls. He made his camp under a large cottonwood tree and explored the area just below the head of the rapids.

His old friend Al Wilkins had the following interesting and pertinent reminiscences to make concerning Gibson:

Not long after Paris Gibson started in the sheep business, his progressive spirit began reaching for larger achievements. I think it was probably 1881-82, the worst winter I ever saw in Montana, that the overland stage had trouble making its daily trips through deep snow. One morning the stage had as one of its passengers Paris Gibson. It was an extraordinarily cold day and the driver, Gus Shaffer, had already frosted his fingers and hesitated about continuing the trip. Gibson said he must get to Sun River that day if possible, as he had an engagement there. Shaffer asked me if I would make the drive for him. Gibson spoke up and said: 'There is an extra ten spot in it for you if you can make it safely.' I found out afterwards that Gibson's mission that cold day was to buy a squatters rights to what is now the townsite of Great Falls. (8)

During 1880, 1881, and 1882 Paris Gibson intermittently was at work in the new area looking over the situa-

(8) Great Falls Tribune, July 22, 1934.
tion, making maps, and gathering considerable material on
the coal field in the neighborhood of Belt and Sand Coulee
and also data on the possibilities of mineral development
in the Belt Mountains in anticipation of the day he would
be able to use it in founding a city there.

Proof of his early interest in the development of
the falls area was given by Robert Leavens of Yellowstone
who commented: "While traveling by boat to Fort Benton
in 1881 among my fellow passengers was Paris Gibson. The
enthusiasm with which he went over his ideas for the found-
ing of Great Falls was infectious....."

In 1882 Gibson wrote two letters to H. P. Rolfe, a
surveyor, who was then in Fort Benton. Evidently he had
talked this matter over before with Rolfe, so that it was
quite certain that he had finally made up his mind that he
would go ahead with his plan for a city at the falls of
the Missouri. In May, 1882, he again wrote to Rolfe,
urging him to be ready to proceed at once with the survey.
He wanted to get started on his task for fear that some-
one else might precede him. Therefore on April first he
wrote that he would soon reach Benton and desired Rolfe
to be in readiness to go with him soon after to survey
the falls. Gibson asked Rolfe "to keep this matter among
ourselves."

(9) Great Falls Tribune, February 11, 1928.
(10) Great Falls Tribune, June 30, 1918.
Soon after his first visit to the Great Falls area in 1880 Gibson began a correspondence with his old friend James J. Hill, the railroad magnate, concerning the founding of a city at the falls of the Missouri. He had known Hill ever since their early days in Minneapolis, when the latter worked on the wharves of the Mississippi checking the flour as it came from the mill, when Gibson was then head of the Cataract Milling Company.

On November 24, 1880, Hill wrote to Gibson from Saint Paul, stating:

"It will give me great pleasure to see you during the coming winter and to hear from you a description of the country lying at the foot of the mountains between the Missouri River and latitude forty-nine, for a distance of one to three hundred miles and as far as you can get information; also the number of cattle now in the Sun River, Teton, and Marias River valleys, and any other information that you think will aid me." (11)

Greatly pleased with this letter, Gibson went at once to Saint Paul and gave Hill such information as he had been able to collect, bearing upon the region and the founding of a city there. "I was at once impressed," he wrote, "with the rapidity with which he grasped the whole subject at that interview, as scarcely an hour elapsed before he had concluded a plan for locating a city at the head of the falls of the Missouri River." (12)

(12) Ibid., p. 382-83.
In November of 1882 Gibson again returned to Saint Paul, after corresponding with Hill during the summer in regard to the town site enterprise. This trip was based upon the pioneer's desire to raise a sum of money with which to start construction of his proposed city. At that time Hill again examined Gibson's maps and listened attentively to his report as to the water power, coal, iron, and other resources of the surrounding country. Mr. Gibson later related how they had spent a part of one night in Hill's railway office discussing these matters before finally deciding to form a co-partnership to acquire lands around the falls. This, then, was the first concrete step taken to found a city at the falls of the Missouri River.

Paris Gibson was provided funds with which "soldiers script" was purchased and title to the land at the Great Falls site was obtained. James J. Hill had A. M. Scott of Minneapolis purchase this script mainly in the South from Civil War veterans who by act of congress had obtained additional homestead land without settling upon it.


(14) After 1865 there was brought increased pressure upon Congress to discriminate in favor of the Union veteran in formulating new public land laws. Under its terms, a man who had served a minimum of ninety days in the military or naval forces of the United States, was enabled to enter 160 acres of premium reserved public lands along railroads, or anywhere in the public domain. But much of this land found its way into the hands of speculators who had purchased military land scrip from Union veterans. This scrip was the negotiable item under which the land was secured. Roy M. Robbins, Our Landed Heritage-1776-1936, Princeton: 1942, pp. 214-15.
These veterans held title to it in script. Definite laws were passed which were intended to halt this malpractice of land speculators, but they were rarely enforced. This procedure being a common occurrence of that day, Messrs. Gibson and Hill cannot be condemned too vehemently for their acts in this regard.

With this script Gibson and Hill had H. P. Rolfe as agent purchase in their names four thousand acres of land and the water rights pertaining to the same. Rolfe as agent hired local Montana men to purchase the land at the Great Falls site. Paid for in "soldiers script," the land was turned over to Messrs. Hill and Gibson.

The enterprising owners of this land next had to decide upon a name for their prospective city. Gibson had originally planned to call the new community Hilltown, but when Jim Hill did not agree to this, it was named Great Falls, because of its location.

An organization then had to be set up to handle the land acquired by these men. From 1882 until September, 1885, it was a private enterprise owned and operated by Messrs. Gibson and Hill. In 1885 a fourth interest in the organization was sold to Conrad Getzian, a Saint Paul friend of Paris Gibson's. Two years later it was formerly incorporated under the title of the Great Falls Water Power & Townsite Company, with James J. Hill as its president.

The trustees and incorporators of the company were Colonel Charles A. Broadwater, Paris Gibson and Louis G. Phelps. Mr. Hill held one-half of the stock, while Gibson owned one-fourth. The remainder was distributed to various persons, including railroad men in Saint Paul, United States President Benjamin Harrison, and most of the Federal cabinet officers. This could conceivably have been a form of bribery to keep Washington quiet. The capital stock was placed at five million dollars in order to provide ample means for the industrial advancement of the city and the development of its water power.

Gibson's signature on the incorporation paper of the Great Falls Water Power & Townsite Company was necessary to validate the contract. Therefore, while in Saint Paul in the summer of 1889, he transferred his interest in this enterprise to Jim Hill in trust in order to complete organization of the corporation at once, without necessitating Gibson's later return to Saint Paul. In 1890 Hill was elected president and Gibson vice-president. The latter was the general manager of the concern.

The Great Falls Water Power & Townsite Company was an enterprise devoted to the selling of real estate in the new community. The company bought all the water power sites along the river, including 4,976 acres of land from Gibson,

(16) Great Falls Tribune, May 16, 1887.
Jill, and their associates. These men received as compensation ten thousand shares of Townsite Company stock which had a par value of one hundred dollars per share. The company became the owner of twelve thousand acres in the region above the falls.

Gibson stated that this corporation did not actively enter into its land sales until the Manitoba Railway (Great Northern) reached Great Falls in 1887.

The Townsite Company was quite active in business endeavors throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. In 1891 it deeded block 253 to Cascade County for twenty thousand dollars.

The Helena newspapers in the early eighteen-nineties, preceding the vote on the capital question, were particularly hostile to the Townsite Company and Gibson for his espousal of Anaconda as the capital. They referred to Great Falls as the town famous for "wind, water and futurity."

The Great Falls Water Power & Townsite Company built the first bridge across the Missouri and charged tolls for its use. The location was at First Avenue North. Later in the nineteenth century it was sold to the city of Great Falls.

In the early years of Great Falls it was imperative to the interests of the Great Falls Water Power & Townsite Company to have a thriving city. Otherwise their land and power

enterprise would have failed. Therefore Gibson and his associates did everything possible to accelerate growth of the city. Gibson realized that trees would beautify the town and impart pleasure to a city otherwise barren. They would also enhance the value of property in the eyes of prospective buyers. On November 21, 1888, only a month after the city had been incorporated, at the first city council meeting Gibson as first Mayor said in his inaugural address:

With a small annual outlay by our people for planting and protecting trees, Great Falls, from its favored location for water supply, can be made one of the most beautiful cities in any country. In order that there may be uniformity in planting trees upon our main avenues and street, I would recommend you to designate where the rows or lines of trees should be planted in relation to the sidewalks and streets. It is to be hoped that people making homes in this new city will recognize the importance not only of planting trees without delay, but also of giving them the care and attention they will require. (18)

To carry out these plans, he advocated the levy of a small tax to cover the cost of tree and park maintenance. He visualized the tax as eventually so beneficial that tree culture would become the settled policy of the city. As an example of what could be done to beautify a city located in an arid area be cited Denver. Gibson believed that there was no doubt the trees raised there added greatly to

(18) Great Falls Tribune, November 22, 1888.
its general appearance.

The founder of Great Falls had spent the first fifty years of his life in the thickly forested states of Maine and Minnesota; and when he arrived on the Great Falls scene, he was depressed by the lack of timber and shade trees. Therefore, one of his early endeavors as vice-president of the Great Falls Water Power & Townsite Company was in the laying out of a town site of three thousand five hundred acres with wide streets and boulevards. They were lined with grass plots and trees, and seven hundred acres were devoted to public parks. To furnish the trees for the beautification of the city, a municipal nursery was formed, (later another one was added), and by 1913 seventy-six thousand trees had been furnished for the city's boulevard system. Eventually there were nineteen city parks with fifty-three thousand trees.

The town was laid out in a symmetrical fashion, and at the time of survey the avenues and streets were named instead of numbered. Gibson planned the city before there was a building constructed; and the layout today is practically as originally mapped out by its founder. Gibson Avenue, the main thoroughfare, was later renamed Central Avenue,

(19) Great Falls Tribune, December 26, 1889.
(20) Robert George Raymer, Montana—The Land and The People, I, Chicago & New York: 1930, p. 606
and all the other streets were numbered. The east-west ones were called avenues, and the ones oriented to the north and south were renamed streets.

Great Falls' founder served as park commissioner from 1889 until the expiration of his third term, which began in 1894.

Under his guidance Great Falls made the protection of the trees and boulevards and its idea of a city beautiful part of the municipal policy. But at first many Great Falls citizens laughed at him when the first trees were planted, and later they haggled about the expense when Gibson urged boulevard the streets.

Taking care of so many trees involved cooperation and assistance from the executive, legislative, and judicial departments of the city, to say nothing of the demands on the public treasury and the water supply. Even an ordinance was passed which declared that dandelions, thistles, and all weeds and vegetation uncared for within the city were noxious weeds and a common nuisance, and property owners were required to rid their premises of such growths as would detract from the city's appearance and perhaps menace the public health.

Eighteen additional employees were hired during the dandelion season to exterminate the yellow pest on city property. One hundred and five men were employed during
irrigation season to work in the parks. According to Charles E. Landgren, an early member of the boulevard department, the tree brigade carried the young trees on their shoulders down the wooden sidewalks from the stockpile to the site of the planting during the early years of the twentieth century. He recounted having visited a cottonwood tree (1938) at the intersection of Seventh Street and Fourth Avenue North to view an iron ring placed there which had prevented the tree from splitting and recalled that during an early period in the history of the town "Senator Gibson came around to inspect the job when it was done, and said he believed the iron band would do the job well." This was an example of the personal interest Gibson took in tree culture.

On November 21, 1888, Mayor Gibson in speaking to the City Council, declared that in a very short time the subject of parks would receive the earnest attention of the city government of Great Falls. He believed suitable lands could be obtained at low prices or perhaps be donated to the city for parks and that they should be forever dedicated to the public. When once acquired, these parks were to be improved and ornamented as fast as the wealth of the city justified it. He believed that in a treeless country such as Great Falls "the value of trees and

(21) Great Falls Tribune, July 26, 1938.
parks will always be more highly appreciated than in the well wooded states of the east."

Four years later, in 1892, when the Mayor invited him, a member of the Park commission, to address the council, Gibson spoke regarding the condition of the city parks and what action was regarded as necessary by the commission on the part of the council.

He believed that the amount appropriated the year before by the city council for the care of the parks and trees adorning the avenues of the city was but one thousand dollars. Gibson explained that prior to cutting the appropriation down to that amount, the commission had bought from the Lake City nursery for the parks and avenues a number of trees and plants. This order had been given in August, and it was impossible for the commission to change the order; but the agent of the nursery had cut the order to three hundred and seventy dollars voluntarily, and had also extended the time of payment from the preceding August until the following spring. The deduction of that amount of the bill from one thousand dollars appropriated left but six hundred and thirty dollars for current park and tree expenses.

Gibson declared that the amount was inadequate and that it might as well be understood then as any other time. "If there is no way to increase the appropriation, the care of

(22) Great Falls Tribune, November 22, 1888.
the trees may as well be abandoned as it will be impossible to care for them with that sum," he contended.

He thought that nothing contributed so much to the prosperity, health, or beauty of a city as attractive parks and trees, and that the money expended to maintain them was well invested. The commission had contemplated the erection of a fence from first Street North and Park Drive to the trestle to replace the rickety affair then serving the purpose. Gibson thought that "the expense would not be great and it would greatly improve the appearance of the park."

Gibson then enumerated several other necessary improvements which would cost altogether in the neighborhood of one thousand dollars and also advised the council to arrange to furnish money for irrigating the park and trees by putting in a pump at Black Eagle falls and owning its own system. The character of the soil in the vicinity of the river rendered frequent watering of the trees imperative, although further back from the river the trees would flourish with scarcely any irrigation. Gibson concluded his remarks by again urging upon the council the necessity of providing some means for caring for and improving the parks, stating that that year Great Falls would be visited by many travelers who would attend the conventions to be held in the state and that the city should be made as attractive as possible. (23)

(23) Great Falls Tribune, June 7, 1892
His interest did not end there. In 1893 he notified the council by letter that he would donate the city three thousand dollars' worth of lots for park purposes in the Willard addition.

The major task confronting him was to persuade people to move to the community. The difficulty of this task will be more appreciated if one realizes that in 1882 the only occupant of the area where Great Falls was to be located was one Lucas Carranza, who lived in a small cabin on the west side of the river. He selected this spot because of its isolation in respect to other Montana settlements.

During the first year of the community, 1883, S. A. Beachley was the only person to occupy a cabin at the Great Falls site. All its other residents had returned to civilization for the winter. One day during early winter he was sitting in his cabin quietly reading a six-month-old newspaper when suddenly he was attacked by a war party of six Nez Perces. Having refused to surrender after the Battle of The Bear Paws, they had made their home just across the boundary line. Without ceremony these Indians at once took possession of the cabin and set Beachley at work cooking his food in an attempt to satisfy their almost insatiable appetites. His service as cook did not end until he had completely exhausted his supplies. Being on foot the In-

(24) Great Falls Tribune, December 8, 1893.
Indian party could appropriate only a few of the articles in his cabin. Beachley tried to save two North Star blankets, but when one of the Indians seized and cocked his rifle, Beachley wisely surrendered them.

During the first years of the new community the population barely reached one hundred.

The construction of houses was also a problem. Previous to 1883 the only human dwellings on the site of Great Falls were the skin lodges of the Indians and Caranza's later shack. The Indian dwellings were located on the flat grassy plains in the big bend of the Missouri. The first frame home was built in April, 1884, at Twenty-Sixth Street and Third Avenue South by H. P. Rolfe.

Al Wilkins of Fort Benton traveled through Great Falls in 1885. He commented that there were fifteen houses in the town at that time. Gibson offered Wilkins and party a corner lot to build on as an inducement for them to stay and go into business in the growing city.

At that time no new town could prosper without an adequate water supply. With this in mind he induced O.E. Spear to come all the way from Minneapolis to drill artesian wells, not only in Great Falls, but in that whole area of Montana. Usually water was reached after drilling twenty-five or thirty feet. In 1889 he was an organizer of the Great Falls Water Company. At a stockholder's meeting two years later he was elected secretary-treasurer.

The founder of Great Falls knew that without the institutions associated with community life Great Falls would not develop. One of these was the formation of a bank. Gibson was a key organizer in the First National Bank of Great Falls. He and J. J. Hill, in addition to prominent men in New York, Saint Paul, and Helena were stockholders in this new financial institution. One of the bank's early activities was assisting in the financing of Hill's Saint Paul, Manitoba & Northern, and the Montana Central railway companies. In January, 1887, Gibson was elected a director of The First National Bank, an office which he held for one year. The Great Falls Tribune remarked at the time: "The bank is in a very prosperous position and filling the wants of business men in this community very acceptably ...." (26)

Gibson also aided in the establishment of a newspaper. He was one of the incorporators of the Great Falls Tribune, in March of 1886, and again in April of 1890, on its second incorporation.

In the spring of 1885, in conjunction with O. W. Chown, Gibson began the construction of the Park Hotel. The transporting of materials to the new site was a difficult problem. One of the finest hotels in northern Montana, The Park, was two and one-half stories high with a frontage of one hundred feet on Central Avenue and fifty feet on

(26) Great Falls Tribune, January 15, 1887.
Park Drive. The main entrance was on the former and the ladies entrance on the latter side street. Women could not enter through the front portals. One of its biggest attractions to visitors was the piazza which encircled the building and which commanded a view of the winding Missouri with the main range of the Rockies, the Big and Little Belt and the Highwood mountains in the background. It had twenty-five rooms with twelve unfurnished rooms in reserve. The furniture was neat and well chosen. The laundry was located in a nearby building. Ted Gibson was one of its managers.

The Tribune in regard to other of its services stated:

"In connection with the hotel is a commodious barber shop and bathroom under the management of Mr. Mayo, the well-known tonsorial artist, late of Livingston and National Park."

To supply lumber for the expanding community, Gibson induced Ira Myers to organize a sawmill at Great Falls. Previous to this, the only sawmill in the area was the one founded by Anton M. Helter in 1880, located on the west bank of the Missouri below the mouth of the Sun River, it served the Fort Benton area. In May, 1880, Helter established a lumber yard there also. He occupied a section of desert land and made the first payment on it. He failed to irri-

(27) Great Falls Tribune, September 4, 1886.
gate it and so lost it by default. This land extended from the Sun River down the Missouri River for two miles and took in what was later Great Falls on the northwest side of the river. The smelter and concentrating plant is today located at this section of the city.

For the next five years Gibson struggled along until during the winter of 1885-86 a ferry was built across the Missouri. In February of 1886 the Holter lumber yard was moved across the river to Great Falls proper.

As there was no saw timber left at the location of the old mill in 1889, he moved the mill also to Great Falls in January of that year. Holter said that possession of land was considered "good title" during his early years in the Great Falls area.

(28) Anton M. Holter came to Iowa from Norway at the age of twenty-three, where, through thrift and foresight in investments he accumulated $3000. Then he and his brother migrated to Colorado. In the eighteen-sixties he moved to Montana where his interests covered many fields, and he was instrumental in organizing and encouraging mining plants, public utility projects, and land development concerns, in addition to his primary interest, lumbering. Not only Montana but also Oregon, Idaho and Alaska were scenes of his lumber enterprises. He shared in the political life of his time and served on the Helena city council and in the Montana legislature. He died in 1921, at the age of ninety.

(Holter, Anton M., "Pioneer Lumbering In Montana," The Frontier, November, 1926; Missoula, Montana, pp. 196, 208-09. The biographical sketch of Anton M. Holter is taken from page 196 of this periodical).
Burials during the first few years consisted simply of interment on one of the local hillsides. But in March, 1886, Gibson and Rolfe selected a cemetery site. It was located between Great Falls and Sand Coulee and comprised about three hundred and twenty acres of land. In a short time an association was formed, and it was laid out in lots. Because of its arid location water had to be brought to the new site.

Gibson was instrumental in organizing other civic endeavors. He helped establish a soldier and sailor burial ground in Highland Cemetery. This was the first burial plot in Montana to honor the dead of both the Union and Confederate armies. Completion of the project took five years from its inception. Prior to 1895 many old

(29) The new city had to have its first burial. It took place on a cold day in 1884. Paris Gibson and others were seated around a big stove in the hotel, when out of the stormy night appeared a man haggard and dirty. He looked around, walked to the stove, and suddenly fell to the floor—dead. The first white man to die in Great Falls. Although he was unknown at that time, he was later identified as one George Smith. The citizens decided to give him a decent burial. A coffin was made and the body was dressed in one of the best suits the town could afford. There was no cemetery as yet, but the funeral procession made its way to Prospect Hill where the remains were interred. On their way home, however, the party quickly changed and indulged in a rollicking race.

_Great Falls Tribune_, June 1, 1930.
soldiers who came into Montana in large numbers following the Civil War were buried in valleys and on hillsides surrounding the city, as well as in potter's field at Highland Cemetery. The local Grand Army of The Republic post decided to purchase a suitable plot and move the bodies of both Union and Confederate veterans there. Along with this was born the idea of erecting a monument to the heroic dead. For this purpose an acre of ground adjoining the cemetery was donated by Gibson and J. P. Lewis, an attorney.

Gibson had numerous real estate interests other than those in connection with the Great Falls Water Power & Townsite Company. In 1887 he erected a two or three-story store on a lot owned by him and Vaughn. The basement was also built for another building which he and two other associates jointly owned.

(30) Great Falls Tribune, May 22, 1939.
(31) Robert Vaughn-1836-1918-A native of Wales, at the age of 24 he came to America. From New York he drifted to Illinois and in 1864 was one of the early pioneers who migrated into Montana. He was a surveyor for Paris Gibson and the Townsite Company when they decided to lay out Great Falls. For many years he was a large rancher who made a specialty of raising horses. Two years after the death of his wife, in 1890, he sold his ranch and moved to Great Falls where he built the Vaughn Block, on which was constructed at an early date, Great Falls' finest business structure. Vaughn wrote a book entitled, Then and Now or Thirty-Six Years In The Rockies-1864-1900, in which he gave historical accounts of the early exploration and achievements of his fellow Montana pioneers. Helen Fitzgerald Sanders, A History of Montana, II, Chicago and New York: 1913, p. 956.
(32) Great Falls Tribune, May 7, 1887.
The Paris Gibson Land Corporation was organized in 1893, six years following the extension of the Great Northern railroad into Great Falls. The concern played an important part in the development of Great Falls and Cascade County. In 1923 this company filed a statement of dissolution in the office of the clerk of the district court. It gave notice that the corporation had no intention of again resuming operations. The company had been incorporated by Gibson, who remained at its head as president until his death in 1920. According to members of its last directorate, the company was intended chiefly to deal in real estate holdings held by members of the Gibson family and other stockholders. Holdings of the company included large tracts of land on the west side of the Great Northern Railway yards and the site on which the present yards of the railroad are located.

One of the most colorful negotiations ever conducted by the concern happened in 1910, when Canadian promoters, desirous of "booming" Great Falls, attempted to acquire the company's holdings. The price set for the property was $208,000. The negotiations were not consummated, however.

The corporation was dissolved in 1925. At that time the directors included Theodore, Mary, and Donald Gibson among others.

(33) Great Falls Tribune, December 23, 1911.
(34) Ibid., December 23, 1911.
Its land holdings, aggregating more than eight hundred acres immediately adjoining the Great Falls town site on the west, and formerly owned by the Paris Gibson Land Company, were purchased from Theodore Gibson and the First National Bank of Great Falls by W. R. Wilson, a coal mine operator at Stockett. The consideration was said to have been approximately $20,000. The land had been named in foreclosure proceedings initiated more than a year before by the First National Bank. The deal concluded was an outright purchase and carried transfers by both Theodore Gibson and the Bank to Mr. Wilson.

The tract was situated on the Sun River bottom, generally between the west city limits and Sun River Park Road. Virtually all of the land could be irrigated from the Sun River garden tracts, which at that time (1925) had been intensively developed. Wilson planned to build homes on this property.

This deal was the second of some consequence completed between Theodore Gibson and Wilson that year. Early in the preceding spring Wilson took under option the Gibson iron claims on Dry Wolf Creek, west of Stanford, and still retained control of the property in 1925.

(35) Great Falls Tribune, November 21, 1925.
Since insurance and real estate are closely allied fields, it was not surprising that the founder of Great Falls was also interested in insurance. With Montana capital he founded the Rocky Mountain Fire Insurance Company and was its first president and chief officer. During one of its early years this Company's business increased nearly two million dollars. Gibson's confidence in the opportunity in Montana for a home insurance company was inspired largely by what he had observed of the fortunes of the Saint Paul Fire & Marine Insurance Company, which was reorganized in the early sixties while he was a resident of Minneapolis. Although the Rocky Mountain Insurance Company was known as a fire insurance company, a large share of its business was in hail insurance.

A great advocate of schools, Gibson was elected chairman of the school trustees of District Number Nine at its first meeting in September, 1885.

Though Paris Gibson was a diligent worker, he would take time out every afternoon to keep a lookout for the coming of the stage, which was then the only consistent means of transportation with the outside world. He would pass the word along when, with a pair of field glasses, he sighted the stage making the turn from the road toward Great Falls. It would soon spread, and everybody would lock up

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(36) Great Falls Tribune, July 2, 1920.
(37) Ibid., September 12, 1885.
shop and head for the post office. Everyone would have a visit, see the stage come in, get the mail, and return to business. This was the daily routine.

In 1889 an excellent description of the man who had done so much for Great Falls was given by M. J. Hutchins who later became editor of The Missoulian. Visiting Paris Gibson in his office at the Townsite Company, he found the "father of Great Falls," a kindly, courteous, quiet, gentleman with white hair and a white moustache, carefully dressed, and with the manners and appearance of a New England Banker or merchant, a thoroughbred to the bone.

During the struggling early years of Great Falls, Gibson's sons also entered into business there. Theodore dealt in hides, sheep, pelts, tallow, and furs as early as 1883, continuing this endeavor at least until 1891. Ted was prominent in establishing the Great Falls Public Library, then called the Valeria Library & Art Association in honor of Mrs. Paris Gibson. Phil entered the insurance business and soon put up a fine residence on Fourth Avenue North. He conceived a plan for making life more endurable in Great Falls during the summer months by clearing out the underbrush which grew dense along the river bank.

The daily routine of early life at the Falls was broken occasionally by social functions, for the population was

(38) Great Falls Tribune, August 1, 1915.
relatively young, and bachelors were largely in the majority. Few women were there at that time. Their age, or lack of it, demanded recreation, which they found in horseback riding, long drives in the country, moonlight picnics at the Giant spring, and in other ways. "One of the early events of note was the tenth wedding anniversary of the H. P. Rolfe's'. As the day drew near, it became evident that the party must be postponed. The sole tinner in town had gone on a periodical spree and could not be sobered up in time to do the requisite artistic work," related Martha Plassmann, one of the early women residents. "A rough outdoor dance floor was constructed," she wrote. Paris Gibson, his sons Theodore and Phillip, and his wife, were present at the affair. A fluent speaker, Phil Gibson, handed out the different favors to the guests, and expatiated at length on their merits. The newfangled stovepipe hat was a present for Mr. Rolfe. As the early leaders of the social life in Great Falls, they were not opposed to taking an occasional refreshing drink. Local bachelor parties were also popular. One of these was held on Christmas Day of 1884. The main course, comprised of oysters obtained from Helena, were packed in small square cans costing five dollars each. Phil and Theodore were hosts for this celebration, which was held at their rooming house.
Gibson realized that for Great Falls and its environs to become a stable community, it was important that it control its own political affairs. Since 1887 this region had been under the political hegemony of Choteau County, which had subordinated the needs of Great Falls to those of Fort Benton. In December of that year a mass meeting attended by the citizens of Great Falls ended in their approval of the formation of a new county with its county seat at Great Falls. This county was called Cascade and was formed from part of Choteau County.

Paris Gibson said that some of his opponents believed that the Townsite Company, of which he was vice-president, favored the county bill because they wished to plunge the county into heavy indebtedness. He vehemently denied this, declaring:

County government is a small matter in the broad scheme for the advancement of this city—a scheme linked with the building in about six months of 500 miles of railroad which was matured and has been carried into effect, regardless of county government or of the likelihood of an extra session. The capitalists who made large investments here in public improvements and will make still more now, that nothing repels people so much as debt, and as they are resolved to build up this part of Montana they will join you in promoting rigid economy. On that account I am glad that a restriction clause was engraved in the bill which prohibited the construction of public buildings until our assessable wealth amounts to four million dollars. (40)

(40) Great Falls Tribune, September 13, 1887.
Gibson's association with the Townsite Company and other corporate interests in Great Falls attached a stigma to his political career, for it gave certain factions an excuse to accuse him of mixing business and politics in an unsavory manner. These assertions by his opponents were never proven to be true.

In 1888 Gibson began taking an active interest in state politics and actively supported William A. Clark as the Democratic candidate for delegate to the House of Representatives. He expressed his faith in Clark's election and called him "one of the foremost businessmen of Montana...a man who has done more than any other individual to develop the mining industry of Montana." Gibson denounced his Republican opponent Carter, calling him a weak candidate.

Continuing to actively support the Democratic candidates he stated that Toole and MacGinnis were men whom one could rely upon to do their utmost for Montana, while their opponents, Power and Carter (Republicans), had shown no friendship for Great Falls, but had been either hostile or silent when the new city's welfare was at stake. (41)

Gibson's career as a political office holder in Montana began in Great Falls in the year 1888, when, owing to his prominence in many phases of Great Falls life and

(41) Great Falls Tribune, September 25, 1889.
his popularity with its citizens, he was elected as the first Mayor. This election was received with great pleasure by the members of the community. They had watched him methodically labor to build Great Falls into the thriving community that it then was and knew he would continue this undertaking as her first chief executive.

The Tribune editor wrote:

The choice of Mr. Paris Gibson for mayor does credit to the grateful hearts of the people of Great Falls. Party sentiment, which has lately been so rampant on all sides, sunk out of sight when his name was mentioned for mayor, and he was very properly nominated by acclamation in a convention which was composed of intelligent, honorable citizens, many of whom have been here from the start. In accepting the nomination, Mr. Gibson adds to the many services which he has rendered this city, of which he is the founder. He needs no civic honors to increase the public esteem in which he is held, or add to the distinction which he enjoys as the introducer of the wool industry in northern Montana, the promoter of railroad extension and mining development, and as the brave, resolute, citizen who discerned the merits of this region, for industrial undertakings and never faltered until he established here the young city which has gratefully asked him to be her first mayor. (42)

On November 21, 1888, Paris Gibson delivered his address as the first mayor of Great Falls. In this speech he outlined his program as mayor. He promised to manage the affairs of the city with "as much economy as may be con-

(42) Great Falls Tribune, November 9, 1888.
sistent with good government." During the early years of a town "the levy of taxes should be exceedingly light;"
Gibson believed, and the city indebtedness "should be kept at as small an amount as the welfare of the people will per-
mit.

He considered fire protection important for the city. Gibson asked the city council to arrange with a private company or individual to establish necessary water works. The franchise, if granted, he thought should be limited, for he was in favor of city control of water.

Another program Gibson considered important was that of providing an adequate and pure water supply for Great Falls. He therefore helped propose a plan whereby mains would be installed and pure water pumped to the city from the Missouri River. The system was to be owned and operated by a private company with the community having the option to take over the project when it desired to do so. The company was to be composed of local capitalists who where not interested in speculation. The bucket and cart-wheel system of volunteer fire fighting was to be superseded by hose and plug techniques.

In his initial speech to the city council, he also stressed beautification of the city, especially in respect to the laying out of parks. Gibson believed that the establishment of street grades was a matter that demanded

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(43) Great Falls Tribune, November 22, 1888.
early and careful attention, as great damage would be done
to the property of individuals by delaying it or by the mak-
ing of changes after the first grades were formed.

Above all things he desired Great Falls to be a clean
and healthy city and hoped that the ordinances adopted to
this end would receive "earnest and careful attention from
the officers who are to execute them."

Though he enthusiastically hoped Great Falls would
become an important metropolis, Gibson realized that it
must first have many more residents, declaring that settlers
looking for homes in the Northwest would do well to send
agents to examine the remaining unoccupied lands at Great
Falls. "There will never again be as favorable a time as
the present for securing these choice lands of northern
Montana," he stated. But knowing also that the in-
dustrial and commercial development of Great Falls could
not continue until a railroad brought it into contact with
the outside world, he next turned his efforts towards se-
curing his aim.

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(44) *Great Falls Tribune*, November 22, 1888.
CHAPTER IV
THE RAILROAD COMES TO THE FALLS

To prosper Great Falls needed a railroad, since until this was constructed, there was no general market for its coal, wheat, and manufactured goods. For help in this venture Gibson went again to his old friend James J. Hill, whom he had known since the early years of Minneapolis, when he headed the Cataract Mill and when Hill had worked on the wharves of the Mississippi.

Between 1880 and 1884 the two promoters corresponded continually in regard to Great Falls and the railroad. Gibson urged the advantages that would accrue to Hill as well as the struggling city on the Missouri if railroad connections were extended into northern Montana from the east.

In the eighteen-eighties Montana had attracted public interest and was increasing rapidly in population. It was a spacious territory, where fortunes were made from range cattle, where immense mineral wealth was known to be stored in the mountains, where river valleys in great numbers and fertility promised well for agriculture. Sufficient resources were in sight to appeal to enterprise and capital. Great copper deposits in the vicinity of Butte were already attracting attention. Coal deposits in the territory were
beginning to be appreciated -- no slight resources after a thousand miles of plain, where nothing better than lignite could be found. Here was an original source of much tonnage, a country short of which no railway, once headed for it, would be likely to stop.

Much of this area, into which Hill intended to extend his railroad, was then a trackless wilderness composed largely of Indian reservations. Western Dakota was unpopulated, and Stevens Pass had not yet been discovered. There seemed no way to broach the barrier of the Rockies. The Indians and nature were not the only obstacles. The Northern Pacific Railway had just been completed to the coast, and the average American depicted this area as a vast primitive wasteland whose hinterlands would never be able to support two (Northern Pacific and Canadian Pacific), much less three, transcontinental railroads. As late as September 25, 1883, Hill declared: "... The Milk River valley and the northern part of Montana are now served by the Northern Pacific Railway and there is not business enough to warrant this company in undertaking the construction of another line."

Contrast this with the flowery account printed in the Saint Paul Press in 1893:

Early in June, 1884, a little party pitched their tent where now is the eastern approach to the railroad bridge across the Missouri at Great Falls. One evening while the party was enjoying a smoke after a supper of mountain trout caught from the Giant
Spring, two of them strolled down the river chatting on what they had seen. The older, (Hill) a man of medium build, with dark eyes and hair, and a beard slightly tinged with gray, grew unusually colloquial for him. He declared that in three years the Manitoba Road would be built into Montana. With a prophetic look he pointed to the distant Rocky Mountains then growing golden, and said 'the Manitoba will even cross those great-piles of rock and earth and press on to the Pacific Ocean until Seattle, Tacoma, and Portland are connected with the East by the best constructed transcontinental road in America. (1)

Finally, in 1884, Hill came to Montana for the first time and spent a day with the founder of Great Falls. He did this with the idea of eventually extending his railway into this section of the West. Hill was impressed with the falls of the Missouri and the resources of the surrounding country, especially its agricultural possibilities. Standing on the river bank, he outlined to Gibson his plan for extending the Manitoba Railway westward from the Red River valley to Great Falls, assuring Gibson that he would build the proposed road in shorter time than any road of equal length had been built on the North American continent. Gibson believed that this idea, coming full-fledged from the brain of Hill, was the result of what the magnate had seen during that one memorable day in 1884. On that day, when Hill saw, for the first time, the Falls of the Missouri River and their immediate sur-

roundings, he comprehended the resources and the possibilities of this great Rocky Mountain region and then dared even at so early a date in the history of the Far West, to think of building a railroad there. The plan was carried out almost to the letter.

Though Hill did not advertise his long thought-out transcontinental railroad plan, his friends ought not to have been under any illusion, since chance statements in his letters disclosed his fixed determination. If need be, some discredit could be thrown upon his plans for the sake of blinding the public until the all important preliminaries had been arranged. While visiting Montana in 1884, when Hill was asked by a reporter from the Helena Independent if he was to consider the advisability of a railroad between Helena and Benton, he replied that he had not come for that purpose, but simply to please, as he had a few days to spare.

Hill had no time to lose, for all the great systems within reach, were at least planning an invasion of Montana. The Northern Pacific had the advantage of crossing the territory with its main line, which passed through Helena. The Union Pacific had not been idle. The Utah & Northern, under its control, was in operation from Ogden, Utah, to Butte and Garrison in Montana. The people of Helena, al-

ready restive under non-competitive railroad conditions, had invited the Canadian Pacific to send an engineer to look into the possibility of building to that city. If there was room for another railroad through Montana, Hill knew no time should be lost in securing suitable rights of way. For here was no stretch of prairie, where a dozen roads might build, if they cared to, without interfering topographically with one another, but a country of mountain ranges, with only a limited number of routes available for construction at a reasonable cost. These, once occupied, railroad building could proceed only by difficult feats of engineering and at almost prohibitive expense. It was important not to warn competitors of their danger. It was equally important not to frighten investors, already associated with the Manitoba System, with the prospect of an undertaking that many thought to be rash or doubtful, one which most believed could never pay a satisfactory return.

Hill's desire to extend the Saint Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad westward across Montana was vetoed by President Cleveland in 1886 because its terms and the necessities of the situation were not clearly understood.

This did not discourage Jim Hill. In this same year he organized the Montana Central Railroad Company, ostensibly to connect the new town of Great Falls with Helena, Butte, and any other points in the Territory that it might
elect. A million dollars' worth of bonds were authorized. The directors entered into an agreement with Hill by which he was to furnish, in addition to past advances, the money necessary to construct and equip the line and was to receive the stocks and bonds of the company in exchange. The Montana Central was to all intents and purposes James J. Hill, and it was organized to occupy the Montana field until the Manitoba was able to continue westward from Minot. Indian Reservations barred him west of Minot at that time.

Construction of the Montana Central was rapid. To forestall the Northern Pacific, the company commenced active operations from the moment it was incorporated. During the coldest weather and through the deepest snows of winter, the line was surveyed; and as soon as the surveys were run, building began.

Gibson was wholeheartedly in favor of the extension of railroads into northern Montana, for he realized that they would greatly aid her transportation problem. He contended that railroad expansion would revolutionize the new country and "break the chains with which the Northern Pacific Company have held us down." The freight rates would be lowered on everything. It would be a benefactor to farmers, miners, and stockgrowers. The freight rates

(4) Ibid., p. 396.
had not decreased since the exit of the ball trains and the
incoming of the Northern Pacific, for Gibson paid one cent
a pound more on wool shipments to Boston in 1881 than in
1879.

Gibson was asked what he thought of the contest going
over the mountains from Helena to Butte between Montana
Central and the Northern Pacific. He stated he knew nothing
about it, but that if Mr. Broadwater (Montana Central) and
his backers had decided to go to Butte, they would get there.
Gibson believed that Butte should lend all possible aid to
the Montana Central Company in reaching the town.

As early as 1882 there had been talk of the extension
of what is now the Great Northern, but was then the Saint
Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway. But this extension
did not materialize until 1887.

The Manitoba system expanded westward to a connection
with the Montana Central as soon as the Indian reservation
bars were let down. Small lines were bought and branches
built every year to round out the system at its base, in
Minnesota and Dakota. In August, 1886, the stockholders
selected a committee which decided upon the extension of
the Manitoba to a connection with the Montana Central, and
the purchase of the latter "if it can be brought about;"
a humorous condition when it is remembered that the same

(5) Great Falls Tribune, August 14, 1881.
person who dictated the resolution had the potential control of the Montana Central.

The actual achievement of closing the gap, which still existed in 1886 between the terminus of the Manitoba on the plains and the cities of Helena and Great Falls, was to write a new chapter in the history of railroad construction.

Hill was finally able to continue his lines westward in 1887, after a bill was signed by President Cleveland, granting a right of way through the Indian and military reservations in northwestern Dakota and northern Montana.

The right of way granted was seventy-five feet on each side of the railway track and included the right to take materials for the construction of the road from adjacent lands, and also additional lands for station purposes, three thousand feet long and three hundred feet wide, but not to exceed a grant for one station for each continuous length of ten miles of road. It provided for appraising the lands taken and making payment for them to the Department of the Interior for the benefit of the Indians. The damages were assessed by appraisers selected by the Secretary of the Interior. The amounts awarded were approved at different times during 1887, and the money was paid in. A map of the definite location of the line was adopted, and the company was authorized to proceed with construction. Between Minot and the east line of the Indian reservation, between the White Earth
River and Fort Buford military reservations, and between the Marias River and Great Falls the country was public land and was covered by the general right of way through public lands. The price paid throughout averaged practically fifty cents per acre, with some additions where small improvements had been made. The country through which the line would run from Minet to Fort Benton was almost entirely an unsettled wilderness. Hill said of it many years later:

When we built into northern Montana...
from the eastern boundary of the state
to Fort Benton was unceded Indian land;
and no white man had a right to put two
legs one on top of the other. If he un-
dertook to remain too long in passing
through the country, he was told to move
on. Even when cattle crossed the Missouri
River during the first years to come to
our trains, the Indians asked fifty dol-
lars a head for walking across the land
a distance of three miles, and they want-
ed an additional amount per head....for
the water they drank in crossing the
Missouri.

On March 2, 1899, a general act was passed granting
rights of way for railroads through Indian reservations and
Indian lands after due compensations to the tribes or indiv-
didual Indians affected. But during the Manitoba's construc-
tion into Dakota and Montana in the eighties it was difficult
to get across the reservations west of Minot. The company
had to buy the right of way from the government. Other rail-
roads had land grants and money, but the Manitoba had to pay
for its right of way from the east side of the Berthold Reser-
vation up to Havre. But it succeeded.

Construction started on May 7, 1887. Gibson on returning from Saint Paul said that he was optimistic regarding the Manitoba's progress into Montana. Just before leaving Saint Paul he had met D. C. Shepherd, the chief of the contracting firm that was building the road. He was feeling very cheerful over the progress of the work. Between 2300 and 2400 teams and a proportionate number of men had gone west of Minot that spring to go to work, and more were constantly being forwarded. Men and teams were strung along the line as far as fifty miles west of Fort Buford. Tracklaying went forward at the rate of four miles per day with one shift. When the days grew a little longer and two shifts were put on, the steel was strung at the rate of seven miles every twenty-four hours. This was one of the greatest feats of railroad building on record. Shepherd told Paris Gibson that there was no doubt that trains would run into Great Falls over the road by September the first and would reach Helena shortly thereafter. Every arrangement for rapid work was made. Since the first of January, 1887, every energy of the company had been strained to prepare for the coming summer's work of construction, and there was little likelihood of any failure to carry out the arrangement made. Grading was to be begun near Great Falls that June. The construction of the Manitoba line was carried on from both ends, thus greatly shortening the period of time needed to complete the work.
During the late spring of 1887 Colonel Broadwater of Helena, the president of the Montana Central Railroad was to visit Great Falls and make arrangements for the union depot of the Montana Central and Manitoba Railroads. Plans were to be formed for the building of the bridge over the Missouri River there and for construction of the short railroad line which would connect Great Falls with the Sand Coulee coal mines. The Manitoba Road was then advancing with rapid strides towards Great Falls. The graded were light and in accord with Hill's purpose to provide Montana with a trunk line railroad that could afford to carry her products at low rates of freight.

On October 15, 1887, the Manitoba Railroad's first train reached west Great Falls. Within the previous year five hundred and fifty miles of track had been layed from Minot westward in order to make this possible.

Commenting on the completion of the Great Northern to Great Falls, Gibson said: "Although Montanans were more trustful and believing in those days, yet the most sanguine hardly believed their eyes, when in 1887, just three years later, their track laying crews....were sighted coming into Great Falls."

In one periodical the first Great Falls depot (1887) was called: "One of the finest edifices of its kind in the

(7) Great Falls Tribune, May 7, 1887.
(8) Ibid., March 4, 1889.
West." In reality it was nothing more than three rectangular box-like structures of one story each.

Ted Gibson said that for many years afterwards nearly all the inhabitants regularly met all incoming trains "with the greatest feeling of exultation and pride imaginable." He stated that James J. Hill reminded him "of an Indian in his land study of the situation." He seemed to sense the general direction the road would take.

After the road was finished to Helena (November 18, 1887), it was five years before it earned a dollar toward paying returns on the capital investment. The line was soon thereafter extended to Butte.

A branch line of the Montana Central had been extended to Sand Coulee, where there were mines of coal excellent for both steam and domestic uses. Only one year later Montana coal was finding a market six hundred miles eastward. The company's line furnished more than forty per cent of the coal used by it. These developments were a revelation at that time to people who knew little about that portion of the country and who scoffed at the idea of building up business through it, people who still held tenaciously to the fittingly aboriginal theory of a traffic limited to buffalo bones.

Early in 1888 the Manitoba Company acquired the entire capital stock of the Montana Central Company, in addition to
two and one-half million of its first mortgage bonds, upon
the bases of the actual cost of the property.

On October 7, 1889, Gibson on his return from Saint
Paul said concerning the financing and expansion of the Mani-
toba system westward:

The new financial operation has been re-
ceived with great favor in New York, where
some of the largest stockholders in the
Manitoba railroad reside. It is a mas-
terly scheme on the part of Mr. Hill to
promote interests of all concerned in the
project which means the establishment of
one of the greatest railroad systems in
the United States. The press in New York,
Chicago and elsewhere speaks approvingly
of the undertaking which has taken the
country by surprise. It is now certain
that the Manitoba railroad will be ex-
tended from here to the coast. It will
proceed from here up the Sun River valley
and thence over the Rocky Mountains.

Paris Gibson contended that the Manitoba Railroad would
always be of prime importance to Great Falls, for it gave her
access to the Pacific coast and the great lumber region of the
Missoula valley and the rich mineral region tributary to Spok-
ane Falls, not to mention providing direct contact with some
of the large consumer and industrial areas of the nation.

Gibson continued his interest in the developments of the
Great Northern Railroad long after its completion to Great
Falls and later the Pacific coast. During the early years
of the twentieth century Gibson became fearful of holders of

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(10) Great Falls Tribune, October 7, 1889.
Harriman interests, which controlled the Union Pacific, and who desired to wrest from Morgan and Hill an interest in the Burlington Road. This would have given Harriman's Union Pacific an entrance into Chicago. Harriman was checkmated in this move. Senator Gibson in 1904 commented concerning Harriman's plan:

The success of Harriman means the pulling away of an immense traffic from our own country and that diverting of this carrying trade to the lines in the lower latitudes. What sensible man believes that if Harriman should gain control of the Northern Pacific and the Burlington, he will haul the cotton of the south to the Pacific by means of these lines so far to the north? He would do just what any other good business man would do, and that is haul it to the ports where his chief interest is centered; and that would carry it over either the Southern Pacific or the Union Pacific. (11)

Gibson's fears soon disappeared, for negotiations ensued for a friendly settlement out of which emerged the Northern Securities Company. This was a holding company which took over all the contestants' stock interests in the Great Northern, Northern Pacific, and Burlington Lines, and in this organization the Hill and Morgan group held a controlling interest. But the Supreme Court soon outlawed the merger, claiming that the holding company had been used as an illegal device for restraining trade, since its necessary effect was to eliminate competition in transportation service over a large section of the country. (12)

(11) Great Falls Tribune, April 27, 1904.
The dissolution of the Northern Securities Company did not impair the services of the Great Northern Railroad. Great Falls, however, did not benefit from this road as much as hoped, for the main line did not go through the city at the Falls until 1952.

But through the coming of the railroad in 1887, the various items produced and manufactured at the Falls were given reasonable transport rates and service to the consumer centers of the nation. This gave an impetus to Great Falls, and its export traffic has consequently continued to increase over the years. The Northern Securities Company affair did not affect this trend.

A key to the future prosperity of Great Falls and the Manitoba Railroad, which became the Great Northern in 1890, was the influx of settlers into northern Montana at the end of the last century. This was due mainly to an exhaustive advertising campaign put forth by the Manitoba to bring immigrants into the virgin territory. The founder of Great Falls commented upon this policy in 1889:

This good work has been done among the best class of farmers in the middle and western states. As the result, northern Montana will be sure to receive a large immigration of farmers during the coming season.... No doubt many will settle in the fertile Milk River valley, but a considerable number will come westward to acquire homes in the vicinity of Great Falls. The certainty of our admission as a state will add largely to the immigration. (13)

(13) Great Falls Tribune, March 4, 1889.
The seeds of development had been sown.

Gibson himself had written articles for magazines in which he presented his reasons why Great Falls would become the "Twin Cities" of the far West. Mr. Lyman, a cattle rancher at the Falls, stated that he came to Gibson's city after reading an article by Gibson in The Arena, an eastern publication, in 1899.

(14) Interview with Mr. Lyman, Great Falls, Montana, April 13, 1952.
CHAPTER V

THE FRUITS OF POWER

No city in our modern age can prosper without adequate power for the home and business. The harnessing of the power at the falls of the Missouri was the key in the industrial development of Great Falls.

With the arrival of new settlers from the East, Gibson foresaw a nucleus upon which to build the foundations for a commercial and industrial empire at the Falls. Water power was a pre-requisite. Definite steps were taken in 1887 for the construction of the great dam at Black Eagle Falls. The power developed there was to lead to the establishment of factories and other enterprises using electricity.

The leader in fostering the construction of the needed power project was the Great Falls Water Power & Townsite Company, under the leadership of Paris Gibson and James J. Hill. This company visualized the potentialities of the vast untapped reservoir of energy at the falls; and in 1884 Gibson brought W. J. Pratt of Washington state to Great Falls to work on the dam across the Missouri. This construction of Black Eagle dam served a two-fold purpose, to supply both hydro-electric and water power for the ever-increasing needs of the growing community.
The completion of this dam was a milestone in the development of industrial power for the new community; for now the raw material potential plus cheap power gave the milling industry incentive to firmly establish itself at the Falls.

One of the first manufacturing concerns in the Great Falls area was a flour mill. But a necessity for successful flour milling was an ample supply of readily accessible wheat. The lack of this condition hindered the development of large scale milling at Great Falls for a number of years.

Gibson was aware that many persons during the early history of Great Falls doubted the capacity of Montana to produce large quantities of wheat, yet he was thoroughly convinced that Great Falls was in the center of what would prove to be one of the greatest wheat producing sections of the continent. He also believed that with or without irrigation the valleys and bench lands of Montana could be made to produce annually from forty to fifty million bushels of wheat. "Give Montana farmers a steady market and fair prices for their wheat and they will demonstrate the accuracy of my statements," he said.

He practiced what he preached. Almost the only spring wheat that had been grown in Montana previous to 1882 was the result of a successful experiment he had carried out. In September, 1891, he informed the Tribune that up to that date he had threshed 2,700 bushels of grain and that he
would have altogether 5,000 bushels. His grain crop comprised oats, wheat, and barley. When he had finished haying, he had four hundred tons in stack to feed to his fancy cattle and other stock.

In 1886 an important mill in Great Falls stated that it would take all the wheat that could be grown and pay cash for it. One of its officials said: "....We must have a great deal more wheat than we had last year." From this one must conclude that wheat raising was still in its infancy in northern Montana at that time.

By 1892 there was not enough wheat grown in the entire state of Montana to keep a large flour mill in operation for a single day. During this same year the only wheat available to grind in a new Great Falls mill, except that shipped from Dakota, was raised by its manager. In 1894, everything possible was done to encourage Montana farmers to grow wheat, even to the offering of prizes. Cultivation gradually increased, although wheat raising did not gain momentum in the eastern part of the state until after 1900.

Gibson reasoned that, with regard to the transportation of wheat and flour, there would be a great and important revolution under which rates to Lake Superior would be established that could not fail to stimulate wheat growing in all the valleys of this country. The freight rates on flour

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(1) Great Falls Tribune, February 27, 1886.
would be so adjusted that Great Falls millers would ship
their product to the Atlantic coast or to London, Glasgow,
and Paris. He contended that these rates would be suffi-
ciently low to make wheat raising and flour manufactur-
ing one of the leading industries of Montana. The wheat grow-
ing belt was constantly moving west, and the supply of wheat
for the mills of Minneapolis and Duluth then had to be hauled
from the west an average of five or six hundred miles. It
was not logical that all the wheat of this productive coun-
try, embracing Montana, Idaho, and western Washington, would
be shipped to Minneapolis and Duluth. Therefore a city such
as Great Falls, where there was afforded abundant power, was
destined to relieve the burden of the Minnesota mills. Gib-
son remarked that the citizens of Great Falls had been so
much interested in the establishment of great smelting and
refining plants that they had overlooked the possibilities
of their town as a flour manufacturing center. He was a
crusader for the future expansion of grain growing and pro-
cessing in northern Montana. "From this time we must adopt
a policy that will contribute in the greatest degree to the
development of the grain growing resources of this region,"
he stated.

The growth of the milling industry was more or less
synonymous with the advancement of Gibson's city. He knew

(2) *Great Falls Tribune*, March 15, 1892.
that in the rich wheat growing area surrounding the falls there must be built mills to refine the raw product.

In Montana there were small custom mills in the mining sections of the state as early as 1869. The first grist mill in the Great Falls area was constructed in 1884 by Gibson. It was called the Cataract Mill, presumably after Gibson's earlier flour mill in Minneapolis. This new mill was supplied power from the recently constructed dam across the Missouri.

In February, 1886, a stock company purchased the Cataract Mill. Gibson held an interest in this organization and was elected its vice-president. Mr. Loring, one of the best known millers of Minneapolis, was the new president. H. O. Chowen, secretary and treasurer of the firm, said that they intended to increase their storage capacity so as to take care of all the wheat that arrived.

Gibson wrote a letter to the Tribune in March, 1892, in which he commended the citizens of Great Falls upon the arrangements made for building another flour mill there. He had no doubts that the enterprise would be a paying one and that it was equally certain that it would contribute much to the prosperity of Great Falls and its environs. He stated that the time was not far off when Great Falls would become one of the most important flour producing towns in the west. He based this assumption on three factors: first, its great

(3) Great Falls Tribune, February 27, 1886.
water power; second, the vast area of wheat producing country tributary to it; and third, the railroad facilities for concentrating wheat at this point and for shipping flour to navigable water on Lake Superior.

Concerning the power situation at Great Falls in regard to milling, he stated:

As flour can be manufactured much more cheaply by water power than by steam, the value of our water power for this branch of manufacturing can be readily appreciated. It will never be necessary to employ steam as an auxiliary at this place as is the case at Minneapolis and other places where the water power is small or very variable.

In 1892, Hill, filled with enthusiasm over the future of Montana as a wheat raising state, persuaded Dunwoody, vice-president and chief stockholder of the Washburn Crosby Company, to build a mill at Great Falls. The proposition must have seemed an unsound one from a miller's standpoint, since when the project was undertaken, very little wheat was raised at the Falls. So great was Dunwoody's faith in Hill's judgment as to its eventual success, however, that he undertook the enterprise as a purely personal one; but when the company was incorporated, several of his associates joined him.

The Royal Milling Company was formed in 1892 with Dunwoody as president. This mill was built in the winter of 1892-93, and began operations the following summer. The

(4) Great Falls Tribune, March 15, 1892.
year 1893 was a national crisis in America, presenting many difficulties for the woolen interests. Gibson sought to obtain capital in the East, but without success. The mill had a hard time obtaining funds, but managed to complete its construction. It was supplied power by a rope drive operated by a small Missouri River utility concern. John J. Gerard, one of the Washburn Crosby Company's head millers, supervised the installation of machinery in Great Falls and put it in running order. The management of the new venture was entrusted to William M. Atkinson, a very able young man who had risen from the position of office boy in 1882 to that of head salesman, a place he had held for less than three years when called to this new and greater responsibility. Atkinson remained in Great Falls until 1904, when J. W. Sherwood succeeded in the management of the mill. It was some time before the Royal Milling Company became an entirely satisfactory investment. But Hill's judgment and Dunwoody's faith in it had been amply justified.

The growth of commercial milling, however, awaited the rise of wheat growing in the eastern half of the state, which did not begin until after 1900. In Fergus County the first elevator was built in 1904, and in much of eastern Montana there was little wheat growing before the building of the Chicago, Milwaukee and Puget Sound Railway in 1909. This

(5) Appendix A, No. 9.
opened the way for the erection of numerous flour mills. The Montana Flour Mills Company began operations at Harlow-town in 1911, subsequently building a large mill at Lewistown, its present headquarters. Other companies developed important mills at Great Falls, Bozeman, and other cities.

But in the main, the growth of milling had not kept pace with the advance of wheat growing. Most of the mills were small and had a local trade as late as 1927. As a result, there had been conflict between the Minnesota mills and those of Puget Sound for control of Montana wheat.

Although the construction of the dams and generating facilities aided flour milling and other industries tremendously, its main purpose was to supply Great Falls with electricity for illumination. This was supplied initially by the Boston & Great Falls Electric Light & Gas Company, which was taken over by the newly organized Boston & Great Falls Electric & Power Company in 1890. The latter proceeded to deteriorate, until in 1903 it was sold to John D. Ryan. (6)

(6) John D. Ryan—A key figure in the Anaconda Copper Mining Company and Montana affairs. His influence was international after the purchase of properties in Latin America. One of his greatest achievements was the formation of the Montana Power Company, which he later sold for eighty-two million dollars to a subsidiary of the Electric Bond & Share Company. Ryan also brought about the first important use on the North American continent of hydro-electric power for railroads—namely the electrification of the Milwaukee Road through the Rocky Mountains. Malone, Dumas, Dictionary of American Biography, New York: 1935, XVI, p. 263.
A.C.M. magnate and pioneer of hydro-electrical development in Montana, and Marcus Daly's widow for a nominal fee.

During the early period there was constructed near the site of Black Eagle dam a small station which generated electricity for John D. Ryan's Great Falls Electric Properties. This corporation was organized in 1906 to take over the properties of the Great Falls Street Railway Company, which had gone through a series of receiverships, and the Great Falls Electric Light & Gas Company. At the same time Ryan sold a five-sixths interest in the new corporation to the Butte Electric & Power Company and retained a one-sixth interest. The corporation received its power from a small substation built on the south side of the Missouri River. It had no water right of its own, but bought the water from Gibson and Hill's Great Falls Water & Townsite Company. In 1887 this company, of which Gibson was a key member, had bought all the water power sites along the river.

The contract between Great Falls electric properties and Gibson's Water Power & Townsite Company called for the latter to furnish water to the electric company's generating plant to the extent of one thousand horsepower whenever there was sufficient water to supply that amount.

The first great use of water power facilities for industrial purposes was by the Boston & Montana Consolidated Mining Company. Its sources of power were the dam at Black Eagle, which had been erected under the terms of a contract
between themselves and the Silver Mining Company, a large and important operator in Butte, on one side, and Hill and Gibson's Great Falls Water Power & Townsite Company on the other. This contract, made in 1889, called for the building of a dam to serve a concentrate or smelting plant that was to be built adjacent to the site. It was not a hydroelectric development, but a setup which diverted the water through water wheels, the wheels turning a rope transmission drive, which in turn operated the machinery in the smelting plant. The contract with the Boston & Montana Company called for the development in successive stages from one thousand horsepower to a maximum of five thousand horsepower, the payment being not for power, but for water.

In 1890, because of the new power development at the Falls, the Montana Smelting Company also located its works at Great Falls. The latter began the manufacture of sheet copper and copper wire.

Gibson commented that between 1887-94 there were built at the upper falls of the Missouri, works including a dam and the silver smelter at Giant Spring that cost in the aggregate of four million dollars. He early realized that an important factor in the development of Great Falls as an ore processing and smelting center was the location and exploitation of the rich ore deposits in the general area of the Falls.

The demand for a smelter at Great Falls first came into existence with the discovery of ore in 1879, when silver-bearing lead carbonates were found in the alluvial deposits of Yogo Gulch. This caused a rush to the Little Belt Mountains located forty miles southeast of Great Falls. This was the beginning of extensive mining in the general area of the Falls. Two years later, 1881, silver ore was discovered at Neihart, which was situated in the central portion of the Little Belt Mountains. This discovery evoked little attention at the time; but has proven the most valuable and permanent source of wealth of the entire region after rail connections with Great Falls were made. Barker, the adjoining town, was located about a year before Neihart.

In 1882, small amounts of rich ore were packed on horseback to the Barker smelter from this region. Mining flourished in 1883-84, and many mines were started in all but the Neihart district. In 1885, a group of claims acquired by Colonel Broadwater, the Helena capitalist, was consolidated. But after a few months of exploitation the work was suspended. During that year James J. Hill and his friends purchased into the Neihart Mines. The area was beginning to "boom."

Gibson was interested in the progress made in mining in the Little Belt area, and in February, 1886, he and P.H. (8) Paul A. Schafer, "Geology and Ore Deposits of The Neihart Mining District, Cascade County, Montana," State of Montana Memoir Number #13, Bureau of Mines & Geology, Butte: 1935, p. 3.
Hughes purchased the Burnham and Aetna mines. Mining in this area became less inviting between 1887 and 1890, and the camp at Neihart was nearly deserted due to transportation costs.

Returning from a visit to the Little Belt Mountains in December, 1890, Gibson reported mining matters in general in that section in good condition. He said that developments were being made in many of the mines in Barker and that ore was carried to Monarch, the transportation terminal for ore shipments to Great Falls, at the rate of forty or fifty tons a day. Extensive preparations were made to move the output from Barker and Neihart districts to Monarch and it was predicted that within a few weeks the joint product of the two camps would be from one hundred and fifty to two hundred tons daily. Gibson believed that this was only the beginning of an immense business that would be done in these camps before the close of 1891. He notified all that as early as the weather would permit the following spring, a railroad would be completed into both of these promising camps.

He did not think that the Great Falls citizenry fully appreciated the rapid development of the mining business that was to follow the completion of these two branches. He believed it would be by all odds the most active mining region in Montana, except Butte, and did not hesitate to
state that a larger amount of lead and silver bearing ores would be shipped from the Belt Mountains than from any western mining region, except perhaps the Coeur d'Alene Mountains. "All of this immense mining business will be tributary to Great Falls and will be the most powerful factor in the growth of our promising young city," he stated.

The founder of Great Falls understood that some complaint was being made by the miners of that section that the freight rates on ore from Monarch, the terminus, were too high but he felt warranted in stating that with the increased output of ore, freights would be reduced to the lowest possible paying rate. "It has always been Mr. Hill's policy to encourage the development of the various industries on his railway lines and in the matter of freight rates from the Belt Mountains he will be certain to meet the demands of the miners," he said.

In 1891, true to Gibson's prediction, a branch of the Montana Central Railroad was built to Neihart and Barker which gave cheap transportation to the smelter at Great Falls and brought new life to the area. Several properties were developed to a stage where steady production was assured and renewed activity commenced. Neihart became the busy center of the district.

Although never owning extensive mining interests himself, Gibson was a staunch advocate of mineral expansion and

(9) Great Falls Tribune, December 28, 1890.
the formation of a smelter in that area. A pre-requisite for the latter was coal, which adjacent Sand Coulee produced. Therefore, on a March day, in 1888, Paris Gibson himself inaugurated the construction of the Montana Smelter by striking blows in the frozen earth. The pick used was preserved and placed in the archives of the city as a memento of the occasion. Upon taking his place to begin work; Gibson said:

Mr. Child, (the manager) I desire in behalf of Great Falls and of the Territory of Montana, to extend thanks to you and your company for the work so auspiciously begun today; and especially in behalf of the miners of the territory are thanks due. We will recognize the full importance of the undertaking and wish your enterprise every possible success. (10)

Gibson was always interested in the welfare of the mining population. At the request of the Great Falls Chamber of Commerce, Senator Gibson, James J. Hill; and another gentleman, acted as arbitrators in the Butte mine dispute of 1903. Their efforts were fruitless although they met practically continuously for forty-eight hours in the Copper City in hopes of deciding the issue.

At the beginning of the final decade of the last century, there had been constructed at Black Eagle Falls a large well-equipped flouring mill, a woolen mill, and a foundry and machine shops. The quarries of red, brown and

(10) Great Falls Tribune, March 5, 1888.
white sandstone that surrounded the town also gave employment to a large force of men. This building material was shipped to Helena and all the prominent cities on the Pacific coast. "I think it no exaggeration to state that Great Falls will give employment to more men next year than any town in Montana except Butte," said Gibson. Marcus Daly by 1894 had definitely decided to locate the Anaconda Refineries there at Great Falls, but the Hill brothers (Sam and Jim) would not come to terms with Anaconda at that time. This temporarily stymied Daly's plan for immediate construction of a refinery at Great Falls in 1895.

Thus, in 1890, his dreams became realities. Industry had arrived, land sales were progressing very satisfactorily, coal production and the continuation of the railroad were to increase the community's importance many fold.

After Gibson and his Water Power & Townsite Company had devoted the better part of thirty years to the development of power at the falls, they decided to sell out to John C. Ryan and his Great Falls Electric Properties. Hill and Gibson sold their water rights and power developments for approximately one and one-half million dollars; although it was valued roughly at five million dollars. Why was this deal consumated at a loss of two-third's of its value by Messrs. Gibson, Hill, and their associates? Cornelius F.

Kelly, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company and legal adviser to Ryan, who had been present at most of the conferences held between Hill, Gibson and Ryan, testified before the Federal Power Commission that Hill said he had spent a busy life and just did not have time to develop the power sites. Concerning the sale, a letter dated April 18, 1917, from Paris Gibson to John D. Ryan, stated:

...I have never regretted that the holdings of Great Falls Water Power and Townsite Company were sold out to you for a mere song, as I became satisfied that under the old management, an important city never could be established here.

An underlying factor was the status of public utility securities at the time. They were considered a poor risk after the Hauser Dam at Hauser Lake on the Missouri River, sixteen miles above Helena, had collapsed only fourteen months after its completion. After this 1908 debacle, many men who had long been associated with power enterprises lost heart. Also, the nation as a whole was going through a depression period.

Gibson believed that the growth of Great Falls would parallel that of Minneapolis. He contended that the industries established there (Great Falls) were of the character that would connect Great Falls with the great markets and business centers of the world; and "it would matter not if

Great Falls were located in the midst of a desert like that of Sahara, it would with its special advantages become one of the leading commercial cities of the country. Our town, however, is located in a region rich in agricultural as well as mineral resources," he said. This quotation was representative of many of his utterances in which he combined historical fact with exaggerated assumption.

Many of his future endeavors in Great Falls were based on his experiences and knowledge of their counterparts in Minneapolis. He stated:

During a long period of my life I lived in the city of Minneapolis and I have seen that city grow from a village, under the shadow, as it were, of Saint Paul, to a city of magnificent proportions .... I can hardly realize the results which have been accomplished there during the past twenty-five years. What has produced these results? It has been the development of the water power at that point and the establishment of a single industry, (flour milling) which in magnitude, is unsurpassed at any other place. (13)

His deep respect for Minneapolis was expressed in later years in his achievements at the "Town at the Falls."

(13) Great Falls Tribune, January 29, 1889.
CHAPTER VI
THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POLITICIAN

Paris Gibson was always a keen student of political life; but not until his community at the Falls began to prosper was he able to devote any substantial effort in its behalf.

The year 1886 marked the first reference available concerning his political views on Montana affairs. In December of that year he spoke out in opposition to Senator Edmunds of Vermont's bill entitled: "A Bill To Establish A Forest Reservation On the Headwaters of The Missouri & The Headwaters Of The Clark's Fork Of The Columbia River." This bill proposed to set aside a great forest reserve one hundred and fifty miles long by forty miles average width containing about six thousand square miles of mountains and foot-hills. From this area, the Missouri, the Columbia and Saskatchewan Rivers derived some of their important sources, and the country embraced within this limit included some of the grandest scenery in America. Gibson opposed this bill for he believed it would limit the growth of Montana industry. He expressed his willingness to preserve the watersheds, but he was also insistent that the mineral resources of that area should be developed.

Gibson did not foresee the indiscriminate cutting of timber that was to follow the opening of vast areas of timber to logging interests. This was a common oversight of many of the people of that day. Gibson and many of the early settlers believed that
forest fires would ever continue to be the main evil confronting forest preservation; and they were all in favor of strict protection of the forests.

In the area described in the bill there were substantial ore deposits. Gibson was in dire fear that the proposed bill, if passed, would forever exclude the extraction of this natural wealth.

East of the proposed reserve there was no timber, while in the west the supply was unlimited. Gibson argued that therefore, this bill would make the whole country watered by the Sun, Teton and Marias Rivers dependent on the timber west of the mountains and should properly be called: "A Bill To Aid The Development Of The Lumber Interests Tributary To The Northern Pacific Railroad."

Many thriving settlements were located within the proposed forest reserve along the skirts of the foothills from the Dearborn to the Blackfoot Reservation on the north, and at the head of the valleys of the Sun and Teton Rivers. Therefore, his final reason for opposing this bill was that if passed, it would have resulted in great depreciation of property in that fertile area, by completely depriving settlers of a supply of timber essential to the maintenance of their homes. If a bill similar to this had to be passed, he believed the easterly limit of the reserve should be moved toward the mountains far enough to afford from the foothills an adequate
supply of timber for the settlers.

On the question of the tariff Gibson took a strong position in favor of tariff elimination, or reduction, on many items. He was formerly a protectionist but changed his views because he believed that the three interests that formerly demanded protection, wool growing, wool manufacturing, and the manufacture of iron and steel, had outgrown the infant industry stage and could compete favorably on a free market. The national economic picture he said was rosy with the increase of wealth in the United States and the consequent rapid decline in rates of interest. America's vast coal and iron fields were more easily worked than the coal and iron of England, and made so much more accessible by railroads. This brought our nation near to a point where, without reducing the price of labor, it could compete with the iron masters of England. Gibson commented that all through the East, manufacturers were changing their views from protection to absolute free trade in wool and woolen goods, which had been the result of abundant and low priced money, and especially the inventive skill of American manufacturers, which had enabled them to produce the best of machinery. Manufacturers stated that by setting the low wools of Asia and Africa, free of duty, they could not only give cheap woolens to the masses of our own country;

(1) Great Falls Tribune, January 9, 1886.
but that they could compete with any and all countries in the markets of South America and many other countries.

It was his opinion for many years that Montana wool growers had nothing to fear, even if absolute free trade had been adopted by the government, for Montana grew a high quality wool. He was confident that Montana wool-growers, with free foreign wool, would receive a handsome return from their product, owing to its superior quality.

On the national scene he saw America practically out of debt and with a population of sixty-five million and greater natural advantages for manufacturing than were possessed by any civilized nation. He also said that the U.S.A. was already shipping to all ports of the world large quantities of manufactured articles made principally from iron, and that America could not hide for long behind tariff barriers without injury to some of her important industries.

As he understood the platform of the Democratic party, it included a plank favoring readjustment of the tariff. Gibson said that this was at least a step taken in the direction of free trade. "The tendency of all civilized nations is towards free trade," he contended.

In September, 1889, Paris Gibson spoke concerning the right of building roads and general travel through the Indian

(2) Great Falls Tribune, October 29, 1888.
(3) The reservations had been closed to the settlement and exploration of the white man and this had impeded western settlement. It had also temporarily stymied the trans-continental construction of the Manitoba Railroad. From northwestern Dakota and covering most of the country from a little west of Minet to the summit of the Rocky Mountains not a foot of road could be built without federal permission. The first legislation to permit the Saint Paul, Minneapolis, & Manitoba Railroad to cross this country was vetoed by President Cleveland in 1886. On February 15, 1887, after congressional approval, President Cleveland signed a bill granting a right of way through the Indian and military reservations in northwestern Dakota and northern Montana. On March 2, 1889, a general act was passed granting rights of way for railroads through Indian reservations and Indian land, after due compensation to the tribes or individual Indians affected. (Pyle, James G., *The Life of James J. Hill*, I, pp. 383-85 and p. 589.

(4) Joseph K. Toole—He was president of the Territorial Council and influential in calling the Constitutional Convention of 1884 and in drafting its constitution which Congress refused to ratify. Toole was territorial delegate to the 49th. and 50th. Congresses, 1885-89, and supported the Omnibus Bill of 1889 providing for the admission of the four northwestern states into the Union. He was also a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1889 and served as governor of Montana: 1889-93 and 1900-08. Malone, *Dictionary of American Biography*, New York: 1936, XVIII, p. 589.
to the Manitoba Railroad through the northern reservation. But the Democrats and many Republicans acting in accord with Gibson gave Toole a decisive majority. Toole proceeded to champion the opening of the Reservation although attempts were made at every stage to delay and hamper the measure. But the efforts of Governor Toole and Martin Maginnis bore fruit and eighteen million acres were added to the public domain of Montana.

Paris Gibson was not only interested in national legislative affairs but also in the furtherance of Montana governmental stability. As a first step he was insistent upon her becoming a state within the Union. This required the calling of a constitutional convention to formulate a code of government. The wheels were set in motion under the provisions of the Enabling Act of Congress, approved February 22, 1889, by which the Legislature provided the necessary machinery for holding the third constitutional convention for Montana. The convention was to convene at Helena, July 4, 1889. The body was to consist of seventy-five members distributed among sixteen counties of the Territory.

(5) Blackfoot- which then began at Cut Bank Creek and extended to the summit of the Rocky Mountains. The greater part of this lying north of the Marias River was extinguished in May, 1888, excepting Fort Peck, Fort Belknap and the present Blackfoot Reservation.
Nominations were held in April, 1889, and Gibson and Collins, Democrats, and Webster, a Republican, were decided upon as delegates to represent Cascade County at the convention.

Among the general public the nominations were well received. The personal popularity of the Democratic delegates and their pleasant relations with the Republicans ensured a large vote from the ranks of that party.

At the convention itself, Gibson, although not one of the most active members, made his presence felt through various pertinent and timely speeches.

The irrigation question was one of the important problems. The main bone of contention was whether or not to allow private corporations to go into the irrigation business. There was fear in certain quarters that canal corporations might discriminate on rates and services.

William Dixon, attorney for the copper interests and representative of Silver Bow county, a proponent of the measure, argued that passage of the bill would have the effect of increasing the number of canals and thus increasing cultivation and settlement. To this extent it would be a benefit to the country. But he believed that if the corporations chose to take advantages of this provision, they must pay taxes upon their lands and property

(6) Corporations which held water rights in certain areas and sold water to the farmers and ranchers.
just as if no provision was in existence.

Collins, who was very active in the work of the convention, stated the other viewpoint. He declared that if this proposition was passed:

... You will give a premium to parties who go into the ditch business exclusively for sale and that you will give no benefit whatever, directly or indirectly, to the farmers or to anyone else who comes into the business for the purpose of using water themselves. You give this premium, and it is a large premium. This is a great subsidy to the man who invests his money in it as a business enterprise, but it gives not one cent to the farmer who takes his little ditch upon his land, nor one copper to the dozen or twenty or fifty farmers who combine together to get it upon their lands. Instead of that, you compel the farmer or the stock-grower to increase his taxes. Every inch of water that is brought out upon a farm adds to the value of it, and the assessor places that assessed value upon its list... You may levy taxes upon the man who by the sweat of his brow, (farmer and rancher) is trying to make a living and you may take taxes off of the man who sells the water that makes the land valuable perpetually; not for a day nor for a year, but forever. Now, gentlemen are wrong in their argument when they state this proposition is of equal benefit to all interests and that it bears equally to all interests and that it bears equally upon all persons. (8)

A closely allied issue was whether or not to grant state subsidies to private ditch corporations. Gibson questioned the wisdom of granting state bonuses to corporations of this character in Montana when there was cheap money ready and willing to be invested by American
capitalists. The opinion was that the new state would have its hands full without entering into private financial ventures. Gibson took an active part in the debate and said that in northern Montana at that time a great many streams and canals had been taken up to be exempt. He believed that the irrigation phase of the canal system would commend itself to capitalists because of "the permanency of that kind of investment." He stated that if he had surplus funds he would sooner invest in that class of property than any other for it "would yield dividends indefinitely."

Finally Collins of Cascade asked that the motion be indefinitely postponed. It was duly carried.

There was a hotly contested issue concerning the taxing of irrigation concerns. A motion was entertained which stated:

Ditches, canals, and flumes heretofore constructed by any person, company, or corporation for the sale, rental, distribution or other beneficial use of water shall be taxed upon the annual net proceeds of such sale, rental, distribution or use, in such manner as may be provided by law. provided that the use and price of such water shall at all times be subject to regulation by the board of County commissioners or other authority as in this constitution provided; and provided further that this section shall apply only to the ditches, canals, and flumes of such

(9) Proceedings & Debates of The Constitutional Convention, Held In The City of Helena, Montana, July 4 to August 17, 1889, p. 563.
persons, companies, or corporations as shall within such time as may be provided by law after they commence the sale, rental, distribution or use of water, make and file in the office of the Secretary of State their duly executed written consent to be subject to and comply with all the terms and conditions of this section and all provisions of the Constitution and the failure of any such person, company, or corporation, to make and file such consent shall render the ditches, canals, and flumes of such person, company, or corporation, subject to taxation in the same manner as other property, without regard to this section, so long as said person, company, or corporation fails to file such consent. (10)

JULY 31, 1889, afternoon session.

Gibson opposed the passage of this section because he believed it was an unjust discrimination in favor of ditch corporations. He thought that if this discriminatory principle was allowed, it should also apply to other corporations, such as the Northern Pacific Railroad, whose work was definitely in the interests of the Territory. He said that their net profits in Montana at that time (1889), were zero, and if measured by the same principles as the proposed law, they should not pay taxes on their net earnings. In fact, he believed that the men of the Territory who were investing their money in great enterprises were benefactors and should therefore all be given preferential tax treatment if the present principle was upheld.

Gibson was a staunch advocate of agricultural advance-

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ment and believed irrigation was the key to a broad policy of successful farming and ranching, but he was not in favor of the particular measure on the floor.

He and many of his friends also feared that monopolistic interests might gain control of agricultural Montana's lifeline, the water supply under the existing bill.

The location of the capital for the future state was heatedly debated by the delegates to the Constitutional Convention. Every community seemed to have instructed their stalwarts to "bring home the bacon." Provincialism befuddled the issue.

As the contender nearest to Great Falls, Gibson was in favor of Helena. Due to the difficulty of travel during that period he believed that Helena would be the best place for the capital until the center of population had materially changed, because of its central location. He stated though, that the time might come, in five or six years, when it would be expedient to change the capital; but he thought that if this day ever came the new location would be at Great Falls.

After a long debate the convention gave up any hope of settling the issue of the location of the capital, and

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(11) Ibid., p. 503.
a resolution was passed which left the matter to be settled by the electorate.

The constitution was finally ratified at the election called for that purpose on October 1, 1889, and on November eighth of the same year, President Benjamin Harrison issued his proclamation admitting Montana into the Union as the forty-first state.
Also, the amendment passed with a vote of thirty-six to twenty-one.

By 1894, Gibson had made an about face and advocated that the capital of Montana should be located at Anaconda. He became Helena's enemy and a friend

(13) The legislative Assembly shall have no power to change or locate the seat of government of the State, but shall at its first regular session after the adoption of this constitution, provide by law for submitting the question of the permanent location of the seat of government to the qualified electors of the state at the general election then next ensuing, and a majority of all votes upon said question cast at said election shall be necessary to determine the location thereof. Said Legislative Assembly shall also provide that in case there shall be no choice of location at said election, the question of choice between the two places for which the highest number of votes shall have been cast, shall be submitted in like manner to the qualified electors of the State at the next general election.

Amendment: Provided that until the seat of government shall have been permanently located as herein provided, the temporary location thereof shall be and remain at the city of Helena. (Ibid., pp. 760-61).
of Marcus Daly. There appears to be a sort of a deal by which Daly would build a smelter at Great Falls and Great Falls would support Anaconda in the capital fight. This, however, was not made public. Gibson stated that the Helena Independent had been attempting to tie in his political career with irregularities in regard to the Great Falls Water Power & Townsite Company, of which Gibson was an officer. Gibson called Helena, "Great Falls natural rival," and said that she had opposed the Burlington Roads extension to the falls so as to limit the growth of Cascade County. His hatred of Colonel Broadwater, the eminent Helena entrepreneur, also heightened his dislike for that city. This antagonism was based upon Broadwater's drawing out from the stock of the Great Falls Water Power & Townsite Company over six hundred thousand dollars, par value; about one-eighth of the entire stock of that company. Gibson said that Broadwater never put a dollar in cash into the Townsite Company. Gibson favored Anaconda for he believed that Marcus Daly had brought prosperity

(14) See Appendix A, No. 10.
(15) Speech of Honorable Paris Gibson (in reply to misstatements of Helena). Capital mass meeting- Opera House, Great Falls, Montana. (Great Falls Tribune, October 1, 1894--supplement.)
not only to Anaconda, but also to Great Falls and other areas of the state where Daly's company had entered into business.

Paris Gibson continued his political service to Montana in 1890, the year following his work in the Constitutional Convention. At that time he was elected to represent Cascade county in the state senate for a period of four years. Gibson was loath to accept the nomination, as his extensive private interests had engrossed most of his time. In regard to Paris Gibson's candidacy the Great Falls Leader tried to defeat him by magnifying his association with the Townsite Company. The Tribune said: "... How silly is this "corporation" cry raised against a man like Paris Gibson. It will not deceive anyone and the fact that the Leader makes that the burden of its tirade against Mr. Gibson is the strongest possible evidence of the weakness of its cause, and of the strength of the Democratic candidate." (17)

While in the state Senate Gibson served on standing committees on: Agriculture and Manufactures; Corporations Other Than Municipal; Counties, Towns and Municipal Corporations; Federal Relations; Finance and Claims; Judiciary; Public Buildings; Hospitals, Prisons and Asylums;

(16) The Republican controlled Great Falls Leader was continually antagonistic towards Paris Gibson and the Great Falls Tribune.

(17) Great Falls Tribune, September 21, 1890.
and Immigration.

During the Second Session of the Senate in 1891, Gibson was instrumental in having a bill passed which stated that senators could not be fined for absences and that expenses incurred in the arrest and return of any senator during the First Session was to be purged of any liability. Gibson's interest in this bill was probably due to his own numerous absences and the inconveniences this old rule broached for him.

In March of 1891, he was feted at a banquet in Great Falls. Collins spoke of Paris Gibson's achievements in the state senate. This brought forth from Gibson an address of twenty-five minutes. The Tribune remarked: "From beginning to end the affair was most successful and enjoyable and we may say purely democratic."

In 1893 Senator Watts introduced a bill providing for the location of the university of the state within three miles of the city of Missoula.

Opposition to this bill was led by Senator Gibson who introduced a bill to establish the agricultural

(19) Ibid., p. 133.
(20) Great Falls Tribune, March 12, 1891.
(21) The Missoulian, January 12, 1893.
college, school of mines and state university combined, the location to be determined by a commission of seven presidents of universities and two of colleges.

But the movement demanding consolidation had strong enemies. One of these was the Farmers alliance which said: "Whereas one of the fundamental principles of the National Farmers' alliance is its opposition to the centralization of power... Resolved, that the State Farmers' alliance in convention assembled at Missoula (on January 12, 1893), do hereby most solemnly protest against the consolidation of the state institutions."

The Helena reporter for The Missoulian sent the following story, regarding Gibson's consolidation program:

Missoula seems to have the field to herself for the state university, but there is a

(22) The Missoulian, January 15, 1893.
(23) An organization dedicated to the bettering of the general conditions of the farming class. It was represented in thirteen states and its specific purpose was to oppose class legislation, the encroachment of capital, candidates not in sympathy with farmers and to demand the nomination of farmers as candidates. It opposed railroads and speculators who seemed to act together to take most of the value of the western products in freight charges and speculation. As an offshoot of this alliance the National Farmers League was organized for political purposes. It later organized as the Populist Party. (McLaughlin & Hart, Cyclopaedia of American Government, New York & London; 1914; I, p. 711.
(24) The Missoulian, January 13, 1893)
scheme brewing which it is well enough to expose. While the papers of Cascade county are opposing division of state institutions, I learn that members of the legislature from that section of the state have made overtures to two separate persons representing different portions of the state to one proposition, to land the aid of Cascade county to secure the normal school, providing aid was given Cascade county to secure the university, and the other aid asked and needed provided Great Falls was supported for the normal school... not until the bill locating the state institution shall have passed both houses and been signed by the governor can it be said that Missoula has secured the university.(25)

Despite considerable opposition, the Watts Bill passed the senate in the committee of the whole on January 31, 1893. In regard to the above bill, The Missoulian stated:

...Gibson surprised everyone by offering an amendment... making it obligatory on Missoula to secure the university to donate 160 acres of land and $40,000, supplementing the proposition with remarks in substance 'That the state institutions should go to the place which would give the largest inducements, and offering in behalf of Great Falls to donate 360 acres of land and $100,000, if the combined institutions were located in that place. Watts and Goddard made speeches in opposition... The motion of Watts to indefinitely postpone the amendment was carried. (26)

The following day the Watts Bill passed the Senate. It passed (February 1) by a vote of thirteen to three, (27) Gibson, Folsom and Bayliss voting against it.

(26) Ibid., February 1, 1893.
(27) Ibid., February 2, 1893.
Governor Ricks signed the bill on February 17, 1893, thus ending Gibson's fight.

Gibson now tried to save the pieces. He was interested in having a branch of the greater university located at Great Falls, and during the Third Session of the Senate in 1893, he rose and stated that the citizens of his community would donate three hundred and twenty acres of land within two miles of the city limits of Great Falls for college grounds and an experimental farm, and would pay to the State within one year the sum of fifty thousand dollars for the further endowment of said College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts. This offer was refused.

The Butte Inter-Mountain summed up Paris Gibson's efforts in regard to higher education for Montana as follows:

Senator Gibson, though he does not profess to be an orator, made a splendid fight for the consolidation of the state university, agricultural college, and school of mines. Though opposed by two able lawyers, Goddard and Watts, he defended his position so well that we think, could all the voters of Montana have heard the argument, a great majority of them would have agreed as to the correctness of his position. Consolidation

(28) The Missoulian, February 17, 1893.
(29) Senate Journal of the Second Session of
The Legislative Assembly of the State of
was practically defeated and these towns which expect a state educational institution will no doubt be glad to learn this result of the debate; but Senator Gibson has made a reputation as a sound thinker and able debater and broad minded citizen which places him among the foremost Democrats of the state in point of intellect, while on the score of character and dignity his pre-eminence has never been disputed. The defeat of consolidation Senator Gibson considers a blow at higher education in the state. Yet as a majority of the representatives of the people have decided for segregation, he will doubtless regard the result philosophically and so do what he can to establish the segregated institutions on a sound and enduring basis.

...He asked only one thing, which was that these institutions should be placed together in order to make one grand university, a monument to the honor and intelligence of Montana. But he was like John crying in the wilderness where there was none but God to hear him. And although he had been vanquished he was right, eternally right, and his brave efforts will be approved and vindicated by posterity, who will have to reap the crop of dragons teeth sown so lightly by his mediocre opponents. (30)

Although this newspaper cannot be considered to be above bias, it must be said that basically this was a sound assayal of Mr. Gibson's efforts in regard to higher education.

After his term as State Senator expired in 1894, Gibson chose to retire from politics, for the Republicans had become the dominant party and this made his

(30) Great Falls Tribune, February 3, 1893.
chances of possible reelection slim. He returned to Great Falls where he devoted the next seven years of his life to efforts in regard to his Townsite Company and various community enterprises.
The second week of March in the year 1901, was the high water mark in the political career of Paris Gibson; for during that period he rose from a position of relative political obscurity to that of United States senator.

One must study the cause for this occurrence. There were doubts concerning the honesty of Senator William A. Clark's election in 1899. The old chant of the fraudulent purchase of votes was raised and an investigation followed. Clark had been elected United States senator January 28, 1899, to succeed Honorable Lee Mantle, Republican. A memorial was filed in the Senate asking that the election of Senator Clark be investigated, and this was referred to the committee on privileges and elections. After an investigation a resolution was reported to the effect that the election was void; this resolution was not acted upon by the Senate, as Senator Clark, in a speech on May 15, 1900, stated that he had sent his resignation to the governor of Montana. He desired to submit the matter to the people of his State, and would abide by their verdict. The acting governor of the State immediately appointed him to fill the vacancy created by his resignation, but he did not present himself to be sworn in under the credentials. In the Democratic State
convention held in Montana in September, a resolution was
unanimously adopted demanding his reelection to the Senate,
and a legislative ticket favorable to his reelection was
overwhelmingly elected in November. In January, 1901, he
was reelected for the term of six years to succeed the
Honorable Thomas H. Carter, and took his seat March 4, 1901.

The legislative assembly then had to decide upon a
candidate to fill out the unexpired term of W.A. Clark which
was to run until March 3, 1905.

The major aspirants were Thomas Carter, Republican,
and H.L. Frank and John MacGinniss, Democrats. Thomas
Carter was, at this time, ending his term as United States
senator and desired to continue until 1905 in the senator-
ship left vacant by Senator Clark’s resignation. He was a
figure of national prominence within the Republican party.

(1) Congressional Directory, 58 Congress, 3 Section, p.66.
NOTE - A description of the events leading up to
Gibson’s election was given by the Anaconda
Standard on March 10, 1901. This newspaper was
owned by Marcus Daly, a staunch Democrat and
friend of Paris Gibson. Therefore one must
assume that its reporting was not without
bias. It said: “Helena will be a long time
forgetting the closing scenes of the Seventh
Legislative Assembly. Wild and picturesque
were they beyond anything ever seen before.
Last Thursday night when the end came the hall
of the house of representatives where the joint
assembly was held, was packed almost to suffo-
cation by the big crowd, including hundreds of
ladies, present to see the windup. They re-
mained through to the end of the joint assembly,
which came at 3:20 A.M. Friday morning, when
Paris Gibson was elected senator for the short
term to the profound surprise of everyone, in-
cluding the members who did the electing.
At eleven-fifteen P.M. on March 7, 1901, the last legislative day, the joint session of the legislature was resumed and a quorum of each body was present. Ballot for a United States senator to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of W.A. Clark in the Congress of the United States was taken.

It was ordered that each member of the Joint Assembly should announce *viva voce* his choice for senator, and this proceeding was followed in accordance with the requirements of the statutes of the United States and a majority was needed to elect.

The *Anaconda Standard* on March 10, 1901, stated that the disorder and the lack of parliamentary discipline was frightful, but in it there was an occasional flash of wit. After midnight the Republicans made a vigorous protest against the assembly continuing as the last legislative day had ended. A protest of this character came after each ballot, but was not entertained by President Higgins. Stull, of Yellowstone, was one of the most persistent objectors. About half past two he arose and said innocently: "As it has been ruled that this is still the seventh of March, I now move that we take a recess to fifteen minutes to twelve."

Through all the many ballots, there had been no approach to an election save when H.L. Frank got thirty-nine votes. Steadily, as motions to dissolve were made, the number

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of aye votes grew larger. The last vote taken on the subject before the sixty-sixth ballot lacked only two votes of being carried.

MacGinniss's followers looked upon the deadlock with calmness and equanimity. In fact they looked forward to it with unalloyed but well concealed pleasure. For the reason that the election at this time was to fill a vacancy caused by a resignation, it was not at all improbable that the appointee of the governor would have been seated. They viewed MacGinniss as the appointee.

Corbett spoke and urged the body to take some men, Gibson, for instance, and try a vote on him. But following this, Corbett unexplainably failed to vote for Gibson. The situation had come to a crisis.

MacGinniss made a speech offering to support any good Democrat in order to settle the issue. A moment later H.L. Frank, the leading fusion candidate, was recognized. He withdrew and suggested to his friends that they support the highest man of the last ballot, which was the Honorable Paris Gibson. The senators took Frank at his word and all but one of Frank's nineteen supporters on the previous ballot voted for Gibson. When the House roll was called Paris Gibson received a majority, forty-seven votes.

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(3) Great Falls Tribune, March 9, 1901.
Carter thirty-two, and MacGinniss eleven. Carter and his (4) Republican minority stood together until the bitter end.

Gibson, at that moment, was sleeping at the Hotel Helena with the assurance that the Legislature would adjourn without electing a senator. He had no aspirations for the senatorship and was truly amazed when at 3:45 A.M. he was awakened and told he was Montana's new senator.

In the 1899 senatorial campaign, Gibson had fought in the interests of W.A. Clark against powerful foes, and when the opportunity came to return the favor, the friends of Senator Clark were ready and obliging. Their aid was instrumental in swinging the balance to Gibson. To this influence Senator Gibson owed his election, and the throwing of it to him at the proper moment was to be long remembered.

Gibson received congratulations from far and near. Senator Clark said: "It is gratifying to me to see a man elected by the Montana legislature whom I know to be a good democrat. Mr. Gibson will be a credit to the state and will do good service for Montana." Clark also sent Gibson a personal letter from Washington, D.C., in which he offered Gibson his heartiest congratulations upon his election to the United States senate. Clark was proud that a democrat was elected and waited with pleasure to welcome him in (5) Washington.

(5) Great Falls Tribune, March 8, 1901.
(6) Great Falls Tribune, March 9, 1901.
Upon hearing that their founder had been elected, the Great Falls people, led by Mayor Collins, formed a citizens committee to prepare a gala welcome for the Senator when his train arrived. All townspople were requested to be present. An informal banquet was tendered him at the Park Hotel on March ninth. Tickets for this function were five dollars each.

All business houses agreed to close between four and five P.M. Schools were dismissed for the afternoon, the smelter employees who could be spared were sent home. A committee of fifty Democrats and Republicans made the arrangements. Crowds gathered at the station at three P.M. although he was not to arrive until an hour later.

The members of the committee took the train to Ulm to meet the senator. There were about forty Great Falls people on Paris Gibson's train and they held a jolly little reception of their own. When the train pulled into the Great Falls station there was assembled the largest crowed that had ever greeted a citizen of that community.

(7) From the papers of Charles Wegner, early Montana Pioneer. This collection is the property of the Great Falls Public Library, Great Falls, Montana.
As the Senator appeared on the platform of the rear coach, three hearty cheers arose drowning out the band music and as Gibson stepped to the platform the crowd rushed forward and all made one effort to grasp him by the hand. Senator Gibson, his face wreathed in smiles and his eyes dim with tears, had difficulty in making his way through the crowd to the carriage that was waiting for him.

The carriage was bedecked with roses and two hundred and fifty men and boys seized long ropes that were attached to the carriage and began to draw it through the enthusiastic throng. Ascending the balcony of the Park Hotel, he said that it was the proudest moment of his life, not because he had been elected to represent Montana in the United States Senate, for that to him was a small matter in comparison with the reception he had received. He believed his election was in a degree, an indorsement of the twenty-two years of his life spent in Montana. The speech was followed by fireworks, a parade, reception and banquet.

In the promotion of a state's interests in the national congress it is important that all representatives of that state shall work in unison. Gibson followed this policy in Washington. He said: "In the capital I managed to get along very well with my colleagues in the Senate and in various departments with many courtesies extended to me by

(8) Great Falls Tribune, March 9, 1901.
the men at the head of affairs in Washington." He stated that Senator Clark's capacity for work was marvelous, and it appeared to be the result of thorough systematization; and his tireless energy enabled him to do an amount of work that would have swamped an ordinary man.

Between Senator Clark and Senator Gibson there was no friction. Both were supported in their election by the same interest. The forces which had attempted to defeat Senator Clark were the same forces that were against Senator Gibson in the end.

The two Montana senators were personal friends. They both had done significant work in the development of Montana, each in his own line, and both were vitally interested in the continued growth and progress of the state. In the senate they proceeded to work hand in hand for the advancement of Montana.

Clark served side by side with Gibson during the latter's tenure of office which lasted until 1905.

While in the United States Senate, Paris Gibson was a diligent, although not outstanding, member. During his term of office he was bombarded by various and sundry private bills which ran the gamut from requests for pensions to the prohibition of polygamy.

(9) Great Falls Tribune, June 13, 1902
(10) Ibid., March 9, 1901
He was a member of standing committees on Forest Reservations & The Protection of Game, Irrigation & Reclamation of Arid Lands, and Public Lands, the work of which was all pertinent to his constituency. Gibson also was a member of the committees on Pensions, Manufactures, National Banks, and Industrial Expositions, among others.

Paris Gibson was always an advocate of the University of Montana and secured passage of a bill granting additional land adjacent to its site. He also submitted a petition of the Montana School of Mines of Butte, asking for legislation to apply a portion of the proceeds of public lands to the endowment of a school or departments of mining and metallurgy, which was pigeon-holed by committee.

Gibson also championed public works. He submitted an amendment proposing to appropriate five thousand dollars to improve the Missouri River above the bridge at Fort Benton, Montana, and also proposing to appropriate a like sum for completing the improvement on the south bank of the Missouri River at the mouth of Judith River. This amendment was to be tacked on to the River & Harbor Appropriation Bill. This bill was sent to committee where no further action was taken on it.

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(11) U. S., Congressional Record, 58 Congress, 1 Session, XXXV, p. 4965.
(12) U. S., Congressional Record, 58 Congress, 1 Session, Special Session of Senate, XXXVII, p. 177.
(13) Ibid., 58 Congress, 1 Session, XXXV, p. 684.
(14) Ibid., 57 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVIII, p. 3738.
Gibson wanted to do something concrete for his hometown. Therefore, he introduced a bill providing for the erection of a public building in Great Falls. In this regard, Gibson wrote a letter from Washington, D.C., on December 16, 1901, to Charles Wegner at the Falls. It read as follows:

... I cannot tell if we shall succeed in securing it; but it seems to me that it is due to us and I shall use every exertion possible to secure the appropriation. As to the location I have no doubt a very favorable site can be secured, provided we are successful in obtaining the appropriation.\footnote{Letter from Hon. Paris Gibson to Charles Wegner, Great Falls, Montana, dated December 16, 1901.}

This bill never came out of the committee.

Gibson advocated the building of extensive irrigation works for Montana. He realized that, without proper water dispersal, the rich lands of Montana would remain sterile. He persuaded Congress to authorize an investigation of the feasibility of irrigating the millions of acres of land between the Sun and Teton Rivers, embracing all the great table land adjacent to Great Falls. He stated that the land in this great district tributary to Great Falls was some of the best land in Montana, and he believed that it might be reclaimed at a very low cost.

Paris Gibson secured the passage of the Milk River Irrigation Project Bill. This authorized the Secretary of the Interior to begin construction on March 14, 1903, and
was the first in Montana under the National Reclamation Act.

In 1903, he notified the people of Great Falls that the money was ready and the first work to be started would be the Saint Mary's canal. The Geological Survey people were in favor of that project which would reclaim so much land with so little money. It was regarded as the most advantageous of all the projects advanced.

In regard to the land withdrawals along this canal, Gibson said that all who had filed on the land could go ahead and prove up, but no other filings would be allowed except in accordance with the provisions of the irrigation law. He reported that sentiment in the East was very strong for holding and redeeming western lands for actual homebuilders, and not a cent would be appropriated unless it was assured that it would go for homemaking.

Gibson believed that it was necessary to withdraw so much land because the course of the canal was not yet decided upon. There had to be surveys and resurveys until the best possible route was found. He said that as soon as the course of the canal was determined, and land in that tract withdrawn, the remaining land would be thrown open again. Meanwhile, all of it was withdrawn in order to be sure that none could be taken by speculators who wished to profit by the building of the canal.

(17) John W. Hakola, The Development of A Policy Towards Irrigation in Montana To 1906, Montana State University, Missoula, Montana, 1951, pp. 133-34.

(18) Great Falls Tribune, June 13, 1902
The project was to start at Dodson near Malta and the necessary dams and reservoirs were to be built there; and a ditch was to run from Dodson south of the railroad to a point beyond Malta. This project was designed to reclaim sixty thousand acres of land in this manner; and to do so it was necessary to move the Great Northern tracks.

Gibson further declared, in 1904, that the Milk River canal system was just beginning, but that it would be a small part of the system. He stated that it was certain that the whole system, as originally outlined, would be constructed, and the one problem that had to be solved before the beginning of the rest of the work was where to locate a dam in the Marias River. It was decided to adopt the Marias diversion project. The water from the Saint Mary's was to be conveyed to a point in the Marias where a dam was to be constructed and thence to the Big Sandy, emptying into the Milk River near Havre. The engineers who had thus far been working on the project were not certain that an adequate dam might be built at the site proposed, and the director had appointed a board of eminent consulting engineers to visit northern Montana and to determine where the Marias diversion dam should be placed.

Actual construction on this project was not begun until July, 1906, and the first water was delivered in 1911. Com-

(19) Great Falls Tribune, April 26, 1904.
struction on various phases of the project has continued to the present time. The first estimate of irrigable area on this project was 291,906 acres. This was reduced and in 1950 the irrigable area was 127,001 acres, of which 76,366 were actually irrigated.

Senator Gibson was also a proponent of the Sun River Project. He said that the chief doubt entertained by the government concerning the feasibility of the Sun River Project was because of a belief that there was not sufficient government land to justify the construction of the canal system required. The country between the Sun and the Teton had been plastered over with desert land filings to such an extent that the government might decide not to undertake the work of reclaiming the public land remaining he stated. If this would be their conclusion, he believed it would be unfortunate for the interests of Great Falls and that the people of that city would then realize the damage wrought by the Desert Land Law, for then much fertile land would lay fallow for want of irrigation. Gibson fought this issue earnestly for he knew that Senator Carter and prominent men in Helena were working hard for other projects.

Gibson's efforts bore fruit, and in 1906 the Sun River Project was authorized as the final early national irriga-

(20) John W. Hakola, The Development of A Policy Towards Irrigation in Montana To 1908. Montana State University, p. 135.
(21) Great Falls Tribune, April 26, 1904.
(22) Appendix A, No. 12.
tion project in Montana with an estimated irrigable area (23) of 256,000 acres.

Soon after this, Gibson reported for the Committee on Public Lands the bill authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to restore to public entry lands embraced in whole or in part within segregations for reservoirs. The bill provided that lands heretofore included within reservations for reservoir purposes made in accordance with the law approved October 2, 1888, and subsequent acts might in the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior be thrown open to entry and settlement as though such reservation had never been made if the Secretary of the Interior said that such lands or portions of tracts were not needed for reservoir purposes. This bill was made law.

Gibson was equally active in helping Great Falls by getting congress to authorize it as a permanent Port of Entry. (25) Previously Great Falls had been made a temporary Port of Entry by action of the Secretary of the Treasury.

He represented an agricultural state and hence directed his efforts in securing benefits for the farmer and rancher. He realized that the ranchers and farmers of Montana deserved preferential treatment both as influential voters and as paramount entitles in the economy of Montana.

(23) John V. Hakola, The Development of A Policy Towards Irrigation In Montana To 1900, Montana State University, p. 135.

(24) U. S., Congressional Record, 58 Congress, 1 Session, XXXVII, p. 176.

(25) Ibid., 57 Congress, 1 Session, XXXV, p. 1570.
In their behalf he presented a petition of the Farmers Institute of Beaverhead County asking for the enactment of legislation providing for an increase in the annual appropriation for state agricultural experiment stations which was referred to committee.

Paris Gibson also presented a petition and a memorial of the Stock Growers Association of Montana, one for the enactment of legislation creating the position of a Second Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, whose duties were solely to be in the interests of the stock industry. The other remonstrating against a reinspection by state authorities of animals liable to convey contagious diseases from one state to another. Neither of these was successful in being passed.

Gibson introduced a bill asking for the holding of regular terms of the circuit and district courts of the United States at Great Falls. This measure was intended to eliminate the inconvenience of northern Montanans traveling to Butte or Helena for federal court proceedings. The bill was passed, and Congress set the first Monday in May and first Monday in October in each year as the date on which circuit and district court would be held in Great Falls. Cases civil and criminal could

(26) U.S., Congressional Record, 57 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVI, p. 4850.
(27) Ibid., 57 Congress, 1 Session, XXXV, p. 136.
be transferred by the court or judge thereof from Helena or Butte to Great Falls or vice versa in said district when the convenience of parties or the ends of justice would be promoted by the transfer; and any interlocutory order could be made by the court or judge thereof in either place.

Gibson presented to the Senate a joint resolution of the legislature of Montana relative to the election of United States senators by direct vote of the people, which was not acted upon. The legislature probably was forced into this decision by W. A. Clark's 1899 election, the following hub-bub concerning its legality, and the need for a special session of the legislature to select his substitute, Paris Gibson.

Another of these miscellaneous bills was to confirm title of the Saint Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway Company to certain lands in Montana and for other purposes. It was sent to committee where it was pigeon-holed.

In regard to Indian affairs he introduced a bill for the relief of the wandering American-born Indians of Rockyboy's band in Montana. It died in committee.

Paris Gibson tried to get through the House an appropriation for the Fort Shaw Indian school but failed.

(28) U.S., Congressional Record, 57 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVI, p. 2408.
(29) Ibid., 58 Congress, 3 Session, XXXIX, p. 2447.
(30) Ibid., 58 Congress, 3 Session, XXXIX, p. 2050.
(31) Ibid., 57 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVI, p. 314.
Concerning this, he said: "I have spoken favorably of the institution at every opportunity, and I have learned that the department regards the school as a great success, very important in the work of educating Indians,..."

Every senator has at least one pet issue which he champions in congress: to Gibson it was the land question. In this connection he introduced bills to establish a new land office and land district in Montana. Only the former bill was passed.

Senator Gibson desired that all land possible be opened for settlement. He not only tried to open up all public land, but he tried to break up the Indian Reservations to give more land to the white settlers. He visualized much of the Indian lands as dormant under their primitive usage and desired to open these reservations to the more modern and productive methods of the white man. These efforts, if successful, would doubtless give to the author greater political influence among the new settlers. He asked for the survey and allotment of lands embraced within the limits of the Crow and Flathead Reservations and the sale or disposal of all surplus lands after allotment.

(32) Great Falls Tribune, April 26, 1904.
(33) U.S., Congressional Record, 57 Congress, 1 Session, XXXV, p. 2218.
(34) Ibid., 57 Congress, 1 Session, p. 2478.
The attitude he represented on the Crow issue can best be shown by a petition of the legislative assembly of Montana; which he introduced:

1. That on October 15, 1892, by proclamation of the President of the United States, a portion of the then Crow Indian Reservation was thrown open to settlement.

2. That there was excepted and reserved in the said proclamation certain considerable and choice tracts from which any member of said tribe of Crow Indians was permitted to select a one-quarter section of land, to be then allotted by the Government to the said Indian in severalty.

3. That a considerable number of segregated and isolated tracts of said lands so excepted by proclamation of the President still remain unselected by and unallotted to any Indians.

4. That said segregated and isolated remaining unsettled and unallotted tracts are surrounded by improved ranches and farms artificially irrigated and in a high state of productive cultivation, and are themselves choice agricultural lands, greatly desired by settlers, who would irrigate, cultivate, and improve same if permitted so to do, settling upon them under the (35) provision of the United States Homestead laws.

On April 26, 1904, Gibson reported that Montana's interests had fared well at the past session. After reaching home he received a telegram announcing that the president had signed the bill for the opening of the Flathead Reservation and that the Crow Bill had been sent to him. Gibson said that those two measures

(35) U.S., Congressional Record, 57 Congress, 1 Session, XXXV, p. 208.
were of vast importance to the people of Montana, and every portion of the state would be benefitted by the opening of these two reservations under the equitable regulations provided.

The opening of the Flathead reservation would throw open to settlement about one million three hundred thousand acres of the best lands in the state after the allotments to the Indians had been made. The Indians were given the benefits of the treaty concluded with them in 1855 by Governor Stevens. They had been peaceable, and it was recognized that they had established homes which they were to be permitted to retain. Eighty acres was allotted to each adult and forty to each child. The president appointed a commission consisting of two Flathead Indians, two citizens of Montana, and a representative of the Indian bureau, to appraise the lands. They classified the lands as timber lands, agricultural lands of the first and second classes, and grazing lands. The timber was to be sold at public auction, and the other lands were thrown open to homestead entry. It was estimated that the Indians would net about five million dollars from the throwing open of the reservation, in addition to their allotted homes, and there would be a great development of the agricultural industries of the state. (36)

(36) Great Falls Tribune, April 26, 1904.
The Crow Reservation was opened to entry by proclamation of President Theodore Roosevelt on July 16, 1906. Gibson also urged the opening of the Fort Peck Reservation and stated that he was confident that the opening of this reservation would be favorably acted upon. On May 30, 1908, his prophecy came true with Theodore Roosevelt's signing of the bill.

Senator Gibson also introduced a bill for the opening of the Absarokee Forest Reserve. He based his case on three points:

1. Due to the fact that a large number of bona fide settlers, holding one hundred and sixty acres of land each, now resides in the Absarokee Forest Reserve.

2. Because a large portion of the area covered by the Absarokee Forest Reserve was above timber line, and therefore grass bearing land, without trees, and a large portion of such area is land devoid of timber and occupied by homestead settlers and is tillable and feasible to be reclaimed by irrigation.

3. For this land so settled upon by said persons is more valuable for agriculture and stock growing than for any other purpose; and should be thrown open to entry and settlement under the land laws, if it has been ascertained by the Secretary of the Interior that such lands, or portions of tracts, are not needed for reservoir purposes, and can not be used in the future for such purposes.

(38) U.S., Congressional Record, 57 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVI, p. 2437.
This bill was passed.

But the energetic Gibson's pride and joy was a bill to repeal the Desert Land Act and the commutation provision of the Homestead Act. (39)

Under the Homestead Law, as amended, the applicant was limited to 160 acres, had to reside upon the land, and make it his home to the exclusion of any other residence during the period of three years. At the end of this time he might make final proof of his residence and of the cultivation and improvement of the land. If this was satisfactory, he received a patent from the United States which conveyed to him full title and unrestricted ownership. (40)

The 1862 law provided for the Commutation of a Homestead entry before the completion of the three year period of residence, after fourteen month continuous residence, and by the payment of $1.25 per acre as provided by the Pre-Emption Act of 1841, or where the land was within railroad grants, $2.50 per acre and upon the proof of substantial improvement and cultivation of not less than one-sixteenth of the area. (41)

(39) U.S., Congressional Record, 57 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVI, p. 3482.
(41) Ibid., XIV, p. 339.
The Desert Land Act opened 640 acres to anyone who would agree to irrigate it within three years. The initial cost was only twenty-five cents an acre; at the end of the three year period, the homesteader was to prove that he had done the required irrigating, pay an additional one dollar an acre, and the land was his. The stockman, who began to worry in the eighties about restricted range, found it simpler to pay the initial twenty-five cents an acre, which permitted him to use the public domain for three years. At the end of that time he turned the land back, overgrazed, and still unirrigated. So under the Desert Land Act the homestead business grew in Montana, though the land, as usual, suffered.

The Desert Land Act was not an effective instrument for disposing of public lands to those who needed homes. The loopholes in the laws were too large and too numerous to prevent speculation, and even though Montanans made final proof on over one million acres of desert land by 1902, only a small percentage of it was actually irrigated.

Desert lands were defined as:

All land exclusive of timber lands and mineral lands which will not without irrigation, produce some agricultural crop..., which fact

After the speech in advocacy of repeal, the referend
aration the force for repeal were much stronger.
constitution and a good effect, and as a result of the referend, the discussion and reafaction of the question
land laws, and while the house was strongly a
rerable motion of the bill to repeal the anomalous
1904, that it was a hard fight in the senate to secure
Congregating these conditions, he said in April,
was needed.
that the Government should hold the timber until it
trument land should be held for the tine better,
tance to get a good home. Gibson wished that all-
domship, but to promote the purchase homesteaders of the
these laws to get title to large parts of the public
the large cattle and timbering companies were now
Gibson knew from observation and experience now
was shown.

The immediate interest of the people of Montana
much land was estimated under it as under the Inter-
teen years after the Homestead Act, by 1905 nearly as
Despita the fact that this act was passed for
in which most of the land may be situated,
the act shall be enforced by proof of two or more
shall be assessed by proof of two or more
hundreds of letters from all parts of the country expressing the gratification of the writers that he had taken up the fight. He anticipated the passage of legislation in the near future that would shut out the land speculators and give the people who were willing to improve and develop their possessions the first chance. He maintained:

There was never a time when large interests were so anxious to get control of extensive areas as now, for they see the end is drawing near, and the means for acquiring land, with the country richer than ever before in its history are greater than ever. (44)

Senator Gibson believed that the remaining non-mineral lands and timber lands, the soil of which was suitable for agriculture, should be held exclusively for actual settlers, and that the timber belonging to the nation should be properly cared for and should be sold, as required, at its true value. He contended that this could be accomplished by repeal of the Desert Land Act, the Commutation Clause of the Homestead Act, the Timber and Stone Act, and by a refusal on the part of the government to further issue script for any purpose whatsoever. Then he thought the American people would have upon the statute book a homestead act that would entitle any head of a family or citizen of the United States who had reached the

(44) Great Falls Tribune, April 26, 1904.
age of twenty-one years to become the owner of a tract of land not exceeding 160 acres by establishing and maintaining residence thereon and improving and cultivating it for the period of five years.

To fortify his position, Paris Gibson read a report from the Commissioner of the General Land Office to his senate colleagues. The report said that only in exceptional cases did homesteaders who had settled upon tracts of public land with the bonafide intention of making them their actual and permanent homes there find it necessary to abandon them before the expiration of five years from the date of their settlement; and the Commissioner of the General Land Office, for reasons stated, recommended the repeal of the Timber and Stone Act and the Commutation Clause of the Homestead Act.

The Senator from Wyoming then asked why there was so small a percentage of cancellations of commuted homesteads or of desert land entries. Gibson said in reply that the government had made poor investigations of the matter and that the special agents who were sent out into the west to investigate the cases of land frauds did not discharge their duties.

The Montana senator then said:

The desert land law is a very strong law so to speak; its provisions are very

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(45) U.S., Congressional Record, 57 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVI, p. 3655.
drastic. If they had been carried out there would have been no trouble, but the difficulty is that the law is violated. It is violated in my own State. There are tracts of land by the thousands of acres that never have been reclaimed, which tracts have been acquired without a compliance with the law.

Within six months preceding this speech a special agent was sent by the Interior Department into northern Montana. He reported that on nearly all of the desert land claims in the Milk River Valley and between there and the international boundary line the law had not been complied with, thus enforcing Senator Gibson's contention.

Senator Patterson of Colorado said that he was in agreement with Gibson's views concerning the operation of the law which the Montana senator sought to have repealed. Patterson stated that when he was in the House in 1877 when the arid land law was passed, he had insisted that Colorado should be omitted from the operation of the law because he was convinced that it would be utilized in the main for the purpose of taking the public lands away from the real settler and turning them over in vast tracts to the speculator and to what was termed "the cattle baron." Very shortly after he left Congress, the law was extended so as to take in Colorado and other

(46) U.S., Congressional Record, 57 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVI, p. 4145.
arid states and territories.

He was opposed to the giving of unlimited opportunity to those who seek to take up the public lands to do so under these laws and was in favor of having the question debated. Patterson believed that the Senate ought at the earliest possible time be put in possession of both sides of the question because he thought it was a matter that it would be called upon to decide upon before long, when the future policy of Congress in dealing with the remaining public lands (47) would be determined.

Senator Hansbrough of North Dakota took issue with Gibson's desire to repeal all the land laws except the original homestead law. Hansbrough said that there was a time when the original homestead law afforded ample opportunity for the then very small number of settlers who desired to go upon the public domain to go and make homes under that statute. Forty or fifty years before a settler could take 160 acres of land, and he was willing to stay there five years before securing title, but Hansbrough believed that was not true in 1904.

Hansbrough contended that if the settler were required to reside upon the land five years without

(47) U.S., Congressional Record, 57 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVI, pp. 3605-08.
having the opportunity of borrowing a cent of money, he would have no title to his land and therefore could give no security, and if he should meet with misfortune, as most of the settlers did, he would be obliged to abandon his land. He said: "That has been the history of public land settlement in the West."

Paris Gibson then asked Senator Hansbrough if he was aware of the fact that for ten years after North Dakota became an independent State the commutations there amounted to only seven and one-half per cent of the total homestead entries every year. From 1900 up to the end of the fiscal year 1903 the commutations increased very rapidly. Gibson said that they amounted to sixty percent of the homestead final proofs.

He submitted that those entries were made in the western portion of North Dakota upon lands similar in character to the lands of eastern Montana; that it was his belief that these lands had been acquired largely in the interest of stock growers, and this extraordinary increase of commutation had been in the interest of men who were taking up large bodies of land. He stated: "I can account for it on no other ground, and I should like to have the Senator (Hansbrough) explain it." Hansbrough gave no explanation.

(48) U.S., Congressional Record, 57 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVI, p. 3565.
During the two years preceding this debate Gibson made frequent reference to the report signed several years earlier by Henry M. Teller of the Interior Department. In this report Gibson said Teller advocated the repeal of the commutation clause of the Homestead Act. Senator Teller replied to this by saying that the Montana senator was mistaken and that he only recommended some modification of these laws, some stricter effort on the part of the Government to see that the laws were complied with.

Senator Gibson then showed that he was not the type to back down by saying: "I do not think I am mistaken. I think I have been too good a student of what the Senator said when he was Secretary of the Interior to be mistaken." Senator Teller retorted that he did not recall what he had said concerning commutation, but that if he had ever advocated repeal of the commutation clause, his attitude had changed. He stated: "I have never in my mind intended to repeal those laws." Senator Gibson then said that the gist of Teller's remarks were to the effect that if the public lands were to be preserved for settlers, the commutation clause of the Homestead Act should be repealed.

Teller himself became quite perplexed and said that he was not going to dispute that but would make a speech
on this subject, paying attention to the remarks made (49) by the Senator from Montana.

Paris Gibson then summed up the view expressed by his major adversaries:

The Senators from Wyoming and the senior Senator from North Dakota (Hansbrough) have given the impression to the Senate that this bill, calling for the repeal of the Desert Land Act, the commutation provision of the Homestead Act, and the Timber and Stone Act, is put forward by certain railway companies whose lines extend across the country from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. (50)

In refuting this last accusation Gibson brought in J. J. Hill as his key defense witness and stated that Hill had taken a great interest in the repeal of these land laws and the preservation of the public lands for the people who would make homes upon them.

Hill's Great Northern Railway Company built its lines from the Red River of the North to the Pacific Ocean, a distance of eighteen hundred miles without any aid whatever from the National Government. It was never a land grant railroad and never owned lieu land selections. Hill desired numerous homesteaders for he knew that their labors would bring his Great Northern Railroad needed freight revenues and enhance the land values along its route. But Gibson stated that Senators on the other side would have the Senate

(49) U.S., Congressional Record, 58 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVIII, p. 4183.
(50) Ibid., 58 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVIII, p. 4215.
believe that its contributions of money for the support of the National Irrigation Association were for the purpose of increasing the value of its land grant lands, when it had none in its possession. Gibson therefore assumed that the other railway companies had contributed to the support of the N.I.A. from motives similar to those that governed the Great Northern Railway Company. To substantiate his point, he read a letter from James J. Hill.

(51) National Irrigation Association- An organization formed to foster interest in irrigation projects. It was especially vehement in advocating legislation to reclaim the arid, but potentially rich, agricultural areas of the west. At their meeting in 1900 there were two radically opposing views struggling for recognition. The first was for national development and the second for the turning over the public land or their proceeds to the states. The chairman of the executive committee of the N.I.A., George H. Maxwell, enthusiastically championed the first course. (James, George Wharton, Reclaiming The Arid West, New York: 1917, p. 17).

(52) The Great Northern's action was taken for the purpose of preventing land grabbers from acquiring the public domain and defeating the settlement of the country. The Great Northern Railway has no land grant and received no land grant and has no lands for sale. It was a campaign of education to bring before the people of the country, through publications, lectures, etc., full knowledge as to the actual situation and what might be done to protect and develop the resources of the country. The most serious obstacle to the settlement of the so-called "cattle states" has grown out of the efforts of the cattle owners to appropriate the entire cattle domain to their own use. (U.S., Congressional Record, 58 Congress, 2 Session, XXXVIII, p. 4218).
The long debate now ended and Gibson asked that the bill to repeal the Desert Land Act and the commutation provision of the Homestead Act, which was then on the table, be referred to the Committee on Public Lands. His efforts commanded the approval of President Theodore Roosevelt but were never accepted by the Senate. He was effective, however, in furthering other plans for conservation and was a steady friend of reclamation.

Senator Gibson's efforts to make the voice of the West heard in Washington were hindered at one time by a serious illness. At that time he had a gall stone operation performed at Johns Hopkins Hospital. Although then over seventy years of age, he made a marvelous recovery.

Summing up his achievements in the Senate, one sees that Gibson was a hard and sincere worker for the interests of his state, and that although confronted by a Senate which was Republican, he achieved some success.

When his term expired in March, 1905, he retired at the age of seventy-four to devote his remaining years to his real estate and farming interests at Great Falls.

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
Against the sweet earth's flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree. (1)

This poem embodies within its stanzas the spirit of nearness to nature which was ingrained in the personality of Paris Gibson. He was an intense lover of nature.

He knew many of the individual trees in the park, and often when Gibson and Mayor Mitchell walked through

the park together the Great Falls' founder would stop to tell the Mayor about one and now and then denounce whoever had been guilty of maltreating a tree in some way. Between the city and Gibson's ranch there formerly was a place where many flowers grew. He called it his flower garden, and when Gibson and Mitchell would reach this location at a time of year when the flowers were in bloom, Gibson would stop his favorite old horse so that he could enjoy the blooms all the more.

Gibson was also a fancier of animals. In 1882 he purchased a purebred collie dog named "Tyne" for one hundred dollars. This dog was previously the recipient of prizes in England over a large number of competitors. Love for dogs and other animals was an outstanding trait of Gibson's. Often on a cold stormy day in winter Mitchell found him sorrowing over the suffering of the cattle and horses out on the range and denouncing the cupidity of men that made suffering such as that to animals seem necessary. Aroused to fury over the treatment to certain horses in the city, Gibson was instrumental in having organized a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and was himself its president.

(3) Great Falls Tribune, February 21, 1928.
(4) Ibid., February 21, 1928.
Gibson was a public spirited citizen and received many public honors. In 1886 he was appointed to the River Convention by Governor Hauser. This Convention was to study the navigation problems associated with the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Three years later, in 1888, Company "A" of the First Montana Volunteers (Great Falls) was organized. In honor of the city's founder it was called the "Gibson Light Guards."

Two years before the end of the century Gibson and his fellow townsmen were honored by the visit of twenty-three year old Crown Prince Albert of Belgium on his return from the Pacific coast. The future King of the Belgians was interested in civil engineering. His party was met by Paris Gibson and escorted on a tour of Black Eagle and Rainbow Falls, Giant Springs, and the smelter. The Crown Prince said that the water power at Rainbow dam offered great possibilities and was enthusiastic about the smelter.

One of Gibson's most cherished mementos was a letter he received in Washington, D.C., dated February 4, 1902. It was from his old friend Charley Russell, the famous cowboy artist of Great Falls. Instead of words Russell drew pictures to transmit his thoughts. He conveyed more in one small sketch than could be written on a typewritten page.

(5) Great Falls Tribune, May 15, 1939.
Russell explained: "As I am a very poor writer, I will make a kind of Injun letter mostly pictures." (6)

Paris Gibson was well liked by the great bulk of his contemporaries. He never failed to receive numerous congratulatory messages on his birthdays. One such affair occurred on July 1, 1890. On this sixtieth birthday, he received a beautiful diamond stud. His health then and up until his last few years was exceptionally fine.

This man of business acumen also had a keen sense of humor. An instance of this occurred in April, 1917, when an artist asked the old man to pose for a sketch. Gibson did so only after admonishing the painter to make the work true to life and not to eliminate the splendid lines of age and character. Gibson said: "If I live until the first of July next, I will be eighty-seven years old, so don't make me look like a moving picture idol." (8)

Paris Gibson was also a man of undoubted integrity. In this regard Chris Dickinson, an old time pioneer friend of his stated: "He sold a portion of the Great Falls town site in order that he might pay up the indebtedness of the defunct North Star Woolen Mills

(6) Great Falls Tribune, August 16, 1931.
(7) Ibid., July 2, 1890.
(8) Ibid., April 10, 1917.
Company of Minneapolis which he had founded.

Gibson was a Unitarian in religious belief and was president and a trustee of the Great Falls Society of Unitarians. Gibson was also a member of the Board of Commerce and belonged to the Electric and University Clubs. He was a member of the Great Falls Masonic and Elks Lodges. In April, 1901, the latter organization conferred upon Senator Gibson an honorary life membership in the order, which had never before been conferred by the Great Falls chapter.

He was also a student of national affairs and history. In honor of one of our great presidents, on December 13, 1917, Gibson was enrolled as a life member of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, which was organized and incorporated for the purpose of erecting at the national capital a memorial to the author and other signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Gibson maintained his interest in public affairs and activities until 1917 when he had the misfortune of being involved in an automobile mishap. The outcome of this accident was the loss of his sight.

After a long and servicable life Paris Gibson passed on in December, 1920. His body lay in state

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(9) Great Falls Tribune, November 13, 1938.
(11) Great Falls Tribune, April 2, 1901.
(12) Ibid., February 22, 1940.
at the court house; on the day of the funeral the whole community mourned his passing. Flags were at half mast; stores closed from one-thirty until three; industrial activity stopped for sixty seconds at two o'clock; county offices closed at ten A.M. for the rest of the day.

The Senate of the State of Montana adopted a resolution in Faris Gibson's memory stating that "the life of Faris Gibson should ever be an inspiration to the younger men of Montana."

Gibson outlived both his wife and oldest son. Mrs. Gibson died prematurely in 1900 at the Park Hotel where the couple had their permanent residence.

Theodore (1863-1936) was the younger of the two and very little material is available about him. He was a student at the University of Minnesota during at least part of 1881 for in August of that year he returned to Minneapolis on the steamer "Black Hills" to continue his studies at that institution. Theodore never graduated from the university. The only other reference to him was in April, 1883, stating that he left for Deer Lodge on the Helena coach.

(13) Great Falls Tribune, December 18, 1920.
(14) Ibid., January 24, 1921.
(15) Fort Benton Weekly Record, August 18, 1881.
(16) Ibid., April 7, 1883.
There is more material on the achievements of his older brother Phillip (1859-1915) during the Gibsons' Fort Benton residence. Phil was co-owner of the Paris Gibson & Son sheep organization; therefore his major interest in Fort Benton was that of ranching. He ran an ad in the local newspaper offering the job of shearing; about one hundred and thirty thoroughbred Merino and Shropshire rams and ewes to any experienced shearer who would not butcher them. Phillip was also a wool buyer for the company. In June of this same year, 1882, he left for Miles City and the east and on route purchased wool.

Phillip married while in the east in the summer of 1882. This was quite a surprise to many of his Benton friends. On leaving town on this journey, Phillip had intimated that he intended something of the kind, but there were serious doubts about it. Phillip's young wife became homesick for Minneapolis after arriving at Fort Benton. This was accentuated by the semi-primitive environment of Benton during this early period. Therefore, Mrs. Phil Gibson returned to the Twin Cities in the fall of 1882 with Paris Gibson but came back to Montana the following July. This was

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(17) Fort Benton Weekly Record, April 27, 1882.
(18) Ibid., October 20, 1883.
(19) Ibid., August 24, 1882.
the period when Paris Gibson in conjunction with James J. Hill laid plans for the founding of Great Falls.

That winter, during the absence of his wife, Phillip spent many leisure hours practicing with the local musical organization- "The Apollo Club." The individuals associated with this group took turns acting as host at their songfests. Phillip also entertained by having friends for dinner from time to time.

During the early years of Great Falls Theodore and Phillip held the social limelight. Theodore was the manager of the Park Hotel, and Phillip was engaged in the insurance business. The boys occasionally got into difficulties which their dad helped them out of. Phillip died before his father during the early part of the present century.

Soon after Paris Gibson's death the allocation of his estate was made known. He left real and personal property valued at upwards of fifteen thousand dollars. Later it was reappraised at thirty-six thousand dollars; of the assets, one hundred and sixty acres of land in Cascade County, lot #1, block 08, west Great Falls, and 859 shares of stock in the Paris Gibson Land Company had been indorsed by the deceased to Theodore Gibson. The total value of this property was set at

(20) Port Benton Weekly Record, November 25, 1892.
(21) Ibid., December 7, 1892.
(22) Ibid., November 30, 1892.
(23) Great Falls Tribune, March 16, 1922.
$17,100. A total of 3740 shares of stock in the
Great Falls Iron Ore Company, appraised at $18,700,
were also endorsed to Theodore Gibson to secure
money advances. The balance of the estate consisted
of a personal library valued at one hundred dollars
and a one-third interest in manganese mines in
Jefferson County, which had no value. The latter
property was held in the name of the James J. Hill estate.

Paris Gibson bequeathed to:

Mrs. Jessie Ladd of Minneapolis $5000,
Mrs. Louise Leland, a granddaughter of Great Falls $5000,
Mrs. Mary D. Gibson, the widow of Phillip Gibson, one-
eighth of the estate,
Dorothy Gibson Wright, a granddaughter, then (1922)
living in Italy, one-sixteenth of the estate.

The rest of the estate went to Theodore Gibson who also
was bequeathed the proceeds of a life insurance policy
and an interest in his father's library.

The will ordered the money legacies to be paid as
soon as the funds were made available by the sale of
real property although the executors were directed not
to act hastily in the disposition of the estate.

Theodore Gibson and his son, Donald Gibson, were named
executors of the will and were to serve without hindrance
of the court. The will was dated November 1, 1917.

Soon after his death many of Gibson's grateful

(24) Great Falls Tribune, May 1, 1927.
(25) Ibid., March 16, 1923.
friends put forth earnest efforts to secure funds for the moulding of a bronze statue in his honor. The campaign to raise twelve thousand dollars to pay for the work was sponsored by the Gibson Memorial Committee of the Chamber of Commerce. In the forefront of the movement was Mrs. Dudley Crowther, Paris Gibson's former secretary. She was the custodian of Civic Club funds, which after 1907 grew to amount to $1000. This sum was donated to the Gibson Memorial Fund. The Great Northern Railway Company gave a five hundred dollar subscription to the fund. Gibson's former colleague and friend in the Senate, William Andrews Clark, was interested in aiding the fund, and his son gave one thousand dollars to it.

Sufficient funds were finally raised to commission William Ordway Partridge of New York to start work on the statue. It was to depict Paris Gibson as a man of approximately seventy years of age, one arm extending and indicating the city of his dreams, and the other grasping a plate which personified the Great Falls of that day (1927). Before the statue was completed Partridge was confined to a sanitarium. A committee from Great Falls saw that the statue depicted

(26) Great Falls Tribune, May 22, 1927.
(27) Ibid., September 5, 1932.
(28) Ibid., May 29, 1925.
Paris Gibson as a young man.

Alexander Etzel, youthful sculptor of New York City, was selected to make the necessary changes, and on January 1, 1927, an inspection was made, and the statue approved. It now stands in Gibson Park in the city at the Falls of the Missouri.

A life size portrait of Paris Gibson was completed in oils by A.D. Cooper in 1869. This portrait came into the possession of Mrs. Leland, a granddaughter of Mr. Gibson, who donated the work to Cascade County in June of 1939. It was placed in the county law library.

But one of the most enduring monuments to his memory is Mount Gibson, one of the largest mountains in Judith Basin County. It has an elevation of eight thousand feet and is located between Running and Dry Wolf Creeks. Gibson Mountain had no name on the base maps of the forest service at the time of his death. It was then named in his honor since he and the late James J. Hill had located, developed, and patented a large body of iron ore deposits in the vicinity of Gibson Mountain. This mountain can be seen when in the area of Stanford by looking southwest.

July first, Gibson's birthday, was set aside as

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(29) Great Falls Tribune, January 14, 1927.
(30) Ibid., January 14, 1927.
(31) Ibid., June 28, 1939.
(32) Ibid., February 11, 1928.
Gibson Memorial day in Great Falls in commemoration of its founder. This was adopted by the city council on a request from the Great Falls Woman's Club on June 25, 1934.

Also in recognition of his contributions to the civic, educational, and recreational life of Great Falls, the junior high school was renamed Paris Gibson Junior High School according to action taken at a meeting of the Great Falls school district in May of 1939.

In conclusion one must say that the life of Paris Gibson was exemplary in every way. At home as well as at the office he was a courtly and courteous gentleman of the old school. Mayor Mitchell expressed it as follows:

Personally Paris Gibson was one of the most kindly and considerate of men. Not only was he always ready and anxious to do a service to the community, but he was ready and anxious to do a service to the individual man or woman; and nothing made him happier than to be able to do something that would add to the joy of little children.

One incident proving this point was related by Miss Aline Chowen, who said that when she was seven years old, she gave Paris Gibson a Christmas gift of a bust of an English general. He paid the Chowen residence a special call in order to thank the young

(33) *Great Falls Tribune*, June 19, 1934.
lady. One of her girl friends was present and asked why she gave him that gift. Unthinkingly she stated: "Because it only cost a nickel." Although his countenance turned all the colors of the rainbow, he kept a straight face and thanked her again before bidding adieu.

Gibson was a visionary character who had depicted in his mind's eye Great Falls as a city comparable to Minneapolis. He copied many things from the Twin Cities including a river drive.

As a businessman he was honest and sincere but not particularly successful. He acquired no great wealth out of his sheep, real estate, or other holdings and was often heavily mortgaged to James J. Hill.

Mayor Mitchell said in 1928:

Appreciative of his love of children, it was a happy thought that inspired the Woman's Club of Great Falls to establish the custom some years ago of having the children of the city present him with flowers on his birthday, a custom which has been followed since his death through the placing of flowers each year on his grave. (37)

Because of his love of children this biography of the pioneer ends with a poem by one of these youngsters, Mary Kitterman, of Franklin Grade School (1925).

(36) Interview with Miss Aline Chowen, Great Falls, Montana, December 5, 1951.
(37) Great Falls Tribune, February 21, 1928.
This poem was judged the best in a contest conducted by the Women's Club of Great Falls.

The Achievements of Paris Gibson

Out to the west a champion came,  
Paris Gibson was his name.  
The soul of honor, this superman;  
Honest, upright, noble, grand,  
With visions of a city of highest rank  
He founded Great Falls on the river bank.  
He laid out parks and planted trees,  
Which now in their grandeur sway in the breeze,  
Where the birds sing and the children play,  
The people rest after a busy day  
And now these trees as a monument stand,  
In their beauty, a tribute to this pioneer grand.  
He was proud of this town, it's as good as the best,  
The Electric city, Niagara of the west,  
And now that he is gone with the noble and the blest,  
May we continue his work till we reach the crest.  
So, hark ye, pilgrims, far and near,  
Honor the grand old pioneer. (38)
Dear Mr. Handford:

This is in answer to your letter of April 15 as to the relations between Paris Gibson and Senator WA Clark in connection with the election of the former to the Senate and his position thereafter in connection with his senatorial duties.

In writing on this subject it should be kept in mind that the legislature which resulted in the election of Paris Gibson and WA Clark to the Senate was the result of the so-called Clark vindication campaign. After it assembled a few of the members got together and thought that they could make WA Clark pay them something for votes, but that attempt failed utterly. Anyhow, practically all of the Democratic members were Clark men, and those who may not have been earlier could see no sense in opposing him, as the people of Montana had made it quite clear where they stood.

There was no agreement in advance on anyone for the short term. Voting on that continued through the session; and as a matter of fact it was not decided until after the legislative session had legally ended. However, before the midnight hour was reached the
sergeant-at-arms of the House, who was Dan McKay, the
so-called county splitter of that day, smashed the
official dock and the legislature went on working
until it elected Paris Gibson.

The Democrats who were voted for, following the
election of Senator Clark, were practically all friends
of his, and the understanding was that he could not
discriminate between friends, and therefore would
keep out of it.

Senator Clark regarded Paris Gibson as one of his
political friends, as he was, and had no objection
to his selection as Senator; but, so far as I know,
he did nothing to bring about that result. To have
done so would have been in violation of his understood
position.

In answer to your second question: "As Senator
Gibson independent of the B. Clark interests while
serving from 1901 through 1906?" I can answer only
as a matter of opinion. I was in correspondence with
Senator Gibson during those years, and saw a good deal
of him when Congress was not in session. There was
no indication or information of such influence, so far
as I was concerned. Further I have no recollection of
hearing such information from others.

Senator Gibsons special interest while in the Senate
was forest conservation and agricultural development in
1 Montana, particularly irrigation. He consistently backed President Theodore Roosevelt's efforts towards the former, and aroused some animosity among the big stockmen of Montana as a result. Whether he voted with Senator Clark on some other questions that arose I do not know, but I remember no charge that he did so; and my opinion is that he never did so unless he believed that it was politically wise to so vote; as Senator Gibson never, at any time during his senatorial service had any thought that he would seek re-election.

I hope that this gives the information desired and that you can read my handwriting, which I know is not easy. The hardest job I have since retiring is writing letters personally instead of dictating, and this is an unusually long one. When you have finished writing your thesis I would be glad if you could spare us a copy, as naturally I am interested in everything concerning Paris Gibson.

Sincerely,
H.B. Mitchell.

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2 To: Abel Gibson Esq.
Brownfield, Me.

My dear Father:

Thinking that you might naturally desire to know how your youngest unsophisticated daughter was prospering
In the goodly city of Portland, what wofull misfortunes and ludicrous adventures cross her path—how she conducts herself and if she takes good proficiency in music, morals and manners; I embrace right weld this opportunity of writing, and this opportunity of sending you a letter. I should have done this before but I've had occasion to write to the others at home so many times that I thought it would be merely throwing a letter away—so I was too economical to do that.

I'm getting along very well, if I can judge and nothing disturbs me except the thought of the hard work at home. I wish I was there to share it but there's time enough for that when I go home. I expect you'll be obliged to call me one of the smarter, most-active girls that ever called you 'Father.' Indeed you'll be so unwilling to part with me that I shall be content to remain with you and mother in 'golden meditation, fancy free.' Do you have such soft, mild weather in Brownfield as we do here? It has been cold enough here for mid-winter, at one time, but now it seems like springtime. That cold weather must have made your hands rather cold if you were digging potatoes but I suppose that they were long before safely stowed away into the 'tater holes, Cellar to. They say here potatoes are going to be very scarce and every kind of produce is very high. It seems strange it should be so now after
2 harvest. I attended, last night, the second lecture of the Lyceum delivered by Rev. Dr. Giles of Boston. The first one by Judge Goodbury (our future President) wasn't much admired. However great he may be as a statesman, he isn't much as a lecturer. They expected something rich from Giles. His lectures on 'Don Quixote' and the 'Irish character' are quite celebrated, being very witty and amusing. Judge then my disappointment and surprise when the speaker a little lunch-backed, deformed man rose and said "what is the worth of Liberty?" That was the subject and I took the liberty to be disappointed some what, thou' the lecture was considered quite good. There will be lectures every Wednesday evening during the winter. I presume there'll be some fine ones. There's a great rush to the Lyceum- 'Exchange Hall' (the largest in the city) was filled to overflowing many retired from want of seats- taken a long walk today all over the city. I take walks quite often as I've no other exercise and its very pleasant walking now. I've walked over to 'Cape Cottage' going and returning made seven miles, tho' we came one mile in the ferry boat. How is 'Deo' Father? Does he still retain your undivided affections? Are his actions still as marvellously sagacious and his method of inserting his ivories into the cattles legs as effective as ever? I suppose you still consider him the paragon of all the
2 canines, the prince of all dogs, if he is a 'little
yaller dog,' how different his lot from those whom
hard fortune hath placed with unkind masters. Them
no patient Father feeds no ever full swill-tub stands
ready to bestow part of its contents—no dainty bits
cast-off bread and meat from their food. I hope
you'll learn your most morally and intellectually
beautiful dog to compare his situation with those so
badly predicamentiated— and that will leave his soul
contentiated and increase his desire to never leave
you. I hope your health is good and you are all going
I some expect to see you soon Father. What do you
think about my coming up to his wedding? Mr. Weeks
says "he couldn't get along without me." I wish they
would defer it until I go home to stay which will be the
later part of December. Don't you think 'twould be
altogether better. Their engagement is so short they
can very well I think

I don't imagine dear father that you can read this
illegible written thing. I hope you will excuse it
and write me one which you consider a good model.

Your affectionate
Helen
3  TO:  Miss Helen Gibson.  Augusta Jan 18th 1842
Brownfield, Me.

My Dear Helen

You must needs think I was very much pleased to receive a line from you informing me that you are doing well and are in good health and pleased with your schools work as well, as long as you remain so good a girl and so industrious, and studyious as you are now you can but receive my love and affection. I want to see you all, but it will be doing no injustice to any of the rest of the family to say I want you and Paris the most of any body in Oxford County to take good care of yourself. Tell your mother I think they had better yet you and Caroline each a pair of thin boots— if she can get a calfskin of Capt Houlton. You must write me again soon—

I remain your affectionate Father
in haste.

4  Dear Sister  Bethel Oct 24, 1842

I thought you would like to hear from me so I took this opportunity of writing you a few words to inform you that I am well and like here well. I like the Doctors folks and the School. Alphonso Rasting has given me a hound he is a little one two months old Decaters and mine look so much alike that we can hardly tell them apart the foxes will hav to stop their fun when he gets to howling how dos Joseph and all the folks do we have Lyceums every night I went to Rumford to the master and I went up to the mills with Mr Mason and I
4 have been in Greenwood several times and in the area of
Gilcard and it is a fine country. I believe Joseph and
Helen attend school at Bryeburg academy be sure and
come over here before the school is done, Mary sent her
love to Helen there is about eighty scholars

Written to Caroline E. Gibson
Brownfield, Me.

Yours truly
Paris Gibson

Written when 12 years old by L. Gibson while attending
school at Bethel. This being the first letter ever written by him.

5 To: Mr. Paris Gibson, Bowdoin Coll., Brunswick, Me.

You may think, dear Paris, I have forgotten, you
must know if your mother seldom writes you, she can
never forget you or any of the wanderers, as I call
them. My mind is continually with the , and when all in
the house are sleeping I offer up prayers to the Father
of all that he may "keep them in the hollow of his Hand"
that may be kept from all temptations that they may
never stray from the high way of rectitude nor ever for
deviates from the strictest rule of rectitude and honor.
Glorious is the privilege of praying none but an Allwise.
All Beneficient Being could have instituted it. Cheering
to the sad heart of the mother whose loved ones are gone
from her.

This alone buoys up my spirits which would sink
under the severe trial of being separated from them.
It's like gathering them under my wing as when "They grew in Beauty side by side". We have had no letter from Joseph since you left home, nor did we expect one soon. Owen Gibson from Boston called here last week. He said a gentleman with whom he is acquainted (Mr. Tucker) had lately returned from California who says he went from the Isthmus with Joseph (he spoke of him in one of his letters). He said Joseph was thought of by all who knew him was very wary and choice of his company, which you know if perfectly characteristic with him.

But the most striking trait in his character is his wonderful share of discernment. I have thought he knew many things by intuition. A good soul is this Joseph. Oh may he live to return with good health—rewarded and for all his privations and toil and oh may we all live to see him.

He received a letter from Augustus last week. He applied for leave of absence but was ordered to another post. The Indians it seems are determined not to leave peacefully. I do not see what Government will do with them. Augustus seems quite restless, the separation from his wife an little son is a severe trial—is an affliction to him. Did you ever know a more affectionate, disinterested person than he is. May he be fortunate as soon to join his family and once more come home. Great has been the change the lapse of time has wrought with
us all since he saw us and not the least in you who were
a little tad when he last saw you and have now become a
strapping young man of much larger proportions than
himself. We received a letter from Annette two weeks
since which was most gratifying I assure you. The
graphic descriptions of her new home and domestic scenes,
little Paris, his cunning pranks are highly interesting.
I think she excels all the rest in epistolary writing.
She is a very efficient woman equal to any situation
in life. May Heaven be shower blessing on them with
liberal hands. Oh when will you all meet again?

I must refer you to Helen for the news in this
region. We missed you sadly after you left home.
The next week your father had an attack of the ague in
his face. He could sit up but part of the time gloomy
enough it was I can assure you. He was so fortunate
as to have a very good man come to hay the best about
the house and barns we have had for a long time.

By health is very much better than when you were
at home. Helen is at Fryeburg I don't know but she
will spend the spring there. I saw her yesterday
I made up to see Carrie's little new daughter a fine
little one Annie alone is at home she spend her time
at Books and Piano as usual. I have seen the notice
of some new books which I should like much to obtain
one in particular. The Secret Police by Monsieur D--
I should like to have Martyria I do not recollect the
5 authors name and the married and unmarried life of Mary Lowell, afterwards Mrs John Milton. If they are in the library when you come home, bring them if you can. I may not get them before. How do you get along? Do you feel perfectly satisfied with yourself? Winter still carries with us your father’s gone to Conway today I am afraid he will freeze. You know writing is quite innoxious to me I can talk fast enough but I do not write so as to do justice to myself but anything from brother is answer I suppose. I must close with the old injunction be a good boy and give joy to your brother.

By Dear Paris

I hasten to reply to your most welcome letter received Sat eve. Nothing would induce me to name to Augustus one word concerning Howard’s health until he writes me about it. I received a letter from Howard Friday eve a business letter, written for his father. He spoke of his being unwell at your house. He said I had probably heard of his departure from Minn., owing to his poor health which, he says, he is slowly regaining by outdoor exercise and proper diet and he may take a trip to Maine to see Aunt Carrie and the other friends down there. I suppose his physician prescribed it. I was not at all impressed at his indisposition. I knew
from his appearance when here last summer he had been
rather fast in Boston and gave some hints which he did
not quite relish. He spoke of being associated with
a young lady of doubtful principles, I have heard, I
told him I had heard the history of her progenitors
as far back as her great-grandmother, who, down to
her mother, were never in good repute. I used as delicate
language as I could on the subject. I saw he was piqued.
I thought that was the reason he did not write so while
at inn. His true mother can do much to make her son
dissipated, and much to prevent his being so. Howard's
mother although a very good, sensible woman had most
erroneous ideas on this subject. She may think my
views and his father's were correct. Is it not too
bad for a young man of his personal and mental
endowments to get into such low disgraceful habits.
He can if he wishes retrieve himself which I sincerely
hope and pray he may. I was thankful to hear you were
all in good health. Mr. Knight continues to improve.
We are all in usual health. Mr. Kealsath's health is
much improved— is better than it has been for many years.

Annie is his physician and most devoted nurse.

Nellie is still with us. She's a rare girl. I
know you must all like Edith, she is so good and true.
How fortunate Caroline is having so good children. I
think her supply repaid for her toil and self sacrifice.
A few days before you wrote to me about Howard's illness I wrote Augustus and mentioned how much you and Valeria thought of Howard, thought him very promising etc. Poor fellow how distressed he must have been to know about Howard. He would quickly divine the cause-

I hope you will be down here soon, with Valeria and the children.

With much love to all

Mother.
Gentlemen.

As I have not already thanked you for your present of a pair of splendid Blankets allow me now to do so most heartily.

I write to inquire at what place a (illegible) of your blankets are for sale in this part of the country so that I may direct others to the point where they may find them.

Yours,
Horace Greeley.

Aug 24, 1873

Paris Gibson
Great Falls, Mont.

Dear Sir,

I have had your matter in mind constantly since I came to N.Y.

There is actually no money to loan at any price. The delay in Washington and the want of any friendly feeling on the part of Congress toward the Banks of the country is making the burdens of the latter very hard to carry. I hope that some relief will come before the middle of Sept and with it better conditions but in my judgment a long time must elapse before the business of the country will be on an easy basis.

Yours truly,
Jas. J. Hill
Office of Marcus Daly,  June 9, 1894  (Friday)
Anaconda, Montana

Paris Gibson, Esquire,
Great Falls, Montana

Dear Sir:

Your favor of June 5th received and carefully noted. I am much obliged to you for the information contained therein but it is absolutely impossible for myself or the Anaconda Company to see our way clear towards complying with your request. We have stated that Great Falls was to be the location of our refinery. This was fully discussed with J.J. Hill, President of The Great Northern Road and Sam Hill so stated to his friends when on his last visit to this part of the country. We have so advised the CB & Q Ry. and tried to induce them to build down through Judith Basin, Belt Creek Mines and Great Falls and I hope that the locations of the works there will be the means of accomplishing this. As far as I know Great Falls has positively been decided upon as the final location of the works. We did not come to this decision without mature deliberation for in making this selection we had to sacrifice the property at Three Forks which cost us over $70,000. The CB & Q people would just as soon go there and by making a connection at Billings. They could get trackage over the Northern Pacific Road but the great advantage of Great Falls overcame all obstacles. The endless amount of water power, the
Belt Creek Mines and other considerations have caused us to decide upon that as the place to build the refinery regardless of any friendship for anybody in the world. Now this is as far as I can go as there are other things to be considered before anything further can be said or done. For a great concern like the Anaconda Company to make a "gallery" play by buying a piece of ground or laying a piece of track, cannot be thought of for a moment. Further than this, on the refinery question, I will not say nor do I care about this being made public. If the Great Falls people have no confidence in the Anaconda Company, this is something we cannot help. We are spending our money in that country at present and this is all the promises we will make. We do not deal in subterfuge; we deal in facts. I think that Great Falls is suffering from a little too much of this business at the present time. Take Anaconda for instance, with her immense wealth and pay rolls, it is already a manufacturing city and does not owe one quarter of a dollar and is steadily going on.

(The next paragraph is crossed out).

Now the above is the position we must take whether we get any votes for Anaconda for the capital or not. The people must decide for themselves. If the people of Great Falls have no confidence in the statements of
myself and Mr Sam Hill we cannot help it and if they wish to vote for Helena for the capital, they have perfect liberty to do so. I think it is to their interest to vote for Anaconda as the closer alliance their is between Anaconda and Great Falls, the better it is for Great Falls, but as stated before they must decide for themselves.

Yours truly,

Marcus Daly.
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