Disciples of Christ in Montana 1863-1900

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DISCIPLES of CHRIST in MONTANA

1863-1900

by

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B. S., Ball State Teachers College, 1948

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Montana State University
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INTRODUCTION

This is a study of those who came to Montana in its beginnings; those who had a common relationship—the church to which they belonged. This church was the Disciples of Christ, or as it was sometimes called, "The Christian Church," or "Church of Christ."

The Disciples of Christ or "The Christian Church" originated as a part of a "Restoration Movement." The purpose of the movement was not to establish another church group or denomination but to restore the New Testament church and "to heal the divisions, unite the people into one body, the church of Christ."¹

Thomas Campbell and his son, Alexander, have been called the "founders" of the Disciples of Christ but those who are Disciples maintain that:

Thomas and Alexander Campbell, father and son, were not founders of the Christian Church. They were preachers, who, with others at the beginning of the nineteenth century, became dissatisfied with the divided conditions of Christendom and set themselves to the task of restoring the church as it was in the days of the apostles. They were restorers and not reformers. They were preachers and not founders.²

¹P. H. Welshimer, Concerning The Disciples, Cincinnati, 1935, p. 37.
²Ibid., p. 37.
Because of the leadership of the Campbells at the beginning of the movement, their followers often were given the nickname of "Campbellites."

The Campbells, who were originally Presbyterians, were the outstanding members of the Restoration Movement, but not the first exponents of the movement. There was James O'Kelly, a Methodist, who, dissatisfied with the existing order of things, established a congregation on Christmas Day, 1763, at Manakin Town, North Carolina, taking the New Testament as his only discipline and rule of practice and faith. They called themselves "Christians." A Baptist, Dr. Abner Jones organized congregations at Lyndon, Vermont and at Bradford and Pierpont, New Hampshire. These congregations also took the name of "Christian" and the Bible as their rule.  

Thomas Campbell, a native of Ireland, had prepared himself for the Presbyterian or Seceder Presbyterian ministry by attending Glasgow University. He came to America in 1807 and settled in western Pennsylvania and was employed as a minister in the presbytery of Chartiers, near Pittsburgh.  

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Because Campbell invited all attending the Sunday morning service, regardless of their affiliation, to take communion, he was marked as a heterodox. He was tried for the offense before the presbytery and found guilty. He appealed his conviction to the synod of North America. The higher body removed the censure of the lower court, in form, "but reaffirmed it in fact by stating that there were sufficient grounds for censure."  

Campbell then severed connections completely with the synod of North America. He was out of a church and preached in the homes of friends. They organized the Christian Association of Washington, Pennsylvania, August 17, 1809. He wrote the famous "Declaration and Address," September 7, 1809 at that place. In the "Declaration," he set down the basic principles of the Restoration Movement.  

The Campbells, both Thomas and Alexander, advocated immersion as the only sure means of baptism and consequently, were invited to join with the Baptists. They affiliated with Baptists for a time but withdrew later. Others joined the Campbells in the movement.

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5 Ibid., p. 43.
6 Ibid., p. 43.
Among them were Walter Scott, a Baptist evangelist and Barton W. Stone, whose work had antedated the Campbells but who did not meet them until 1824. These men marked the beginnings of the movement.7

Members of the Disciples of Christ maintain that:

As a people we have no creed but Christ, no book but the Bible. Our plea is unity of all believers in Christ. Our program is the restoration of the church of the New Testament in creed, doctrine, polity and life. Our purpose is the evangelization of the world. It is not now, nor ever has been, our purpose to establish another sect or create another denomination. There are already too many of these.

The group or as they prefer to call themselves, the "brotherhood," has two ordinances—Christian baptism (by immersion) and the Lord’s Supper. "Infant baptism and sprinkling are unknown to the New Testament Church."9 The Lord’s Supper is partaken every Sunday, as "it was observed in the early church upon the first day of every week."10

The organization of the group is congregational. Disciples have no organizational hierarchy under whose jurisdiction individual congregations fall. Each congregation is a free agent and as such may employ or dismiss ministers according to the wishes of its membership.

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7Ibid., p. 77.
8Ibid., p. 3.
9Ibid., pp. 7-8.
10Ibid., pp. 7-8.
In its beginnings the Disciples of Christ made a tremendous advance in what were then the frontier areas of Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, western Pennsylvania, Missouri, Illinois, and western Virginia. It was in the beginning, a church made up mainly of the rural and agrarian element, but just as American life and living have become more highly urbanized, so have the Disciples churches and membership. Cities like Indianapolis, Louisville, St. Louis, Columbus, Cincinnati, Washington, D.C., Richmond, and Old South cities have not one Disciples church today, but many.

The "brotherhood" supports totally or in part many institutions of higher learning. Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia was one of the first. Transylvania College, Lexington, Kentucky; Hiram College, Hiram, Ohio; Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana; Eureka College, Eureka, Illinois; Oskaloosa College at Oskaloosa, Iowa later merged with and became a part of Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa; Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, Texas; Phillips University, Enid, Oklahoma are among the colleges and universities founded or supported by the Disciples of Christ. 11

Adhering to ideals which support Christian unity, the Disciples of Christ group has held an integral

11 Ibid., pp. 107-109.
vi

position, not only in the present-day Federal Council of Churches (which recently became the National Council of Churches of Christ in America), but in that ecumenical organization's beginnings. The Federal Council of Churches was formed in 1905 and was the first organization of religious bodies themselves on a national scale.¹²

The Disciples were in it from the start. In fact, the name of the organization was suggested by a Disciple. Disciples have been active in every phase of its work.¹³

As the largest religious body of American origin, the Disciples have a membership of 1,639,393 for the United States and Canada with a total world membership of 1,789,291.¹⁴

The creation of new educational foundations, the maintenance of an aggressive journalism, the organization of missionary and philanthropic agencies, and the encouragement of an effective evangelism in the churches have increased the numbers, intelligence, and consecration of the Disciples until at the present time they are fifth among the great evangelical bodies in America.¹⁵

¹²W. E. Garrison, Whence and Whither The Disciples of Christ, St. Louis, 1948, pp. 86-87. See Appendix.
¹³Ibid., pp. 86-87.
The Disciples of Christ brotherhood because of its native American origin and the way in which it grew, has been called a frontier church.

The movement expanded with the westward growth of the nation, never made great progress in the East but became strong in the Middle West.\(^6\)

A part of the "westward movement" was the movement into Montana. The Disciples of Christ members, their church and organization as they came to Montana are the concern of this study. The "frontier" church followed the frontier, West, and this frontier included the Territory of Montana. Members of the brotherhood of the Disciples of Christ were in the Montana Territory from the territory's beginning. Their religious background was unique and individualistic, but their reason for coming to the Montana Territory was the same as all the other emigrants.

They came for gold.

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CHAPTER I

"Tu grass Hop Per digins 30 myle"
"Kepe the Trale next the Bluffe"1

Gold was the reason men came to Montana. Men lived it; hated it; longed for it and hoped to survive for it in the paradoxical existence of the placer mining camp during the mid-nineteenth century. They came seeking it from everywhere and from all quarters. Gold, with its limitless magnetism and allure, attracted men whenever and wherever it was found like some monstrous being devoid of reason and rationality. Pauperism and prosperity were separated at the gold-seeking level by a too thin line of human perseverance and inalterable fate.

"Sunday, 15, Gold Hunting found some"2 was the laconic statement made by Major John Owen in February, 1852 in his journal covering his activities as an early Montana frontiersman, trader, and settler. That statement heralded the opening of a new economic era for the geographic area which became first, Montana Territory, and then, the state of Montana.

Gold-seekers were these men—they were not looking for a stabilizing influence or a character guide, but following the herd from discovery to discovery; from digging to digging; each hoped that the next major strike would be his. There was little place for religion in the thoughts of those who thrived on the lust for gold nor was there any place for it as long as the gold-seeker remained a gold-seeker and drifted and wandered and daydreamed of the elusive ore.

Add to the cynicism, barren realism, and crudeness which accompanies men who become addicted to the "devil-may-care" in a gold-seeking mission, the background of a Civil War, from which many of them had fled to come to the Montana "diggings," and there is little place for the scheme of the moralist or the missionary. Disillusioned and bitter, after service in the Union and Confederate Armies, many men found their way to the placer diggings.

Women and religion were rare commodities in the placer mining camps; in many cases, one seems to function best when aided by the other. At any rate, ex-soldiers of the Confederacy and the Union became soldiers-of-fortune and severed almost entirely any relationship with those with whom they had been intimately identified—wives, families, and friends.
With very little femininity to counterbalance intentions which were far from being altruistic, the existence of the gold-seeker was shaped in mundane patterns. Indeed, with petticoats in the minority and those present considered in most cases vulnerable, nothing was as insecure as Puritanism or Victorianism. In distinct masculine tones, life was lived and undoubtedly, "a spade was called a spade," in any case.

Of little concern to those who came looking for gold was the past of the men with whom they found themselves surrounded in common enterprise. Origin, former social status or position, economic backing mattered little as personal identity and background were soon lost in the grim search for gold.

As legend prefers to state it, the gold-seekers made their own laws—moral, criminal, and civil and, in many cases, their laws did not fit the code of the conventional. Behavior was motivated and dominated by a stern economic standard.

Lack of a staid environment caused the gold-seeker to live for the present with a future only if he were lucky with his gold pan and shovel. An adequate grubstake meant his "life hereafter," or at least for several days. Remoteness from conventionality and stability of the social customs of the "States" gave rise to a somewhat bizarre society and social structure with materialism and realism as all-inclusive guideposts.
The very composition of the society of Bannack at the time was such as to excite suspicion in all minds. Outside their immediate acquaintances, men knew not whom to trust. They were in the midst of a people which had come to Bannack from all parts of this country and from many of the nations of the Old World. Laws which could not be executed were no better than none. A people, however, disposed to the preservation of order and punishment of crimes, was powerless for either so long as every man distrusted his neighbor. The robbers, united by a bond of sympathetic atrocity, assumed the right to control the affairs of camp by the bloody code. No one was safe.

Such were the observations of Nathaniel P. Langford as he wrote concerning Montana in the placer mining stage. Langford came to Bannack in 1862, where he was later an active participant in the "vigilante" committee activities. Langford aided in "vigilante" action against the notorious Henry Plummer, who at the time he was sheriff of Bannack, also served road agents as their leader and mastermind.

The men who discovered gold in Montana or, as Langford did, saw the territory's beginnings, offered little hint or suggestion that religious influences were important then. Gold was the all-important factor. On the other hand, there was no open defiance of the church or religion. The miners and gold-seekers just had no time, in the physical sense, for such. Even though many of these men who had followed gold from California to Oregon to Idaho and to Montana may have been imbued with

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3 Langford, op. cit., I, p. 135.
religious devotion in another kind of life, prior to
gold-seeking, such teachings and beliefs became latent
when perspiration and backaches were rewarded by gold
dust or, as often happened, with nothing.

Tales of the exhilaration and excitement gold-
seekers felt in their pursuit of gold have been described
colorfully. Granville Stuart, who in connection with
his brother, James, discovered gold on Gold Creek, May 2,
1858 wrote his account of discovery in matter-of-fact
tones. However, in spite of the fact that his descrip-
tion of the discovery was matter-of-fact, Mr. Stuart
and many like him spent considerable parts of their
lives continuing to seek for gold. So, even to those
who become accomplished in the art of gold digging and
sluicing, gold remained an encouraging commodity and more
comfortable to have than not.

Granville Stuart related his experience at find-
ing gold in Montana as follows:

On May 2, 1858, James Stuart, Reece Anderson,
Thomas Adams, and myself packed up tools we had
... and started for Benetsee Creek on a prospecting
trip. We followed up the creek about five miles
carefully searching for any prospect or evidences
of prospecting but found nothing. Near the bank
of the creek at the foot of the mountain we sunk
a hole about five feet deep and found ten cents in
fine gold to the pan of sand and gravel... This
prospect hole dug by us was the first prospecting
for gold done in what is now Montana and this is
the account of the first real discovery within the
state.  

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4Paul C. Phillips, (ed.), Forty Years on the Frontier,
as seen in the Journals and Reminiscences of Granville
Stuart, Cleveland, 1925, 2 vols., I, p. 137.
5Ibid., p. 137.
Gold Creek discoveries of the Stuarts opened the Deer Lodge valley area to gold diggings and for the next several years there was a periodic influx of gold-seekers. A party composed of A. H. Wilcox, Owens, and White arrived on foot in the area in July, 1862.6

Another party came to Gold Creek and the Deer Lodge valley in the summer of 1862. Mark D. Ledbeater, among those in the party, wrote home as follows:

Vanderburg, the two Hoyts and myself are in the party. Claims above us are paying from $5 to $12 per day and those below $4 to $6. . . Three-fourths of the whole party are going on to Oregon after seeing what hard work mining is.7

Discoveries of gold on Grasshopper Creek and in Alder Gulch occurred the next year 1863. Granville Stuart related a vivid account of the Alder Gulch hysteria.

July 3, 1863, Left our ranch on Gold Creek on May 31 and returned today. When we reached the top of the mountain about a mile from Bannack [Bannack was established as a result of the Grasshopper discoveries] we met a big stampede from town. I inquired what it was all about and learned that six men had come into town a couple of days before to get some provisions, and under promise of strict secrecy had told a few of their friends that they had found a rich gulch and would take them to it. Of course, enough leaked out to create a great excitement and everybody got ready to follow. So here they were, about seventy men . . . They were strung out for a quarter of a mile, some were on foot carrying a blanket on their backs, others were leading pack animals. The

packs had been hurriedly placed and some had come loose and the frightened animals running about with blankets flying and pots and pans rattling, had frightened others and the hillside was strewn with camp outfits and grub. My wife and I assisted some to round up their animals and collect and re-adjust the packs; soon they were all on their way again hurrying and scurrying lest they get left behind.

Gold was discovered at Last Chance Gulch, which later became Helena, in July, 1864. Judge Cornelius Hedges, writing in the Montana Historical Society Contributions, described activities during the discovery period there by noting:

It was in July, 1864, that gold was first discovered in this locality by a party of Georgians, of which John Cowan, Robert Stanley, and Gabe Johnson were members. . . .in September began regular mining operations on a bar not far from where the Masonic Temple now stands. The lateness of the season and the failure of their undertakings up to that time led them to christen their diggings Last Chance Gulch, while the abundance of snakes gave the name to the district of Rattlesnake.

Settlements grew and spread up and down the gulches and the valleys. A few settlements which had preceded the major gold discoveries continued to grow. Many land-owners and farmers of Missouri and of the "border" states who

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8Phillips, Forty Years on the Frontier, op. cit., pp. 246-47.

had been robbed of their land-holdings during the Civil War or had seen those same land-holdings ravaged by the war came to the territory seeking new lands to till. Many of those who had lost all as a result of the war came to Montana; some to mine and others to farm.

Gold Creek had become a settlement after the Stuart's discovery there. Grantsville was established in 1859 and was named for "Johnny" Grant who maintained a ranch there. After 1862, other settlements began. Deer Lodge was established and was located on Cottonwood Creek, eleven miles up the Deer Lodge River. Warms Springs and Gregson Hot Springs were founded.

Bannack was built on Grasshopper Creek diggings and as a direct result of those gold discoveries. It became the first of the territorial government. Virginia City had "gold roots" in Alder Gulch as did Helena in Last Chance Gulch.

Although, gold attracted the masses, there were some settlements in the territory which were founded without the overwhelming influence of gold. West of the Continental Divide were Hell Gate (later Missoula) and settlements

10 Speck, op. cit., p. 57.
11 Ibid., p. 67.
in the Bitter Root Valley. Corvallis, in the Bitter Root, laid no claims to gold discoveries for its beginnings but attracted farmers from the "border" states and the Confederacy. These farmers from the South learned quickly and well that the Bitter Root was a good place for farms and orchards. Fruit trees and farms provided produce which was welcomed on the market in the mining areas east of the mountains. These men in the Bitter Root found another way to gain gold besides digging for it.

Whereas all gold discoveries were important to the economy and early population growth of Montana, discoveries in the Deer Lodge Valley and at Last Chance Gulch were important to the beginnings in Montana of the Disciples of Christ, the religious group to which this study is devoted. It was to Last Chance Gulch or Helena that the first minister or preacher of that group came. While there, he mined as much as he preached, but that discussion follows later. Deer Lodge and Deer Lodge Valley was a concentration point of early Disciples during territorial beginnings. Corvallis, quietly hidden from gold mining directly, had Disciples affiliates who had been loyal since escaping there from Civil War pressures. Later, much later in fact, it was these regions in the territory that helped to launch an organized effort for the Disciples of Christ in Montana. From Helena, Deer Lodge, and Corvallis Disciples of Christ in Montana found loyal support among transplanted members.
Although, a number of preachers and ministers found their way into the territory during the gold mining era, there was little more than a "stand-offish" respect for the church and the parson among the miners. Economic and social conditions of the period would permit or warrant little else on the part of miners. Men, and men, in the main, were in Montana for one purpose; to dig for gold or to make money by supplying the needs of those who dug for it.

The mining camps were peopled by representatives from many backgrounds—racial, national, and economic. To illustrate the vast divergence of the population, we cite the Ninth Census Report of the United States for the year 1870 which was compiled six years after Montana became a territory.\(^\text{12}\) The total population for the territory was 14,048.\(^\text{13}\)

Statistical citations mean very little unless they bear out a specifically significant point. In this case, the point of significance was the overwhelming ratio of male population to female. According to the 1870 census, the Montana Territory had 13,846 men between the ages of sixteen and fifty-nine; 165 women for the


\(^{13}\text{Ibid., p. xvii.}\)
same age group; one male child between the ages of ten and fifteen; four female children for the same age group; thirty men and two women over sixty.\textsuperscript{14}

To reiterate, it was strictly a man's world or to be more accurate, a man's territory with approximately eighty-four men to one woman. This certainly was not the period in Montana history when men gave thought to establishment of homes, the building of schools, churches or anything else that resembled a stable life with community patterns of thought and homey firesides.

Irish and orientals were the largest foreign population groups represented. There were 1,584 Irish and 1,436 Chinese and Japanese.\textsuperscript{15} What could have been more divergent than the religious backgrounds of those two groups? Other national groups which made up the crazy-quilt pattern of Montana Territory populations included people from Germany, England, Wales, Scotland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, France, Italy and South Europe, and British America. There were in addition to the 19,300 Indians which were not included in the white population

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. xvii.
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. xvii.
Culture and religion, presumably, had been in their past, a part of the way of life of those who came to Montana seeking gold and the background of each individual regarding the matter was vastly different from that of his companion who might be Irish, Chinese, Italian, or Japanese.

The objective of each, regardless of race or nationality or whether from Vermont or Missouri, was to find gold. Many found rich diggings at Alder, Gold Creek, or Last Chance; others knew those places only as the point at which disillusionment and failure replaced high hopes and tenacity.

The crude signs, "Tu grass Hop Per," with the lettering fashioned with wagon tar had guided the influx along the wagon trails. Gold was the reason men came to Montana; gold was the reason men stayed in Montana; gold was probably the reason many men left Montana. Family life and religion came after. Of those men who stayed, many had families with them or sent back "East" to the "States" for them.

At this point, there was a place for religion.

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16 Ibid., p. xvii.
17 Langford, op. cit., p. 228.
"She has decided we should wear starched shirts."¹

"Starched shirts" were a part of the transition. Hysterical gold-seeking subsided somewhat. Restraining influences were introduced--sometimes they were subtle with a touch of lady-like finesse, but on more than one occasion, were tactless as a hangman's noose. "Best flannel shirts and highly ornamented buckskins" of which Granville Stuart held a particular yen, were found to be expendable after a long utilitarian reign in the limited wardrobe of a frontiersman and gold-seeker.²

The uncouth element did not disappear entirely, but attempts were to be made to gloss it over and eradicate it. Saloons and hurdy-gurdies remained as institutions in the placer mining camps which were fast becoming towns.

White women and children came. They joined the Indian wives of gold-seekers and taught them the process of ironing shirts.³ Domesticity followed the feminine flying wedge. Dishpans and gold pans were to share equal prestige.

¹Phillips, Forty Years on the Frontier, op. cit., p. 256.
²Ibid., p. 256.
³Ibid., p. 256.
Schools and churches were introduced. Of these institutions, the church was concerned with the welfare, moral and spiritual, of the people. The religious element was not totally foreign to the territory or region. Father Pierre-Jean DeSmet, S. J., in 1841, had established the St. Mary's Mission near the right bank of the Bitter Root River, and the present town of Stevensville.\(^3\) The mission was concerned with the Flathead Indians. Other Indian missions were established later.\(^4\)


\(^4\)Ibid., I, pp. 315-16. In 1850, Father Mengarini recommended the temporary closing of the St. Mary's Mission because of the indifference of the Flatheads. Major John Owen leased the mission and used it as a trading post. Father Giorda re-established the old mission in the Bitter Root in 1866. In 1891, the remnant of the Flathead Tribe under Charlot moved to the Jocko Reservation in the Jocko Valley where Father Ravalli established a mission the original buildings of which still stand.

Father Adrien Hocken established a mission among the Blackfoot Indians in 1859 on the Teton River near the present town of Choteau. In March, 1860, this mission was abandoned for a site on the Sun River. In the same year, St. Peter's Mission was founded by Fathers Giorda and Imoda and has been maintained to the present time, with an interruption between 1866-74. Ibid., II, p. 600.
The first Catholic church for whites was established at the village of Hell Gate in the summer of 1863 and was called St. Michael's.

It was an edifice of hewn logs set up by one of the Brothers from the Mission, namely, Brother W. Classens, and the work being superintended by Father J. Caruana, who while on his way to the Coeur d'Alenes Indians, stopped some time in the village for that very purpose. The church or chapel stood near the brow of the northern bank of the river, called at present Missoula, but originally by Father DeSmet, the St. Ignatius and almost opposite the mouth of the St. Mary's, today the Bitter Root River.5

St. Michael's served the white people in the Hell Gate region with occasional services and was dependent entirely upon the parent church. However, as the white settlement moved to the end of the valley, another Catholic chapel or church was built for the benefit of the Frenchtown community in 1864. Father U. Grassi, assisted by Father Menetrey was responsible for founding the chapel which was for a time called St. Louis, but later the name was changed to St. John the Baptist.6

6Ibid., p. 297.
St. Michael's and the church of St. John the Baptist neither reached a great number of the white settlers since the major concentration of the white population was in the placer mining areas and the western valleys were functioning mainly as an agricultural area with a relatively small white population.

Establishing positively the identity of the first Protestant minister who worked actively in the territory is rather difficult. In his account of the territory, Granville Stuart indicated that "Rev. A. M. Torbett arrived early in 1864 and was the first Protestant minister in Montana." Stuart, if he knew, did not indicate which denomination Torbett represented but stated that he established a church on Idaho Street in Virginia City.

There were probably other Protestant ministers in addition to the Rev. A. M. Torbett of whom Stuart spoke, some of whom practiced their profession only part-time.

Bishop Daniel S. Tuttle's written account of activities in the Montana Territory and Idaho was the most elaborate Protestant-based church history for the territorial beginnings. Tuttle was not the first Protestant minister in the territory.

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7 Phillips, Forty Years on the Frontier, op. cit., p. 268.

8 Ibid., p. 268.

When he came to the area for the Episcopalians, he found other denominations and ministers there. His writings explained in detail his connection or contact, either first hand or by secondary impression, with other ministers in the territory—who they were and why they came.

The Episcopalian Bishop Daniel S. Tuttle arrived in Virginia City, Montana Territory, in 1867. He was the first member of the Episcopalian clergy there. He told about others—the Methodists, the Presbyterians, and the "Campbellites," which was his way of referring to the Disciples of Christ; they were all there when he came.\textsuperscript{10}

In Montana, humanly speaking, I built on no other man's foundation... But in Montana, no clergyman of the Church before me had ever so much as set a foot.\textsuperscript{11}

His statement meant, of course, that he was the first Episcopalian minister to arrive in Montana, not the Protestant minister since he capitalized the letter "c" in "Church," meaning the Episcopal Church.

\textsuperscript{10}Tuttle, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 132.

\textsuperscript{11}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 118.
The Methodists were on the scene, as Tuttle indicated when he wrote "... since I began writing..." to the letter which he was writing from Virginia City. Judge Hosmer has called with Mr. Duncan, the Methodist minister.¹² His Methodist colleague in Virginia City, Mr. Duncan, informed Tuttle of the status quo in religious circles of the territory as Tuttle indicated in the same letter later.

Mr. Duncan says that besides himself (he is only a local preacher), there is only one Methodist preacher in the territory, viz., Mr. Hough at Helena. The Presbyterians, he says, have not one man in the territory, nor the Baptists. The Roman Catholics have several priests, having established their Indian missions in the northern part of the territory nearly thirty years ago.¹³

Tuttle discovered, however, that there were other ministers in the territory, corrected himself by stating the following:

The above account concerning ministers is not strictly correct. A Rev. Mr. Baxter, of the Methodist Church South, had a Sunday School and was gathering a congregation in Helena. And in the same town a Professor Campbell, a Campbellite or Christian, some Sundays exercised his vocation. A Presbyterian minister, also, named Smith, had preached somewhat in Virginia City and had commenced the erection of a log cabin church there. Before any satisfactory progress had been made, however, he abandoned everything.¹⁴

¹² Ibid., p. 131.
¹³ Ibid., p. 131.
¹⁴ Ibid., p. 132.
The Rev. Mr. Tuttle, Episcopalian, must have found perplexing and at the same time rewarding his situation in Virginia City, Territory of Montana, in the year, 1867. Since as he admitted, "humanly speaking," the territory was wide open, from two standpoints; since, on the one hand, there were "few to minister to the flock," it was not necessary to employ any denomination, guile to build a congregation. People were attracted to the first representative of the cleric and in nearly every case, priority of a church group in an area assured it of a permanent and faithful patronage. On the other hand, there was much for a minister to do.

Duncan, the Methodist minister, left Virginia City soon after Tuttle arrived. Regarding that incident, Tuttle seemed unperturbed as he wrote:

I met Mr. Duncan this morning. He tells me he moves away tomorrow, 165 miles to Flint Creek. This leaves me in undisputed possession of Protestant Virginia City. No services but ours and the Roman Catholic will now be held here. Ought I not, as in God's sight, to preoccupy and hold this place?15

15Ibid., p. 135.
"Ought I not, as in God's sight, to preoccupy and hold this place?" smacks a bit of occupational mouth watering and rubbing together of the hands. Pre-emption rights among the clergy in regard to parishioners has never been established and other groups were to invade Bishop Tuttle's Protestant Virginia City. 16

During his stay in Virginia City and the territory, Bishop Tuttle made the acquaintance of everyone worth knowing from store clerks to the governor of the territory. Tuttle visited Governor Green Clay Smith and gave his impression of the governor as follows:

I then called on Governor Smith. He is a stout, pleasant-looking young man, of about five-and-thirty, dressed in gray, and with 'hail-fellow-well-met manners.' He is a Baptist and his wife a Presbyterian. She and his three little children have just come here to live. 17

All Episcopalian activity was not limited to Virginia City. Bishop Tuttle held the first services for the Episcopal Church in Helena on August 11, 1867, after traveling some twenty hours by stage over the 125-mile journey from Virginia City to Helena. 18

16 Ibid., p. 135.
17 Ibid., p. 135.
18 Ibid., pp. 136-37.
Stricken with self-consciousness and uncomfortable, in the beginning, churches and religion moved in along side or nearby the saloons and hurdy-gurdies. At the outset, members of the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, shuddered; were shocked. Seminaries and "States" parish life had not prepared them for the crassness and callousness which they found.

Men, women, and children thrived on both felicity and infelicity; hardship and hope. In what sort of a world, the clerics wondered, had they found themselves. Here the church and religion were accepted with simultaneous sympathy and apathy.

If the "men of the cloth" did not understand the "why" of what they saw, they did understand, that what they found was offensive to their standard of values and system of ethics. With so much amiss and moral systems too long inert, the church felt it must act.

They filtered in; were directed and were sent—the agents of the church. In nearly all cases, they followed the denominational stratagem established in the "States."

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19 Accounts written by ministers and priests who came to Montana Territory in its beginnings offer ample evidence that what they saw did not please them. See, in addition to Tuttle's work, Alson Jesse Smith, Brother Van, Nashville, 1948.
"High church" Episcopalians brought with them "high church" attitudes; the Methodists were conscious of administrative and organizational backing from the "States;" the Baptists soon were present too. The "Campellites" or Disciples of Christ were on scene represented by "Prof. Campbell" at Helena. As traditional with the group, Campbell was operating strictly upon his own without organizational directive or policy, at the outset, at any rate.

Religion and the church found places for themselves in the territory only at the point where and when placer miners began thinking about bringing their families from Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee as well as other areas to the camps which were becoming towns. Women and families joined their husbands at Virginia City and at Helena and in the Deer Lodge Valley or in the Bitter Root if they had not accompanied them in the beginning.

Then, it was not so far amiss, that "starched shirts" were a part of the transition of the territory. The influence of women and families was going to be felt more and more in the territory and in the territorial churches.

In those early years, Disciples men and women were scattered throughout the territory. Bishop Tuttle ministered to a "Mrs. Donaldson" in Virginia City during
her last illness and met a "Miss Irvine" in Deer Lodge, both of whom were Disciples.19

"Prof. Campbell" was Thomas F. Campbell. He preached in Helena and mined there, too. It is with "Prof. Campbell" and his contemporaries of the Disciples faith that this history begins--"The Disciples of Christ in Montana."

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20 Ibid., p. 137.
CHAPTER III

"... Professor Campbell, a Campbellite, or Christian some Sundays exercised his vocation."

Thomas F. Campbell's efforts were initial for the Disciples of Christ in Montana even though he functioned under no national church office assignment or directive. The time had not come yet in Montana for organized Disciples group action.

Thomas F. Campbell, Mississippi born and Bethany College educated, as a Missouri "Campbellite" preacher, was a preacher first and foremost. Thomas F. Campbell, Last Chance Gulch, Territory of Montana, was a gold-seeker, initially, a "preacher," secondarily.

In 1863, Campbell closed his Missouri ministry to accompany his Mississippi Valley neighbors, many of whom were long since tired of war, to the Montana placer diggings. He, in all likelihood, came up the Missouri River by steamboat to Fort Benton and from there by wagon to Last Chance Gulch. Such a travel pattern was common for the purpose of entering Montana from Missouri and its neighboring states.

1Tuttle, Reminiscences, op. cit., p. 131.

2Winfred E. Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ, a History, St. Louis, 1948, pp. 398-99. Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia was granted its charter in 1840 and Alexander Campbell was its first president. It is still maintained by the Disciples of Christ.

3Ibid., pp. 398-99.
Even though he came originally as a gold-seeker, Campbell was probably one of the first, if not the first Protestant minister to enter the territory. His claim to the title of the "first" might be disputed on the grounds that, originally, "preaching" to him while in Montana was secondary and liberally interspersed with placer digging. However, since his church group maintained no organized effort in the territory at that early date, his chances of survival without digging for gold were negligible.

He mined or "dug" during the week and preached on Sundays.\(^4\) Financially, neither paid him well for the mine was never a successful one and he received no remuneration for his preaching. As a mining parson, Thomas F. Campbell found the way of living in Last Chance Gulch as paradoxical as the two professions of mining and preaching he pursued while there. The placer miners, no doubt, puzzled at him as they heard him decry "things of the

flesh" on Sundays and watched him dig for gold Monday through Saturday. That they respected him none-the-less for his activities was evident later by a gesture of confidence on their part.

Mrs. Campbell and family were among those wives and families who came later to join their husbands at the placer digging camps. Thomas F. Campbell met his wife and family at the Marias River after they had come up the Missouri River by steamer in 1865. During the eleven-week trip, a daughter of the Campbells died of the measles and was buried near the present Fort Union. Campbell brought his family to Helena (Last Chance Gulch) by wagon.5

In contrast with many of the living quarters of the placer mining camps, where, in many cases, a blanket lean-to sufficed, the Campbell home was near-palatial. The structure was fashioned of logs which was not uncommon, but the logs were hewn on both sides which gave the home a mark of distinction since it was the first of that type constructed in Helena. A carpet, the first in Helena, covered the floor and was distinctive even though it was made of rags.6

6Ibid., pp. 398-99.
The versatile and enterprising Thomas F. Campbell, in addition to preaching, started a boys' school which met in his private home. Campbell, also, baptized the first convert in the territory, presumably a Disciple. His preaching and mining itinerary had made him rather well known in the Last Chance Gulch area; in many cases, he traveled distances of twenty or thirty miles through the gulches and placer camps, preaching to the miners.

His mining colleagues sent to St. Louis for a bell for his school and asked no pay for it in return except that they be allowed to ring it in return whenever they felt inclined to do so.

Another Disciple, William L. Bullard, hauled it upon an ox wagon, by tedious journeys, from the head of navigation to the young mining town, a distance of one-hundred-and-forty miles without charge.

Thomas F. Campbell, evidently, won the respect of his fellows as a miner, preacher, and teacher.

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7Ibid., pp. 398-99.
8Massena Bullard, Disciples of Christ in Montana, Historical Report of the Secretary of the Montana Christian Association, St. Paul, 1885, pp. 5-18.
10Bullard, op. cit., pp. 5-18.
Although Thomas F. Campbell, Last Chance Gulch and Helena, was not related to the founders of the Christian Church or the Disciples of Christ, his wife, Jane Eliza Campbell, was a niece of Thomas Campbell and a cousin of Alexander Campbell, pioneers of the Disciples of Christ movement.\textsuperscript{11} This fact, although not particularly significant historically, was a unique coincidence.

The location of Campbell's church services or school in Helena has never been determined, although Tuttle described the location of other groups' meeting places as follows:

There were three Sunday Schools, the Methodist, under Rev. Mr. Hough, the Methodist, South, under Rev. Mr. Baxter (who also cultivated a ranch in Prickly Pear) and the Christian under Prof. Campbell, a lawyer, who, it was said, was a nephew of Alexander Campbell. Mr. Baxter held his services in the Helena Academy, which was the Public School House on Rodney Street. I do not remember where Mr. Campbell and the Christians were housed.\textsuperscript{12}

If Tuttle's writings were to be accepted \textit{prima facie}, Thomas F. Campbell was indeed versatile. There is no other evidence, however, to support the statement that he was a lawyer.

\textsuperscript{11}Garrison and DeGroot, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 398-99.

In 1869, Thomas F. Campbell, pioneer-preacher-turned-miner-educator, left Montana Territory and Last Chance Gulch to head Monmouth College in the Williamette Valley of Oregon at the invitation of a group of Christians who had migrated from Monmouth, Illinois to the Williamette.\footnote{Garrison and DeGroot, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 398-99.}

As a preacher, he undoubtedly addressed many; as a miner, he knew many; as an educator he was most successful. He left no established churches or congregations for such was not the pattern of a territory in transition. Many men mined and then moved on; Thomas F. Campbell, his wife and family, were no exceptions.

His efforts as a Disciples preacher were initial in Montana in that he was the first Disciples preacher in the region. Other Disciples were in the territory, however, who shared his religious beliefs and affiliation. They had come and were to come from Disciples stronghold states of Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, and Missouri.

Meetings with two contemporaries of Campbell's in
the Montana Territory were described by the Episcopalian missionary-bishop Tuttle. Writing a letter from Virginia City on July 21, 1867, he recorded the meeting with one Disciple of Christ affiliate, as follows:

I have just visited a sick woman who sent for me. Her name is Donaldson; she is the wife of a merchant here from St. Louis, a Campbellite; she is far gone in consumption. It seemed grateful and refreshing to her to have prayers with her.14

The second visit to Mrs. Donaldson was recorded in another letter written July 30, 1867.

Sunday afternoon I visited Mrs. Donaldson...15

Then, on September 21, 1867, Tuttle wrote of bidding farewell to Mrs. Donaldson.16 The missionary bishop was apparently greatly moved by the spiritual tenacity of Mrs. Donaldson, "Campbellite." She died sometime later.

A brief mention of another member was made by Tuttle regarding a visit which he made to Deer Lodge in 1868.

In the afternoon I visited a Sunday School held in it [a billiard saloon next door and over it

14 Tuttle, Reminiscences, op. cit., p. 133.
15 Ibid., pp. 136-37.
16 Ibid., p. 144.
a hall doing duty as a Court House] under the superintendence of Mr. Addison Smith, a Methodist. Judge Smith had called on me in my Virginia City cabin, and I had given him some Calvary catechisms, etc. Mr. and Mrs. Sharpe and Miss Swallow (Presbyterians) and Miss Irvine (Christian) were helping as teachers.17

There were other Disciples in the territory then. Some, undoubtedly, knew Campbell and were known by him. Many of them knew each other, but it was not until later that they became a part of an organized effort.

Willoughby Thomas, a merchant, lived in Helena and undoubtedly knew Thomas F. Campbell since they were living there at the same time. Thomas was evidently a merchant apart from the others in the busy mining camp. He closed his shop on Sundays—the busy day or one of the busiest for merchants.

While other merchants took advantage of flush hours of Sunday, then the busiest day of the week, to increase their sales, Willoughby Thomas, Disciple, closed his large dry goods store on Saturday evening and opened it not again until Monday morning.18

Elizur Beach was in Montana at the time when double-barreled shot-guns and revolvers were commonplace. After

18 Bullard, op. cit., pp. 5-16.
leaving Portage County, Ohio, his birthplace, Beach went to Kansas in 1857; to Missouri in 1858 and Colorado in the spring of 1860 where he mined for a time. He mined at Alder Gulch, arriving there, June 1, 1863. 19

In the fall he returned to Missouri with a party of sixteen, armed with double-barreled shot-guns and revolvers as a means of protection. They proceeded on horseback to Salt Lake, thence by stage to Missouri. 20

Alice Gray Vivian, a native of Missouri and Elizur Beach were married on April 17, 1864. On the twenty-third of May, they started for Montana from Missouri and arrived September 5. Upon his return to Montana, Beach began stock raising and farming in the Ruby Valley. From 1867 to 1869, Beach mined in the McCunis Bar of the Missouri River district. In 1869, he opened a livery and feed stable in Helena but sold out. In September, 1870, he went to Oregon and returned to Montana with a band of horses which he sold and the following year repeated the

20 Ibid., p. 1192.
operation. In 1872, he disposed of another band in Salt Lake City.  

Beach traveled to California in 1880 and bought a flock of sheep. In 1881, he brought the first "blooded" sheep to Helena and became actively engaged as a rancher after that.  

His eldest son, Emory V. Beach, was the first white child born in the present capital city of Montana; the date, May 10, 1865. As a Democrat, Beach served as a member of the eleventh and twelfth territorial legislative assemblies and 1875 was county commissioner of Lewis and Clark County.  

Although he was one of the first Disciples in the territory, it would seem that Beach did not stay in one spot long enough to become a "pillar" in any church. However, he took considerable interest in the Helena Disciples group after 1880.  

21Ibid., pp. 1192.  
22Ibid., pp. 1192.  
Massena Bullard came to Montana from Fayette County, Missouri in 1862 with his parents. He was twelve years of age at the time. In 1871, Bullard was admitted to the bar and practiced law in Helena and later served as president of the Montana Bar Association.\(^{24}\)

Bullard was a partner in the law firm of Woolfolk and Bullard. His home in Helena was on Benton Avenue between Lawrence and Clark.\(^{25}\) He served two terms as city attorney in Helena from 1883-86 and again from 1895-98.\(^{26}\) He is credited with the following statement regarding the Disciples of Christ in Montana:

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\ldots\text{in 1864} \ldots\text{it is believed that there were in the territory a larger number of Disciples than any other Protestant church.} \]^{27}

His observation has been neither proved nor disproved, but it should be questioned. In 1864, Bullard was fourteen years old. Were his powers of observation mature and astute enough to make a statement which has been sanctioned with pride by members of the church in

\[^{24}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 192-93.}\]
\[^{25}\text{Montana Territory History and Business Directory, Helena, 1879, p. 144.}\]
\[^{26}\text{Progressive Men, op. cit., pp. 192-92.}\]
\[^{27}\text{Bullard, op. cit., pp. 5-18.}\]
Montana? The statement has not been disproved, but it invites question.

Harrison Jordan came to Montana in 1864, bringing with him a carefully-selected stock of merchandise for miners. He came to Alder Gulch on July 17, 1864 and there started his store; however, his business was unsuccessful and he became a rancher and a dairy farmer. He moved to Fish Creek in Madison County where he and his family lived for thirty years until he moved to Pleasant Valley, Jefferson County. He was a Democrat and a member of the territorial legislature, also, he served as a county commissioner. One of his children, Walter M. Jordan became an outstanding Montana Disciples minister. Jordan, in later years, helped to establish the Fish Creek Disciples Church which was located in Madison County.

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28 *Progressive Men, op. cit.*, p. 1095.

Sample Orr, a native of Tennessee, came to Montana where, engaged in the practice of law and in sheep raising. During the third, fourth and fifth sessions of the territorial legislature, he served as a member of the Council (Upper House). He has been characterized as follows by Massena Bullard:

Judge Orr was devoutly religious. In the prime of his manhood he became an admirer of Alexander Campbell, the great protagonist of the religious reformation of the 19th century and united with the Christian Church. 30

Well-past forty when he arrived in Virginia City in 1864, Jonathon Forbis, at forty-eight, began vigorous mining operations. Forbis came to Montana via ox team from his Missouri farm. In the territory, he found that the commonest necessities sold at a premium; flour sold readily at $100 per sack. Forbis and his family moved to Helena in 1865 and lived on a farm. He was characterized as a "man of unusual sagacity, rare judgment, and great force of character." 31 He, too, took part in early Montana politics as a member of the territorial legislature and as one of the county commissioners of Lewis and Clarke County. 32


31 Progressive Men, op. cit., p. 159.

32 Ibid., p. 159.
The first sheriff of Lewis and Clarke (modern usage has dropped the final "e" in Clarke) County was a member of the Disciples of Christ Church. He was W. K. Roberts, a native of Louisville, Kentucky, who came to the Montana Territory in 1863 and mined at Alder Gulch. Roberts encountered road agents during the time he was in the territory in the following manner:

... on December 14, 1863, in company with several other parties, left Roberts' Virginia City for Denver with a wagon train and the group was attacked by road agents. 33

It seems that during the encounter with the road agent, one of the bandits was wounded and his two companions escaped but were later captured and arrested. So, W. K. Roberts experienced the terror of the times and the uncertainty of overland travel.

He returned to Virginia City again in 1864, accompanied by his family. He mined until 1865. That

34 Ibid., pp. 1246-47.
year, he and his family moved to Helena and during the fall, was elected the first sheriff of Lewis and Clark County and was re-elected for the second term of four years. 35

Elijah Chaffin purchased a 320-acre ranch in the Bitter Root Valley in 1866. Chaffin's birthplace was Jackson County, Tennessee. On his ranch, 120 acres of which he tilled, Chaffin raised grain and vegetables and maintained an excellent orchard. He became a part of the Disciples movement while still in Tennessee. 36

The man who eventually became one of the outstanding Disciples leaders in the territory came to the Deer Lodge Valley in 1865. William L. Irvine had joined the Disciples of Christ church in 1837 in his native Madison County, Kentucky. In 1849, he sold his farm in Kentucky and moved to Missouri where he bought a farm. The Missouri farm was located approximately fifteen miles from St. Joseph. 37

36Ibid., pp. 1301-02. See Appendix.
37Ibid., pp. 1074-75.
Irvine and his holdings in Missouri were victims of the Civil War and the "border state" upheaval.

Although opposing secession, the act accomplished, his sympathies were strongly with south, and much of the fine estate he had accumulated, one of the best and most valuable in that section was confiscated or swept away in the fierce ravages of the border.

His characterization implied that he was a man of considerable esteem.

Highly intelligent, with large experience in public affairs, self-reliant and studying earnestly all questions of public import, he was one of the few who arrive intelligently at well considered conclusions, and whether popular or not, avowed them... His character as a Christian gentleman was absolutely above reproach, and commanded the respect of all.39

James M. Ashley was appointed Territorial Governor of Montana April 9, 1869. Governor Ashley was the son and grandson of itinerant ministers in the Disciples of Christ movement in Pennsylvania. Ashley lacked formal education but that did not impede his political career. Before his appointment as territorial governor, he had

38Ibid., pp. 1074-75.
39Ibid., pp. 1074-75.
served in the United States House of Representatives as chairman of the territorial committee and is credited as being one of those who selected the name, "Montana," for the territory. Ashley, who was a Republican, ran into difficulty with the strongly-Democratic Legislative Assembly. Deadlock followed deadlock between Ashley and the legislators and eventually, President Grant removed him from office.\(^{40}\)

Disciples in the territory were engaged in many fields of economic endeavor and professions, ranging from that of territorial governor to storekeeping, ranching, gold digging, preaching, and law enforcement.

Many of those Disciples in Helena made themselves known to each other and held church services even after Campbell's departure. Theirs was the only Disciples church, so-called, (they did not yet have an edifice) and they

clung tenaciously to their convictions and waited hopefully for the time when they would have a minister again.

They were living in a strangle-hold of isolation. Distances were vast. Communication with the States and the East was measured in terms of long distances and delays. Intra-territory travel was difficult and tedious. Tuttle indicated that it took twenty hours to cover the 125-mile distance between Virginia City and Helena by stagecoach.41 Indirect and roundabout methods were involved in contacting and gaining contact outside the territory.

Granville Stuart described the involved mail delivery pattern in these terms:

The pack trains brought us our mail, some letters from the states and some San Francisco papers sent to us from Hell Gate by Worden. . . The letters from Iowa came by way of the Isthmus of Panama to San Francisco, then to Portland and the Dalles, and then overland to Walla Walla, and Frush and Sherwood's Express to Hell Gate, then up here by any reliable person coming this way. We paid 1.00 express on each letter received and 75¢ on each sent out, but letters from home are welcome at that price.42

Those were times of high prices and higher hopes in a new territory. No one in the territory could afford self-pity; only an occasional bit of homesickness or remorse. Gold diggings and territorial life were theirs by individual choice. A measure of the life which they had left behind, many attempted restore and recreate in the Montana Territory.

The members of the Disciples of Christ Church in the territory, some of them, at any rate, longed to have their church in the territory. Many of them were in the territory about nothing ever will be known; they left gold digging and the territory as quickly as they had arrived.

Those Disciples who remained were obscure and ineffective as a religious group in their disorganized helpless for many years. It was, however, upon them that the real beginning of organized "Discipledom" in Montana depended.

Rich placer diggings were on the wane. Men had to seek substitutes for their economic livelihood. They were in the territory and they must either find new ways
to provide for themselves and their families or leave and seek elsewhere. The territory for many years, saw both occur. The territory was maturing in a newly-found respectability.

Soon, there was to be preaching every Sunday.
"... thus for fifteen years hope and disappointment followed each other without anything being accomplished."¹

Fifteen years spanned the time of departure of Thomas F. Campbell and the arrival of another preacher. Disciples in the Montana Territory worshipped without aid or encouragement from any national church office, if, indeed, they were in such a circumstance where they could worship at all.

Walter F. Jordan, a Disciples minister at the turn of the century, characterized the fifteen-year-interim period as follows:

The population was fluctuating. New disciples would move to the community, the meetings would be resumed, hope would begin to rise, when all of a sudden some of the leading members would move away... Thus for fifteen years hope and disappointment followed each other without anything being accomplished. The individual disciples were not to blame. Indeed they were made of material fit for martyrs and saints but with no missionary organization to aid them their hands were tied. They felt their failure all the more keenly when they saw their religious neighbors coming in and possessing the land which by right of discovery belonged to them."²

²Ibid., p. 326.
Many national church groups and organizations, at the outset, became alert to the religious needs of the Montana Territory, but not the Disciples of Christ as a national group. Affiliates of the group were in the territory from the beginning in considerable numbers and they floundered about in the religious sphere—isolated, ignored by Disciples, nationally. Haphazardly, they existed devoid of attention from the organization's core in the States.

Many Disciples, wishing to uphold their religious obligation and conviction, joined forces with other religious denominations and became Presbyterians, Methodists, or Baptists. In modern terms such a move would not be considered as worthy of a second thought, but to the denominational zealot of the nineteenth century, religious affiliation was not to be tampered with or treated lightly. Others of them became listless, disinterested, and apathetic toward not only their own beliefs but toward any. Disciples of Christ in the Montana Territory probably lost more communicants during this period than any other.

In reality, the democratic, loosely-knit organizational basis and background of the Disciples movement was in the case of the Montana Territory, the reason for its inert existence as a religious group. Autonomy gave
rise to ineffectiveness.

The group was not without its stalwarts, those whom Jordan referred to as "made of material fit for martyrs and saints." Beliefs and convictions to which they ascribed had been brought with them to the territory via the gold-seeking and emigrant route. Inculcated with staunch Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Kentucky Disciples backgrounds, they represented the superstructure upon which later organizations were to build.

Beach, Bullard, Forbis, and their Helena Disciples associates were among those who worshipped in that town during the preacherless years. A woman of drive and initiative joined them.

She was Elizabeth T. Morton of Clay County, Missouri who became Mrs. John T. Murphy of Helena, Montana Territory in 1871. She was known as Mrs. "Lizzie" Murphy. Although the name "Lizzie" was a bit unpretentious, it was evidently indicative of the type of person

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3 Ibid., p. 326.
4 Elizur Beach was a native of Ohio; Massena Bullard, Missouri; Sample Orr, Tennessee; W. K. Roberts, Kentucky.
Mrs. Murphy was—not Mrs. "Elizabeth" Murphy, but Mrs. "Lizzie" Murphy.

According to all available information, John T. Murphy did not participate actively in the activities of the Helena Disciples group. Murphy was the senior partner in Murphy, Neel, and Co., "wholesale and retail grocers, liquors, and cigars, and proprietors of Montana Freight Lines, Main St., op. post office."6

John T. Murphy had known mining camps and mining centered activities since he was seventeen years old. He headed for Denver in 1859 leaving Platte County, Missouri and was a clerk in a store there for one year and a half. He was in business for himself at the same place for another year and a half.7

For a year, he was with Ben Holliday and the overland express. After his experience with Holliday, he

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bought teams and freighted from Missouri to all parts of Colorado. Murphy came to Helena in 1865 where he established a large transportation office which had contacts throughout the territory.8

The firm of which Mr. Murphy is principal, have branch houses at Fort Benton and Deer Lodge... their business second to none in the territory.9

In 1871, John T. Murphy assumed a new role. He became the husband of Elizabeth Morton of Missouri. They had four children. Mrs. Murphy must have had a fully-sympathetic husband—after all, the year was 1871 and women supposedly were to maintain their traditional role as homemakers with limited outside activities. Mrs. "Lizzie" Murphy was different and evidently so was her husband because her bustling enthusiasm created a stir among the Disciples in Helena.

Mrs. Murphy succeeded in transplanting her Missouri-born Disciples enthusiasm in Helena. Her presence set off a new thought pattern among Disciples. Latent hopes for

8Ibid., pp. 1238-39.
9Ibid., pp. 1238-39.
a stronger congregation and perhaps even a minister suddenly entered the realm of feasibility.

A woman had given them motivation. Or, perhaps, her enthusiasm caused their own feelings and hopes to crystallize into creative urgency and ambition. They determined to hire a preacher or an evangelist.

Even with all of those things—ambition, Mrs. Murphy, creative urgency and enthusiasm, it took eight years. Mrs. Murphy came to Helena in 1871 and in 1879 a new Disciples preacher was in the pulpit. No national help or aid put him there. The initiative lay in the hands of the small Helena group.

G. A. Hoffman or Gustavus A. Hoffman preached his first sermon to a Disciples of Christ congregation in Helena the last Sunday in August of the year 1879. The leadership void was to be filled, but only for a time.

He was the second Disciples minister to enter the territory.

Minister-missionary Hoffman had come to the Helena church at the request of the Disciples Murphy, Bullard, Forbis, Orr and the others. His objectives were made in a simple statement but their realization was a difficult and ambitious attainment. He was to organize the Helena church and assist in the development of the Disciples movement in the territory. In his Helena congregation of thirty-five members, he found responsible lay leadership.  

Hoffman went to Deer Lodge in April, 1880 where he began the organization of a congregation assisted by lay leaders Ed Irvine and J. Y. Batterton. Wiley Mountjoy, a graduate of Christian University, Canton, Missouri, arrived in Deer Lodge in August of the same year and completed the organization of the church.  

\[1^{11}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 327.}\]  
\[1^{12}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 327.}\]  
\[1^{13}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ p. 329.}\]
A church at Corvallis was built during G. A. Hoffman's stay in the Montana Territory. It was established in June, 1880 with eighteen members and Elijah Chaffin and "Elder" Cowan in lay capacities. Cowan contributed $300 toward the erection of the church and Chaffin $100. The building at Corvallis was the first Disciples church erected in the territory.\textsuperscript{14}

W. D. Lear, a Disciples minister from Kentucky came to Corvallis and the Bitter Root Valley in 1880 where he preached for some months. He visited Iowa for a period and then returned to Corvallis in 1883. He was a native of Garrad County, Kentucky. In 1859, he went to Missouri; returned to Kentucky in 1862 and remained until 1868 and attended Lexington University there. In 1868, after attending Lexington University for only a short time, he went to Missouri and enrolled at Canton University which he attended for three years.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14}The Missionary Tidings, January, 1884, I, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{15}Leeson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 1312.
G. A. Hoffman wrote in regard to the Bitter Root Valley, in which Corvallis is located, as follows:

This valley is so far removed from other settled portions of the territory an evangelist could not easily reach it. The settled portion of the valley is about sixty miles long, and has about 3000 people in it. It is ninety miles north-west of Deer Lodge. The N. P. R. R. passes through its mouth. 16

In another letter to Walter M. Jordan, G. A. Hoffman indicated the sort of experiences he had while in the territory and the places he visited. He indicated in the Jordan letter that he had preached at Butte City, which had a congregation of sixteen, Wickes, Radersburg, Boulder, Bedford, Diamond, White Sulphur Springs, Prickly Pear School House, New Chicago, Missoula, Unionville, Fish Creek, and Phillipsburg. 17

While in the territory, he traveled some 3,000 miles by horseback and 2,000 by stagecoach. Hoffman experienced the uncomfortable Montana winter climate and observed that it was forty-two degrees below zero when he preached at White Sulphur Springs. 18 He offered no comment in regard to the size of his audience upon that occasion. At another time, he was forced to swim the

17 Jordan, op. cit., p. 329.
18 Ibid., p. 329.
Bitter Root River on the back of a "pony" and indicated the swift current was rather cold. 19

Regarding Hoffman, Jordan commented:

I was a lad of fifteen years of age when he held his short meeting at Fish Creek, Madison County, but I remember that he made such an impression on my mind that I resolved to myself that whenever I did become a Christian I would join the Christian Church. 20

During his missionary-evangelistic itinerary in the territory, Hoffman sought out and attracted those who shared his religious background and others who accepted it as a new teaching or interpretation. Congregations sprang up throughout the territory and although the groups were in nearly all cases small, they were none the less enthusiastic or tenacious.

The vast expanse of the territory inhibited the growth of large congregations; particularly, since each group's perspective was that of its own tiny segment.

There was a need for a territorial-wide organization—close-knit which would be made up of Disciples members from

19 Ibid., p. 329.
20 Ibid., p. 329.
all over the Montana Territory. C. A. Hoffman realized that such was the case and before he left Montana, saw to it that others realized it and shared his viewpoint.

As a direct outgrowth of Hoffman's efforts and those of William L. Irvine of the Deer Lodge Church, who is credited with channeling the enthusiasm of Montana Disciplesom into a concrete form, the Montana Christian Association was formed. 21

The organization of the Montana Christian Association was not easy. Irvine's correspondence with lay leaders in the territory revealed many of his fears and in addition, his hopes. He addressed, by letter, two members of the Helena church, W. K. Roberts and Massena Bullard, regarding the progress of the movement toward a Montana Christian Association. His letter to W. K. Roberts follows:

Deer Lodge, M. T.
Sept. 19, 1881

W. K. Roberts,
My dear Brother: We had a conference of the brethren of the Territory to try and devise some plan to secure

the services of an able and efficient evangelist for the Territory, and decided to have the meeting at Helena on Saturday evening, October 1st.

We chose that day of the week as we desired to have Bro. Mountjoy present in the meeting. Others of the brethren were chosen and if my health will justify, hope to be present.

We have written to brethren in Missoula County urging them to be present in the meeting; are writing to brethren in other parts of the Territory, insisting upon their being present in the meeting with us; and desire that you and Bro. Bullard unite with us in writing to every brother you may know, urging them to come and cooperate with us in this work so greatly needed.

I greatly desire to be present on the occasion and certainly will be present, no providential hindrance. Don't delay your writing to the brethren as the time is short.

Hoping to see you soon, with many, very many of the brethren, I am as ever,

Sincerely your brother,

W. L. Irvine.

I hope Bro. Edwin Toole will be present at the proposed meeting, especially if I am able to go as I would be much pleased to visit with him again.22

The date was set for the organization meeting.

It was to be October 1, 1881 at Helena.23

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22 Ibid., pp. 5-18.
23 Ibid., pp. 5-18.
In answer to Irvine's persuasion and patient urging eighteen people attended the Helena meeting. They were Irvine, himself; his son, Edwin H. Irvine, Thomas Irvine, and Wiley Mountjoy of Deer Lodge; Ellis Ballou, Elizur Beach, Massena Bullard, Mrs. Massena Bullard, Shelton Duff, Mrs. G. W. Keeler, G. R. Metten, Mrs. John F. Murphy, W. K. Roberts, Mrs. W. K. Roberts, J. H. Steele, Dr. S. Irvine Stone, Mrs. C. K. Wells, and Mrs. Ann F. Woods of Helena. \(^\text{24}\)

The meeting was carried out properly and W. L. Irvine was elected chairman; Massena Bullard, secretary, and G. R. Metten, treasurer. A resolution was adopted which set up necessary machinery for committees to correspond with other known Disciples in the territory for the purposes of securing funds to hire an evangelist. It read:

Resolved, that two committees be appointed, one to be composed of five members who reside on the west side of the Rocky Mountains; with the president of this organization as chairman, and the other said committees to be composed of five members who reside

\(^{24}\)Bullard, _op. cit._, pp. 5-18.
on the east side of the range, with the secretary of this organization as chairman thereof; that these committees be, and are, instructed to correspond with all Disciples in Montana, whose address they have or can obtain, with the view to secure their cooperation in raising funds with which to obtain the services and assistance of an evangelist, who shall devote his time and labors in proclaiming the gospel and organizing churches in various sections in Montana.25

The group needed money to hire an evangelist. They organized to get it. Some of those at the Helena meeting paid or made pledges to pay within a year from the date of the meeting. Names and amounts varied—Elizur Beach, $200; Massena Bullard, $50; S. Duff, $25; S. Irvine Stone, $25; E. Ballou (due Dec. 1, 1882) $50; Mrs. J. T. Murphy, $100; Mrs. C. K. Wells, $50, and G. R. Metten, $30. Pledged and paid was a total of $525 at the Helena meeting.26

No amount of letter writing or pledge making among Disciples in the territory could quite add up to enough. It soon became obvious to the independent and hardy as well as the dependent and weak that outside help would have to be secured if the Disciples of the Montana Territory were to have an evangelist. Their appeal went to the

25Ibid., pp. 5-18.
26Ibid., pp. 5-18.
Christian Woman's Board of Missions—woman, again, was to aid religion in the territory. 27

Something had been accomplished after those long fifteen years. G. A. Hoffman had come to the territory and preached, taught, and ridden over 3,000 miles on horseback and 2,000 miles by stage. Mrs. Lizzie Murphy had come to Helena. W. L. Irvine's Montana Christian Association filled a need.

Inert and ineffective autonomy was present and was to remain a major obstacle. Isolation and distances did not change. Montana Territory was no nearer Cincinnati or Lexington or St. Louis than before. To the "easterner," Montana remained legendary and daring; remote and romantic. Missionaries and preachers preferred India, Jamaica, or Africa.

Montana was to get an evangelist. It was a woman's job to send him. He was going to find Cincinnati, St. Louis, Lexington, and Springfield were far away and not like Montana Territory. Montana Territory was of little comfort to him, but he did his job.
CHAPTER V

"Let your women keep silence in the churches. . ."¹

Dimes and nickels helped to build Montana churches. Ten cents dues paid by women supplied Montana Christian Churches with preachers and missionaries.² Women hired men as preachers and missionaries and women acted as financeers, executives, and administrators.

St. Paul had defined the position of women in the church.

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.³

His definition remained unchallenged for centuries; for a woman to do otherwise amounted to dereliction of her traditional Christian duty. By 1874, women in general and women who were members of the Disciples of Christ Church in particular questioned and reacted to the literal interpretation of St. Paul's code.

¹I Corinthians 14:34-35.
²Mrs. R. A. Doan, "A Flame of the Lord's Kindling," an address, Turkey Run State Park, Indiana, January 10, 1949, p. 5.
³I Corinthians 14:34-35.
According to the "Christian Monitor" of October, 1874, "The great Sisterhood of the Christian Church will organize a Missionary Society of their own at the general convention soon to assemble in Cincinnati. Out of the assemblage of the "Sisterhood" came the organization made up exclusively of women, called "Christian Woman's Board of Missions" or "C. W. B. M."

At the Cincinnati meeting, the "sisters" heard one of their own number say:

We are all familiar with the exact round of duties which the majority of churches have allowed women to perform. She may distribute tracts, circulate subscription papers, teach in the Lord's Day School, and prepare the floral offering to grace the sacred (7) desk and last and greatest of all, she may sing the praises she dare not utter in any other way.6

From "distributing tracts" and "singing the praises," women of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions launched into an activist program of sending missionaries where the members felt there was a need. The C. W. B. M. was the first national society of women for home missions in

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5 Doan, op. cit., p. 3.
6 Ibid., p. 4.
the United States.

C. W. B. M. was a unique organization. It was unique because it was managed entirely by women and it was even more unique in that these women employed men to serve in various capacities. Women collected and disbursed the funds, selected their mission fields, employed and controlled their missionaries (many of whom were men), and were wholly responsible for the business of the organization.

Financially, the organization was founded upon the premise that "A dime will not hire a preacher but many dimes from many sisters over the country will send a missionary." At that and other things, men smiled and sneered. Women had to prove their capabilities extended beyond "distributing tracts" and "singing praises."

Operations of the group were launched first on the island of Jamasia. Appeals came from other quarters.

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8 Ibid., pp. 69-71.
9 Doan, op. cit., p. 9.
10 Ibid., p. 11.
The "West" and Disciples living there asked for help. One of the C. W. B. M. members wrote:

The call to this great field sounded in our ears and hearts, but the venture in Jamaica absorbed all of our slender means for several years... Miss Lou Payne, Secretary for Missouri, was especially urgent in pressing the needs of the West. She had friends in Montana and knew personally of conditions in that state, and prevailed on the Board to begin work there.

The financial theory of minimum of ten cents dues per member developed the annual receipts of the C. W. B. M. to the sum of slightly over $9,000 as shown in the report of the group at the Disciples of Christ National Convention in Lexington, Kentucky in 1882. A major decision then was made by members of the C. W. B. M. and regardless of their somewhat inadequate budget and lack of capital, they decided to enlarge their missionary operations.

India and Montana were new fields of operations for the C. W. B. M. Misconceptions and misunderstandings

12Ibid., pp. 110-12.
13Ibid., pp. 110-12.
during the period were no more numerous for the former than for the latter. The denim-clad cowboy of the Judith Basin in Montana undoubtedly would have been "down-right" insulted if he had been confronted directly with comparison between his "spiritual" needs and that of an Indian bathing in the Ganges. The kind of "spiritual" needs he understood were constituted in terms of a thirst-quencher.

Regardless of how the Indian on the Ganges or the cowboy in the Judith Basin may have viewed themselves, they were the concern of the "sisterhood" of the Disciples of Christ who knew that the whereof they spoke was Biblical. Although they had probably never seen the Ganges, an Indian or the Judith Basin or a cowpoke, the ladies set out to do their Christian duty in terms of "Go ye therefore to the uttermost parts of the earth..." which included India and Montana because one was as "uttermost" as the other to the nineteenth century.

The long silence enforced by St. Paul was

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14 Matthew 28:19.
broken; women were to take action, and under the auspices of the C. W. B. M. J. Z. Taylor of Springfield, Illinois was going to Montana to the Disciples there to serve them and to survey and evaluate the area for the Christian Woman's Board of Missions. The American Missionary Society of the Disciples of Christ rendered that the Montana Territory was the exclusive missionary project of the C. W. B. M. and missionary efforts there were to be under the jurisdiction of that organization.

The process was hardly simple. It was not one of a group of women deciding to send an evangelist to a territory. There was much more. Disciples in the Montana Territory, although better organized than during the time of Thomas F. Campbell, were still in a state of disorganized floundering. They had an organization, but it was new, quite new, in fact, and the same problems confronted its members that had confronted their predecessors.

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15 The Missionary Tidings. I, No. 1, p. 3.
The vastness and expansiveness of the Montana Territory and its remoteness did not grow less. Choked off from the central stronghold of Disciplesdom, they experienced near strangulation from their isolation.

Money was their problem. How or in what manner could the members of the Montana Christian Association raise enough funds to support an evangelist-missionary-preacher for the Disciples of the territory? To them, the plight seemed almost hopeless and correspondence of the members during the period indicated their concerns regarding the matter of financial aid.

They attempted, according to the code of the frontier in which they lived, to raise funds independently at first. A committee appointed at the organization meeting of the Montana Christian Association, October 1, 1881, believed that it was necessary to raise the sum of $2000 in order to employ a competent individual to come to the territory for one year. It soon was found that they could not

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17 Bullard, op. cit., pp. 5-18.
raise such a sum. W. L. Irvine suggested that the group might be able to raise $1500, "and when we could not raise $1500, he recommended that we made the effort if we could raise $1200. But twelve hundred dollars could not be raised. As a last, desperate resort, he suggested that, "if we could not employ an evangelist for a year we should employ one for four months. The veteran philosopher preferred a third of a loaf to no bread at all."  

Irvine corresponded consistently and conscientiously with other Disciples in the territory. The matter of raising funds to hire an evangelist he carried to other Disciples in the territory. In a letter to Massena Bullard, he stated:

Deer Lodge, M. T.  
November 15, 1881

Bro. Bullard,  
Dear Sir: I have been anxious to know what success you have met with in securing funds with which to procure the services of an evangelist.

I do hope you have met with better success than I have,
for up to this date we have not received assurance of any help outside of our little congregation. Yet I can but hope we will obtain some assistance from the outside; and if persistent efforts will accomplish anything, it shall be obtained. I think if we can raise no more than fifteen hundred dollars in the Territory we could venture to employ an evangelist, as I feel confident that we could raise the deficit from the brethren and the public at the meetings he may hold through the Territory.

I have received letters from Bro. Errett, and also from Bro. Green, secretary of the Missionary Society, urging our going on with the work, and whilst not promising the aid of the society yet speak encouragingly.

They furnished the names of quite a number of preaching brethren whom they heartily endorse for the position.

We are getting along hopefully in our little church, have some accessions nearly every meeting, with good prospects for more. Please let me hear from you.

Truly and kindly yours,
W. L. Irvine.

Irvine wrote other letters and in each, he continued his hopeful campaign for funds. His expectations were never reached in funds forthcoming from the Montana Territory. National aid was forthcoming—after many years of delay.

The Macedonian cry was heard. The C. W. B. M. provided the solution to the perplexities of the Montana Christian Association. The corresponding secretary of

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19Ibid., pp. 5-18.
the Christian Woman's Board of Missions wrote:

We selected Montana as a beginning place for our work (in the west) with great care, and believe there is a grand and good field there for some one willing to work in it.\(^{20}\)

The C. W. B. M. promised to provide \(\$1000\) for an evangelist if the Montana Christian Association would raise an equal sum. The M. C. A. members lost no time in adopting unanimously the proposal and pledged \(\$1000\).\(^{21}\)

The financial impasse had been resolved. The process of selecting an evangelist for the Montana Territory began.

C. W. B. M.'s machinery was employed and after several months of negotiations, they made a choice. From the minutes of the group dated April 4, 1883:

Negotiations have for some time been pending between the Board and Bro. J. Z. Taylor in reference to the proposed work in Montana, in accordance with the promise of the Board made to the churches at Helena and Deer Lodge. Bro. Taylor stated some time since that he would go for a limited time. Being assured that he was a man after their own choice, his offer was accepted with the request that the time be extended to one year. It was decided to accept his labors for that time although much disappointment was expressed that the time could not be extended. We hope it may be yet. He will go about June first.\(^{22}\)

\(^{20}\)Ibid., pp. 5-18.

\(^{21}\)Ibid., pp. 5-18.

\(^{22}\)The Missionary Tidings, I, No. 1, p. 3.
J. Z. Taylor of Springfield, Illinois was the choice of the C. W. B. M. He was to divide his time between the Helena and Deer Lodge churches. He was to preach, teach, and analyze the need of the Montana Disciples for the C. W. B. M. 23

The silence had been broken. A floundering organization on the frontier had received aid. Nickels and dimes continued to flow into the coffers of the "woman's organization."

Let your women keep silence in the churches. . . And if they will learn any thing let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. 24

Women had spoken. Their efforts were manifest in Montana and India. The cowboy in his denim clothing remained unperturbed and the bent elbow and the bar rail were still important and the Indian still cleansed himself in the Ganges, but the Montana Disciples had an evangelist-missionary-preacher.

Women were administrators and executives. Men puzzled. There were fewer questions asked at home.

23 Bullard, op. cit., pp. 5-18.
24 I Corinthians 14:34-35.
CHAPTER VI

"I found there a faithful little congregation. . ."1

"In due time Bro. Taylor arrived, and at once won our hearts by his upright character and by the eloquence and power with which he proclaimed the glad tidings to the people. . ." wrote Massena Bullard, secretary of the Montana Christian Association.2 J. Z. Taylor of Springfield, Illinois arrived in Deer Lodge, Montana Territory on June 9, 1883.3

He found there a different life. People lived in a different manner than in Springfield or any other place he had ever been. Before he had been in the territory very long, Taylor sensed the loneliness and isolation of his fellows—the Disciples of Christ. Those of his own belief before him, Campbell and Hoffman and those who left no record, as well as those of the other groups such

2Bullard, op. cit., pp. 5-16.
3Taylor, op. cit., p. 1.
as those represented by Tuttle and Hough, had sensed the same feeling of sickly helplessness when they were confronted with too great odds. By its very nature, the territory seemed to repel religion and religious influence.

Taylor realized, too, that aid for the Disciples of Christ in the territory had been too late in coming. This handicap and obstacle was never quite overcome and throughout the history of the group in the territory and later, the state, Disciples have wavered between despondent circumstances of privation and mediocre existence.

Of those things and many others, Taylor wrote to his sponsors, the C. W. B. M. His letter included a complete analysis of conditions in the Montana Territory as viewed by a preacher-evangelist. Because of the thoroughness with which he treated the subject, his letter, nearly in its entirety, is quoted, herein.

Helena, Montana
August 3, 1883

To the C. W. B. M. Convention at Island Park:

Dear Sisters: Having been employed by your board to inaugurate the work of the Western Mission in this Territory, I left home on the 6th of June, and arrived at Deer Lodge, on the western slope of the

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Rocky Mountains, on the 9th. I found there a faithful little congregation of about forty members, meeting every Lord's Day, and having a live Sunday-School, whose records showed an average attendance of over fifty scholars. It seemed indeed like an oasis in the desert—like a beacon light to the children of God scattered far and wide on the sea of life.

... Our meetings were held in the court-house, the usual place where the brethren attended, and were characterized by good order and fine attention on the part of the people. There were six additions to the church, four by conversion and two by letter. After the expiration of nearly three weeks, we came to Helena. Here we found a small congregation of about thirty-five members. It has been in existence for about fifteen years, though for the last two years and a half they had ceased to meet for worship. In consultation with the brethren it was decided to regard the old organization as still intact, with its board of elders and deacons, and to resume work with this understanding.

We hold our meetings here also, in the court house, which is by no means the most favorable place for our work. To this we shall be confined, I presume, until a church edifice be erected. As initiative of this work, subscriptions have been solicited, and over $6000 have been pledged upon condition that we build in a certain portion of the city. Whether that shall be deemed best remains yet to be decided. On account of unfavorable circumstances no protracted meeting has been held. As a result of our regular meetings, five persons have obeyed the Gospel. We have also organized a Sunday-School, which has now about forty scholars in attendance.

So much in reference to the work to the present time. While our observation and experience in this field
are necessarily limited, still we think we have learned something of the actual needs of the Territory, and of the true methods of operation that should be pursued.

I. There can be no doubt in the mind of anyone acquainted with the condition of things here, of the imperative necessity of assisting, first of all, the churches at Helena and Deer Lodge in the work of sustaining pastors. Their struggles for existence in the past and their feebleness at present, demonstrate this great need. This is the primary work to be done.

1st. It will give stability to the cause in this territory. As long as these congregations are unable to sustain a pastor we can not claim a permanent foothold here. In this way other religious bodies have operated. Each church has been sustained by means furnished in the East. Had our people received similar aid in the past in Helena they would have maintained that superiority in numbers and influence which they when Bro. T. F. Campbell preached for them fifteen years ago.

2nd. It will make these congregations, when once self-sustaining, radiating centers—helpers in your work in the future.

3rd. By this method, we shall utilize the means of these brethren which are now at our command. They can pay a good portion of the pastor's salary. This they could have also done in the past. These means have, therefore, in a large measure been lying dormant, neither tending to advance the cause among themselves nor benefiting others. Manifestly, to utilize these means, and to help in this Western work, must commend itself to your consideration as of the very first importance. The original plan of having one preacher supply both churches is impracticable. They are too far apart, it is too expensive traveling back and forth, and the places are too important, especially Helena, for such partial work.
II. The next work of vital importance demanded in Montana is that of an Evangelist. The attractions that this Territory presents will, in a few years, draw to it a large population. Its vast mineral resources, almost inexhaustible; its wide valleys and extended plains, adapted to agriculture and stock raising purposes, in richness of soil seldom surpassed; its waters, flowing down the mountains, easily utilized for agricultural and manufacturing purposes, in such great abundance; and its mountain scenery, in beauty and grandeur beyond description. These will always tend to make this an attractive portion of our country. Railroads are rapidly opening it up to travel and commerce, and multitudes of people are daily flowing into it. In the light of these facts we need an Evangelist in this field immediately.

1st. Financially; it is an advantage. Property which is needed for church purposes is cheap now in towns and cities. In a few years it will have increased in value, and thus be placed frequently beyond our reach. By wise management we might secure, in advance, property for church purposes, as the Catholics are doing everywhere, and thus save large sums of money. Moreover, those who erect the first churches receive more liberal aid than those who succeed them. A certain number are felt to be necessary; denominationalism makes a greater number requisite. The people weary of being solicited so frequently— of giving so often—do not aid liberally those who come last. Our plea not being understood we are hence at a disadvantage.

2nd. But a much higher consideration is the fact that we need to look after and save our own people, who are scattered over this Territory as sheep without a shepherd—children of God without the blessed privileges of communion and fellowship you enjoy in the States. Of these we have lost multitudes. In order to enjoy religious privileges many of them have united with other religious bodies. Very many of our best people, isolated as they have been, and without hope of having a church of their own, have gone from us in this way. How many more have been lost by apostasy—how many have gone back to the world again—no one can tell. Of these we have seen enough already to sadden
our hearts greatly. This loss involves not only the loss of members to us, but also their children. To save these disciples who are here, and also those who are coming, is a work of vast importance. The Catholics are awake to all this. Their churches and parochial schools are established everywhere, and many of the Protestant churches fully appreciate the importance of this work. The American Home Missionary Society has thirty-eight missionaries in Dakota this year, it is said, and they have built six new church houses, have commissioned twenty new missionaries, and sent thirty theological students into the Territory for summer work. Are not these facts sufficient to stimulate the sisterhood all over our land to co-operate with you in your blessed work?

3rd. Again, we need an Evangelist immediately to inaugurate the work in new fields. Large towns and cities are springing up all around us cities like Butte, Gallatin, Missoula City, etc., where work should be inaugurated at once—and as congregations are formed to have them supplied with permanent pastoral labor. By thus doing we shall soon have strong congregations in this Territory, and the work of the Lord will greatly prosper in your hands.

III. There are, of course, difficulties to be encountered in establishing the cause in this new field.

1st. Religious opposition. We encounter a preoccupancy of ground here, in a measure, as elsewhere. Romanism is here, strong, vigilant, and well-fortified. Denominationalism has its foothold and retains much of the prejudice against our plea that it exhibits in the States.

2nd. Infidelity is here also—often, too, in the ascendant—cold, cheerless, materialistic infidelity. Something in the kind of wild life they have lived—something in their peculiar pursuits—in the absence of religious influence, seems to have produced this sad mental condition, which knows no God, no human responsibility, no hereafter!
3rd. An intensely worldly spirit prevails here. Most of these people have come to this far west inspired by the hope of gaining wealth. Many have largely succeeded in doing so; others, actuated by this same hope, are still pressing forward with an eagerness that knows no abatement. Along with this thirst for gold comes an intense love for pleasure, so that the human heart seems to crave only the earthly, the temporal, the perishing!! But though there are these difficulties in our way we shall succeed. God and His truth are on our side. Working up to the measure of our high responsibility, we shall finally triumph.

Give us enough of true men—brave men, men of God—and the cross will wave over every city, town and village throughout this vast Territory, and from every valley and plain, from every foothill and mountain side, wherever human hearts beat, will ascend the praises of God.

Press forward in your enterprise. You are inaugurating a work that shall widen and deepen in influence through all the ages of time, and in heaven multitudes will arise to call you blessed, because you made, by Divine Grace, "the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose," and the very mountains and valleys to echo with the benedictions of God.

J. Z. Taylor.5

Thus, J. Z. Taylor, evangelist, offered to the Christian Women's Board of Missions his reaction to Montana. To Taylor and those who were to follow him, cyclical reactions of inspiration and depression to the territory were experienced. Things had not changed a great deal since Bishop Tuttle came to the territory. Religion still met the same calloused indifference and opposition.

5Ibid., p. 1.
Montana was a place to make money; worshipping God was incidental.

As he indicated in his letter, Taylor, soon after his arrival, decided to devote his full time to the Helena group. The C. W. B. M. agreed to send another evangelist to Deer Lodge, to pay five hundred dollars of his salary. The Deer Lodge group was to pay the balance. Wiley Mountjoy who had been working in the Deer Lodge area since August, 1880 resigned his pastorate in August, 1882 and returned East before Taylor's arrival.

Of the "lost multitudes" to whom Taylor referred, of course, nothing was determined as to the exact number of unidentified Disciples in the territory. A religious census for the year 1880 indicated the following religious apportionment of the population: Roman Catholic, 16,450; Disciples of Christ, 675; Methodist (South), 232; Methodist, 364; Episcopal, 300. At that period, the Disciples of Christ had the largest number of affiliates in the territory of any Protestant group.

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6 Bullard, op. cit. pp. 5-18.
7 Ibid., pp. 5-18.
8 Ibid., pp. 5-18.
9 The Missionary Tidings, IV, No. 4, p. 1.
William L. Irvine, Disciples stalwart and president of the Montana Christian Association, died on February 8, 1883. At the third meeting of the M. C. A. held the fourth Wednesday in August, 1883 in Deer Lodge, only three members of the association were in attendance. Many assumed that with Irvine's death, that the organization would cease to exist. Another meeting of the group was called for September in Helena and Edwin H. Irvine, son of the first president, was unanimously chosen president.

When J. Z. Taylor's recommendations and analysis of the territory reached the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, new decisions affecting the Montana Territory were made. Two ministers were to be sent to the territory; one to serve at Deer Lodge and the other at Helena. Their purpose, ultimately, was to make those two churches self-supporting as quickly as possible.

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10 Bullard, op. cit., pp. 5-18.
11 Ibid., pp. 5-18.
12 Ibid., pp. 5-18.
13 The Missionary Tidings, I, No. 6, p. 2.
14 Ibid., p. 2.
Taylor returned to the States. Churches at Helena and Deer Lodge waited for the next ministers and speculated upon what they would be like. The new ministers were an unknown quantity to them and nothing sustains the interest of a congregation quite in the same manner as awaiting the arrival of a new "preacher."

The "faithful little congregations" waited. The new preachers arrived. Other churches were built.

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15 Ibid., p. 2.
CHAPTER VII

"Let no one come to Montana expecting to find an easy field."¹

Helena and Deer Lodge had new preachers. Martin L. Streator came to Helena and Galen Wood to Deer Lodge. The year was 1883; their sponsors, the Christian Woman's Board of Missions.²

Martin L. Streator was a native of Ravenna, Ohio and a graduate of Bethany College. Galen Wood of Aurora, Ohio, was graduated from Hiram College in 1887. Streator had been in the ministry for seventeen years, five and one-half of which, he had been engaged as state evangelist for Pennsylvania. The qualifications of these men along with the favorable reputations which they held in the states in which they had served (Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York) assured the Christian Woman's Board of Missions that they were the right men to send to the Montana field.³

Martin L. Streator overshadowed the efforts of


²The Missionary Tidings, October, 1883, I, No. 6, p. 2.

³Ibid., p. 2.
his colleague in the territory and was to become the outstanding Disciples pioneer in the area. The history of his people in Montana could not be written without countless citations to things of Streator—his deeds, travels, observations, and writings.

He and Galen Wood left for the Montana Territory on October 10, 1883 to serve their respective churches. As soon as he was established in his new pastorate, Streator set down his impressions of Helena in the Montana Territory, in the year 1884 and sent them back "East" to the ladies of the C. W. B. M. He wrote as follows:

Helena is the capital of a vast domain larger than all New England. Already it is the largest and most important city between Minneapolis and the Pacific Portland. It is reported as having 8,000 inhabitants, with a prospect of 60,000.

It is divided into two principal parts called the east side and the west side. There is no river, nor any large stream of water between them. They are separated from each other simply by a narrow valley or gulch, which is crossed by streets in various places.

Helena is located at the base of the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains, by which it is hemmed in on the south. . . The west side is devoted almost exclusively to dwelling houses. It is the healthiest location. It has the finest and best dwelling houses in the city. It is said to be inhabited by the best class of people. . . The finest dwelling house that

4Ibid., p. 2.
I have seen in the city is here far out toward the broad valley. It is attracting more dwellings of its kind. Some are already begun. More are projected. Here will be the homes of the great cattle kings of the territory. Further north and back toward the mountain are many beautiful little houses where the people dwell, with here and there some elegant mansions. There is no church on this side. The people here want one. However irreligious some of them may be, they are willing to contribute liberally to the erection of a church building. They are disposed to favor most the church which comes first.

Whatever way business streets may develop, people will delight to dwell here. And here they will have a beautiful church, and I thank God it will be the Church of Christ.

Montana and her majesty were accompanied by considerable unpleasantness, as Streator learned. He experienced the crippling blizzard of 1886-87 and its effect upon life in Montana. From Helena, February 4, 1887, he wrote:

... At Christmas we had, for the first, a heavy fall of snow which has remained. Alternate thawing and freezing formed a thick crust on its surface. This is dreaded by all Montanians. For it prevents the wind from drifting the snow and exposing bunch-grass for feed to the cattle upon a thousand hills. Horses, with their stronger hoofs and habit of pawing will break through the crust and find the grass, but cattle seldom do it. Our summer had been

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5The Missionary Tidings, January, 1884, I, No. 9, p. 2.
very dry and the grasses short. Hence, all were hoping for a mild and favorable winter. But the last of January a Rocky Mountain blizzard swept down over the Northwest. Already we had snow on the mountains. It brought more snow in abundance, and whirled blinding sheets of snow through the air in all directions. It lifted fresh snow along our railroads and across their tracks. Helena, from all communication, save by telegraph, with the outside world. Coaches were lost in the vast wastes of the trackless snow. Ponderous locomotives, with their huge snow-plows, were hurled from the track. Brave men died in their heroic discharge of duty, in battling with the white monster, that was obstructing every road and crushing every industry. Passenger trains were wrecked and human lives imperiled. Cattle with nothing to eat, were driven by thousands before the freezing blasts of the tempest. The cold wave swept down from the polar icebergs and caused the temperature to fall to forty degrees and even fifty-seven degrees below zero. The people at some places in their extremity, are burning their fences and outbuildings and old shacks. Thus the fierce white fiend of the northern snow-storm established over us this terrific dominion. How feeble is man in the midst of the raging elements. May the good Lord speedily send the friendly chinook and dissolve the icy fetters that bind us. . . Let no one come to Montana expecting to find an easy field. The weather has moderated and the temperature has risen to fifteen degrees below zero, but it is snowing hard again. Never before to my mind, has there been so much gloom in every snow-flake.

The cattle industry of Montana was rendered a severe blow by the winter of 1886-87 and the industry was never to regain its previous status after that period.

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Charley Russell, Montana's cowboy artist, depicted the tragedy of the blizzard in his water color work, "Last of the Five Thousand," the legend of the gaunt steer, legs bowed and head down, standing in a drift with the predatory coyote lurking nearby.

Montana was not an easy field for Martin L. Streator and his associates but he stayed on. A headline over a story in The Missionary Tidings, December, 1887, indicated that "Streator Resigns Work at Helena," and the article under it, which included a discussion of his appointment as Montana Territorial Evangelist, read as follows:

It will be remembered that it was announced a short time since that Bro. M. L. Streator who had served the church at Helena so acceptably for over four years, had tendered his resignation, which had been regretfully accepted. Our readers will be pleased to learn that he will still remain in the employ of C. W. B. M. having accepted the position of Territorial Evangelist. He will be succeeded at Helena by Bro. G. K. Berry, of Charleston, Illinois, who will begin his labors there January 1, 1888.7

As territorial evangelist, M. L. Streator set out to traverse the tremendous area of the Montana

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7The Missionary Tidings, December 8, 1887, V, No. 8, p. 15.
Territory—preaching to scattered Disciples and arousing them to the need of erecting churches and supporting those churches. He served Montana's people as a preacher and evangelist during the period when they were characterized by the clergy as follows:

They are hardy and vigorous, notable for their energy and enterprise. Montana has no place for ninnies and drones. They would soon be stung to death by the busy bees. The prevailing spirit is worldly. Their success has so infatuated them that many care for nothing but money-making. Covetousness, drunkenness, and licentiousness are the curses of Montana... Multitudes are either intensely hostile or utterly indifferent to all religion. Mammon reigns. You find this sentiment in the atmosphere of Montana; that religion may do for women and children, cranks and crones, but men of mettle should make money. It is the hardest community to reach with gospel truth in which I ever labored. Among the busy money-lovers and money-makers are found many lovers of God, who regard money as a God-given blessing, and use it freely for advancing His kingdom. They are the most liberal people I have ever met... Zeal, pluck, and energy, restless ambition and resolute will in pushing great enterprises are characteristic of our people.

Characterizing his own people and writing during a period of territorial development, the editor of the Montana Post wrote:

The outstanding characteristics of our people are enterprise, restless activity, and contempt of danger and privation. Hospitality is general and unaffected. There is a sort of rough, though genuine, courtesy much in vogue among Montanians that makes them excellent companions in danger or hardship.

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8 The Missionary Tidings, November, 1887, V, No. 7, p. 2.

The Montana of which they wrote was of gold, the cattle rancher, the silver mine, quartz, and later, bought-ten votes and boisterous legislators. In spite of conditions which to the clergy appeared to be overwhelming covetousness, and money infatuation, there prevailed a certain honest recognition upon the part of those in the territory of why they were there and what they were after. There was little sham or hypocrisy.

Montana had a new territorial evangelist. He had served the Helena church for four years as preacher and was prepared to serve Disciples in the territory and preach to them in terms of their own understanding. He was by no means a novice at dealing with problems of the territory. He proved himself to be a seasoned observer and was well-grounded in the technique of pursuing his profession. He had met rigorous climatic conditions of the territory and in addition to his winter experience of 1886-87, wrote of the winter of 1888 as follows:

The first month of my work as the Montana evangelist for the Christian Woman's Board of Missions has closed, and it is fitting that I should submit to you and the board a report of it. The intensity of the cold and the severity of the storms
in this month have scarcely been equalled hitherto, either in Montana or in any part of the Northwest. In the Bitter Root Valley, where I have been laboring the most of the time, the temperature sank in a few days to 36 degrees below zero, suddenly rose under a strong chinook to 48 degrees above, and then, under the freezing blast of northern blizzard, it fell down, down, till the mercury was congealed, whiskey frozen solid, and even alcohol was converted into mush-ice. For several days it continued in this arctic condition, when to go any great distance, even to church, was to risk one’s life. The best thermometer in our neighborhood of which I could learn registered 48 degrees below zero. In some sections of the territory spirit thermometers indicated 60 degrees, and even 65 degrees, below zero. It seemed as if the very elements had conspired against us to put our zeal and persistence to the severest test. . .

In spite of the obstacles encountered during the month I have traveled 600 miles preached in six places, Missoula, Stevensville, Eight Mile, Corvallis, Butte, and Deer Lodge, in all twenty-six sermons, to audiences ranging from 10 to 160, averaging 47 and aggregating 1,227 persons, and have collected for the Montana Christian Association $182.90 in cash and $27 in pledges making a total of $209.90 for the association and also obtained pledges for supporting Bro. Lear amounting to $113, making a grand total in cash and pledges for the work in Montana of $322.90. Two persons were added to the church at Corvallis by relation. Two places not mentioned above, Skalkaho and Grantsdale, were visited with reference to future work. Arrangements were made to transfer the mission at Eight Mile to the new railroad station at Florence. The committee appointed for this purpose secured for monthly preaching the free use of a room soon to be built at the station. . .

We did not, for we could not accomplish all that we had hoped for. But what was done has given impetus to our territorial work.

Bro. Lear took me in his two-horse sleigh from
Stevensville to the various places visited in the valley. We had some ride together which will long be remembered. On the morning of the 8th the thermometer at Stevensville was 34 degrees below zero. We had an appointment ten miles away. During the day it moderated somewhat; but we were afraid of freezing. We wrapped ourselves in buffalo coats and robes and had a pleasant ride. Afterward, Bro. Lear, in returning from a wedding, on his way to church was met by that terrific blizzard. It drove the blinding snow and icy sleet into his face, and froze both of his ears while he was driving only two miles. Within two miles of the church he stopped at a house for the night.

Streator had reported upon his first month as territorial evangelist. Despite the weather conditions which were highly unfavorable, he was heard from the pulpit by 1,227 people in a total of six areas and had concentrated considerable effort in the Bitter Root which was continuing to prosper as an agricultural area.

Disciples in the territory reacted favorably to Streator and considered him to be "the right man in the right place." Massena Bullard wrote regarding him that:

Wherever he is known he is respected, esteemed and admired, as well for his devotion to the cause he represents, the integrity and purity of

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10 The Missionary Tidings, March, 1888, V, No. 11, p. 2.
his character and his genial companionship, as also for his scholarly attainments, untiring industry, exceptionally accurate and correct business methods, and splendid tact.  

Streator returned East in June of the year, 1889. It was his first visit there since he came to the territory in October, 1883. The editorial column of *The Missionary Tidings* commented upon his return as follows:

When Bro. Streator wrote, on May 27, his plan was start East by the 17th of June, to be absent a month or two. He is to visit his aged father and childhood home, and bring back with him his wife and little daughter, who have been East for several months. He says: 'No preventing providence, I hope to see the whole Board on my return. I want all of you to see Montana and feel about it as I do.' Bro. Streator has been invited to make his visit here some time during the Bethany Assembly session. This is his first absence from Montana since he went to Helena, October, 1883. Remember, the present standing of our work in Montana is not the result of a fitful flash of enthusiasm, but the fruit of continued, consecrated toil out of a burning heart of zeal for the salvation of souls.

After six years in the Montana Territory, Martin L. Streator had earned a vacation and returned East to report to his sponsors. Discipledom in Montana

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had shown considerable growth. Now there were churches at Bozeman, Missoula, Anaconda, Helena, Deer Lodge, Highwood, Cascade, Butte, Corvallis, Fish Creek (Madison County), and Stevensville and missions awaiting some degree of permanent establishment at New Chicago, Philipsburg, Great Falls, and Chinook.\(^{13}\)

New preachers had come to the territory to fill pulpits and help build churches. Joining Streator, Wood, Berry, and Lear were George E. Barnaby at Bozeman; Eli Fisher at Missoula, and J. A. Seaton, Stevensville.\(^{14}\)

Experiences were the same and related from one Disciples church to the next in the territory. A few Disciples met; lack of funds confronted them; a preacher was needed; a church was dreamed about and sometimes built. C. W. B. M. received reports from the territory and its churches. They read much the same but with different names and different dates.

Helena, Corvallis, and Deer Lodge had had organized congregations for some time—their congregations were the earliest in the territory of the Disciples brotherhood. Others were organized and endured the painful

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\(^{13}\)The Missionary Tidings, December, 1889, VII, No. 8, p. 9.  
\(^{14}\)Ibid., p. 9.
process of being organized. In February, 1884, Galen Wood held the first service in Anaconda. On July 27, of the same year, the church, which cost $2,000, was dedicated with seven members on the church roll. By 1889, the church membership was twenty-three.\(^1\)

W. D. Lear held the first Disciples church services in Missoula in 1884. Letters sent to the C. W. B. M. by a "Sister A. W. Newell first moved the Disciples . . . to lend a helping hand."\(^1\) J. L. Phoenix, territorial evangelist, who had been employed by the C. W. B. M. in 1885, had his headquarters in addition to M. L. Streator, Montana Disciples had another territorial evangelist. Church meetings and services in Missoula were held in an old carpenter shop until July, 1888. Eli Fisher, then the minister, recommended the building of a chapel and the C. W. B. M. delegated the work to the Children's Mission Bands.\(^1\) Offerings

\(^1\)"Our Montana Churches," The Missionary Tidings, October, 1889, VII, No. 6, p. 11.
\(^1\)Ibid., p. 11.
\(^1\)Ibid., p. 11.
from children's groups helped to build Montana Disciples churches—a rather unique method of financing the operation, to say the least. Work on the building was begun March, 1888.

The cost of lots and building will be about $8,000. In the rear of the church Bro. Fisher has built, in his own name, a parsonage, intended, ultimately, to become the property of the church. He has done this at a cost of $2,700.18

In the spring of 1885, a congregation was organized at Highwood. After the group was organized, a chapel was built at the cost of $1,000. M. L. Streator said of the chapel:

It is 30 x 18 feet in the clear, with ceiling 11½ feet high. It is a log building, but is the neatest log house I have ever seen. . . . In the center of a fertile valley, a sheltered cove within the mountains, it is in peculiar accord with its surroundings, and exactly adapted to its purpose. At a distance it appears like a frame building, partly hidden among the trees. As you approach it, its beauty grows upon you. You admire the hewn logs brought from yonder mountains. . . . it is seated with chairs. The platform is gracefully and beautifully carpeted. The pulpit is attractive in its simplicity.19

Martin L. Streator was quite impressed, evidently, by the rustic atmosphere and surroundings of the Highwood church.

18 Ibid., p. 11.
19 Ibid., p. 11.
On the last Sunday in June, 1886, M. L. Streator preached at the Court House in Bozeman and to his surprise, found many Disciples in the community who attended the services. That day, he formulated a church covenant which was signed by twenty-six. He visited them several times during the following months and the church roll grew to thirty-four. From February 5, 1887 to June 1, 1888, the membership increased to nearly 100 and M. L. Streator devoted almost his entire time to that church. It was during that period that a $5,000 brick chapel was erected.  

The Butte church was established during the same period. Galen Wood held a few services there at intervals between 1886 and January 1, 1888, at which time he began regular work there. The permanent organization of the church was set up March 4, 1888, with sixteen members, and by 1889, had increased to thirty-four. Early church meetings of the Disciples in Butte were held in Fidelity Hall, on Broadway, and on June 1, 1889, occupied the Congregational Chapel. It was not until later that they had their own church building.  

[20Ibid., p. 11.]

[21Ibid., p. 11.]

Much has been told already regarding the churches at Helena, Deer Lodge, and Corvallis—the earliest in the territory. Helena was the strongest church in the territory with a membership of 123 in 1889. "It has the most valuable church property and the most wealth in its membership of any church in the Territory."22

Deer Lodge was making progress.

They have built an elegant brick chapel at a cost of $8,000. Since their organization they have received by obedience of faith, 22; from sister churches, 42; from the Baptist Church, 3; in all, 86 members. Of these 5 have died, 6 are absent and residence unknown, 4 are resident at distant points, 27 have received letters of commendation leaving a resident membership of 44. They have small but active Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, a good prayer-meeting and Sunday-School.23

Church affairs were forming into a more orderly fashion during the period as evidenced by the report of the Deer Lodge congregation. Ministers and church officials were keeping records of their members, of additions to the membership, deaths, and residence withdrawals—a considerable change from the haphazard or non-existent records of the earliest church meetings.

22Ibid., p. 11.
23Ibid., p. 11.
Cascade, Fish Creek (Madison County), and Stevensville had churches established, too. Cascade's report showed a total membership of thirty with the following financial status:

The amount of money received and expended for the year ending June 30; secured in church property, $20; Sunday-School supplies for one quarter, $20; Sunday-School library, including bookcase, $100; total outlay, $2,200; average per member, $74.33.  

Cascade church members in the year 1889 had a great deal more zeal and enthusiasm as evidenced by their financial report, than among the Disciples membership of the state in 1948—fifty-nine years later. Contrast $74.33 per capita for the Cascade church in 1889 with $5.04 per capita for Disciples members in the state in 1948.  

Fish Creek had sixteen members in 1889, but had no minister. Harrison Jordan was an elder in the church. Stevensville had forty members with J. A. Seaton preaching there monthly.  

Relative strengths of the churches in the territory ranged from the strongest at Helena and Deer Lodge to the weaker and struggling ones and to the "missions"  

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24Ibid., p. 11.  
26"Our Montana Churches," op. cit., October 1889, p. 11.
which Galen Wood and R. E. Dunlap were building throughout the territory. They visited Philipsburg and New Chicago and $500 was subscribed at those points for a preacher but none was secured before 1889. Ministers and evangelists of the Disciples were looking toward Great Falls and Chinook but up the year 1889, nothing had been done by the Disciples in those areas. 27

Churches had been established. Small congregations were the pattern of the era and members of them were looking toward the future with the hope that there was a future for their struggling group.

Streator, himself, writing in 1889, summarized the period and looked to the turn of a new decade, 1890, in the following manner:

Six years ago after diligent investigation, Montana was selected as our Western Field, and the brethren of the General Christian Missionary Convention requested not to enter it. At that time the Christian Church had only two preachers in this side domain, and they engaged chiefly in secular pursuits. Now we have eight men in Montana devoted wholly to the ministry of the word; G. K. Berry at Helena; R. E. Dunlap at Deer Lodge; Galen Wood at Butte; Eli Fisher, Missoula; J. A. Seaton at Corvallis; B. F. Norris, Cascade; Miley Mountjoy, Bozeman, and M. L. Streator as State Evangelist.

Then, we had one house of worship; now we have eight, among the best in the new state. . .

For every dollar the Christian Woman's Board of Missions gives to Montana, Montana raises at least

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27 Ibid., p. 11.
two dollars to carry on the work. Yet so great are
the burdens in this western field that without this
help from them scarcely any money could be raised.\textsuperscript{28}

Montana had grown up politically; once a terri-
tory--now a state in her own right. Frontier economic
attitudes prevailed, but in some cases were softened,
in others only more accentuated. The dollar, and a
silver one, at that, still remained mighty big in the
"Treasure State."

But, for the church, it still was not "an
easy field."

\textsuperscript{28}The Missionary Tidings, December, 1889, VII, No. 8,
p. 9.
CHAPTER VIII

"In presenting this, my final report..."¹

The year now was 1890. It was a magic one in the magic moneyland of Montana. Men were rich. Men were poor; one day could make the difference or even one hour. Everything was for sale if one had the right amount of money and could afford to stay in the market. There were names which represented power and money. Few challenged them, but they challenged each other and the small man in the mine in Butte or at the "Big Stack" in Anaconda was bruised, bandied, badgered, and expendable in the process.

Things were measured in terms of their bigness. The era was silver-clad and copper-mad. It was a different kind of madness than that of the gold years, if indeed, madness could be or can be cold, calculating, and clandestine—copper-madness was and more. The names of the era are familiar ones in Montana, as familiar, as the

big state herself to her natives. Finlan, Hauser, Heinze, Daly, Clark, and many more dominated and dictated the period. It was their era in Montana—politically as well as economically. There has never been an era like it and there never will be again.

Money was the criterion for everything. It was felt everywhere and in all phases of the state's existence. The church in such a locale could not hope to escape the influence and the confluence of such thoughts and activities. Diamond stickpins in silk ties surely made an uncomfortable contrast to unvarnished pews and half-finished edifices. But rich men gave to the church, too, though many thought not enough.

Other things happened during the era. In the nineties, there was an epidemic in Bozeman. It was suffocating the town with its dreariness. The Disciples minister, Wiley Mountjoy, in 1890, wrote of it:

We have done little at Bozeman during the month of January, except visit the sick and attend funerals. We are under a cloud. The entire town and community are much depressed. So much sickness caused primarily by the epidemic, 

2Wiley Mountjoy, "Letter," The Missionary Tidings, n. d., however, letter was dated, January, 1890, VII, No. 11.
endeavoring to persuade the remainder of the Flathead Indians to leave the Bitter Root Valley for the Jocko Valley Reservation.

A commissioner, trying to persuade the Flathead Indians to leave the Bitter Root Valley and go to the Joko [Jocko] Reservation, called their attention to the fine fishing and hunting, and the government appropriation. One of the chiefs replied: 'Our loved ones sleep in this valley. Can you gather up the scattered bones of our beloved dead and move to Joko? If you can we will go contentedly, otherwise, we will remain by the graves of our fathers.'

R. E. Dunlap, Deer Lodge minister, made the following report in regard to Montana Disciples in 1890:

Five years ago, after a pains-taking effort, M. L. Streator was able to report only 250 Disciples in Montana. Each year since has shown a good percentage of gain so that, with all our losses, we now have an aggregate membership in our churches of 501, and perhaps 200 Disciples resident where they have no church home...

Montana has eleven Christian Churches. Of these, six have weekly preaching, one has tri-monthly, and one has monthly preaching. One has occasional preaching, and two have none. Ten preachers serve these churches. Eight of them devote all their time to the work and two are engaged in secular callings.

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3 The Missionary Tidings, May, 1890, XVIII, No. 1, p. 15.

Disciples of Christ in Montana were challenged by their contemporaries as Dunlap indicated in the same report.

The Montana Christian Advocate wrote a caustic criticism of the statement in last year's minutes of the M. C. A., that there were eleven Churches of Christ and 408 Disciples of Christ in Montana. The criticism contained an uncharitable estimate and false statement of the piety of the Disciples, and a false statement concerning their claims in using only scriptural names in designating the Lord's people. While we recognize that the piety of Disciples will compare favorably with that of their religious neighbors, the puerile charge of exclusive appropriation of scriptural names can have force with those only who are ignorant of our movement in the interest of Christian unity. So far from excluding others from such use of them as we make, we rejoice at every indication of a growing righteous jealousy for these names upon the part of people who can not yet abandon their party names and standards. But we shall not be driven from our security in Christ, nor our purpose to effect the unity of His people, by the ridicule or defamation of teachers who should know better.\textsuperscript{5}

Disciples by that time had gained enough strength and notice to draw criticism to their group. Their status as a religious group was improving. But, as the forerunners of the movement had intended, they still were maintaining that they were not another denomination, but a brotherhood within which all brothers in

\textsuperscript{5}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 10.
Christ might unite—even, Methodists, Presbyterians, or any so inclined.

Butte was an area of concern. There was much to be done there. Regarding it, R. E. Dunlap wrote in 1890:

I am more than ever impressed that there is a great work for the Disciples to do in Butte. Our great need is a good, well-located chapel. Since our meeting began, a Congregational preacher has come to the city to revive that church if possible. When our meeting closes we will, perhaps, have to seek another place for regular meetings—vacating the Congregational chapel. How this need is to be met is difficult to foresee. Real Estate advances more rapidly than our financial ability.

The appeal for and need of funds were perpetual. There was never enough money to operate effectively. The loyal ones attempted to maintain their status with what was available and never stopped hoping that there would be more.

In September 1890, according to a published report in The Missionary Tidings, the following conditions existed:

... the reports show that we have in Montana ten church and three mission stations in thirteen places dispersed through eight different counties. We have two churches and two missions in Missoula County; two churches in Deer Lodge County;

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6Ibid, pl.10.
one church in Silver Bow County; one church and
one mission in Lewis and Clarke County; one church
in Gallatin County; one church in Jefferson County;
one church in Cascade County; and one church in
Choteau County.

This statement will indicate, even to those not
familiar with the geography of Montana, that most of
our churches are widely separated from each other.
But they are planted in the centers of commercial and
social influence.

These churches report an aggregate membership of
585. Besides this we have about 200 scattered
Disciples in the state. This gives us a total
membership of 785.7

Progress was being made. It was painfully
slow and certainly not extremely obvious, but each
report was more favorable than the preceding one. The
theme was always the same with variations very limited.
Lack of money (in the churches) was the greatest
deterrent.

Our work in the 'Treasure State' is
steadily advancing. All communications of the
past month show that the churches are taking hold
firmly and pushing forward vigorously. The detri-
ments and hindrances to the progress of the gos-
peh are not usually noted in our reports, the
brighter side of the work only is generally given.

7The Missionary Tidings, September, 1890, VIII,
No. 5, p. 8.
To tell of the whirlpool of worldiness in which Montana 'society' is whirling giddily around; of the unbelief in the gospel that loves in these modern days to wear the name of 'Agnosticism,' because it has an intellectual sound and forms a convenient veil for a deep-seated antipathy of the fact that social customs are formed which seem not only to have left religion entirely out, but to be armed against it—all this kind of thing would not read like 'reports from the field.' But in the face of all opposition the work is prospering and the word of Christ is winning converts and building up His followers in faith and graces.\(^8\)

The year was now 1895, but a similar observation had been made by Rev. Daniel Tuttle, Bishop of the Episcopal Church, when he arrived in Virginia City in 1867. Churchmen had lived with Montana values and ideas for over thirty years and were still troubled and puzzled at what they saw.

New names appeared on the minister rolls for the state. A few old ones remained. Walter M. Jordan, Deer Lodge minister, and son of Harrison Jordan, who had been an elder in the Fish Creek Church, reported the following to the C. W. B. M., October, 1895:

\[...\] the financial outlook for Deer Lodge \[...\] is very discouraging. Crops are very light; silver so low that the mines near here are all shut down, and business in general is very slow.\[...\]  

\(^8\) The Missionary Tidings, March, 1895, XII, No. 11, p. 12.
I believe Bro. Dunlap used to receive $1,800 per year but times are so hard here now that we are quite content with half the amount.9

Silver interests and the silver market and the economy they created affected the state and in turn its citizens. That the churches were affected was indicated in a report made at the Twenty-First Annual National Convention of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, Dallas, Texas, October, 1895.

The churches in Montana and Colorado are still suffering from the depression in their silver interests, especially those in Montana. However, they think a better state of things is in prospect. In some instances heavy indebtedness on church buildings has crippled the churches. To my mind the wisdom of weak congregations becoming so involved is a serious question. What they might be able to carry in prosperous times may crush out the very life in case of stringency. The church at Butte City, Montana, is now seriously disturbed over this very question of how to meet its obligations. . . M. L. Streator has been almost overwhelmed with the responsibility of the Evangelistic interests of both Montana and Colorado, either of which is quite enough for one man, however efficient he may be. G. E. Ireland, having been appointed Evangelist for Montana, will share the responsibility hereafter, leaving Bro. Streator to devote his time and energy to Colorado.10

M. L. Streator was appointed as evangelist for Colorado and was undoubtedly qualified having experienced life surrounding a mining economy in Montana which had its counterpart in Colorado.

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9The Missionary Tidings, October, 1895, XIII, No. 6, p. 112.
10The Missionary Tidings, December, 1895, XIII, No. 8, p. 169.
Projects and enterprises are measured in terms of their success whether they are secular or religious. Disciples of Christ in Montana through the C. W. B. M. had received aid and organized direction since J. Z. Taylor arrived in the territory in 1863. He had been preceded by others, Hoffman, Campbell, and some who had come and departed without leaving a record. What was the success of the Disciples movement in Montana? How can its success or failure be measured?

Statistics, such as the following, can be cited. In the year 1896, the following summary was made:

... I am unable to find a record of the number of Disciples in the 3 churches in the territory at the time the C. W. B. M. began their work in that field. But I am confident that 200 would fully cover the membership at Helena, which was 37, Deer Lodge, and Corvallis. On this basis the Disciples in Montana increased fivefold in 13 years. People are amazed at the rapidity of our increase throughout the nation. . .164 percent in 15 years. Yet in Montana they increased 500 percent in 13 years. What mission field can show a more fruitful record? 

... Average per member [per capita giving] $15.61. 
... This is an average per member that strong and well-established churches might do well to emulate.11

Opinions and judgments of men who served the territory and the state as preachers and evangelists

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can be related as a part of an analysis.

Martin L. Streator, after long negotiations, had succeeded in getting a permanent Disciples church erected in Butte. The Shortridge Memorial Christian Church there, to quote, Streator, "has been expensive, it is only equal to the demands of the enterprising and growing city." The Disciples of Christ movement in Montana had been able to meet a need, which still existed in 1897 when M. L. Streator wrote:

The appalling need of Christian work in this metropolis [Butte] among the closing of the racing season, stated that it had very successfully completed as $2,200,000 passed through their pool-rooms. Women vied with men in the wild whirl of the gambling mania, and dragged down the young and the pure with the debased and vile. It is worthy of heroic Christian effort to establish a primitive Church of Christ in this city of marvellous growth, limitless resources and abounding material prosperity, a city of 30,000 souls but a place where Satan sits enthroned amidst abounding iniquity. . . here is one of the most needy and important fields that the wide world can afford. . .

The same year year, 1897, another evaluation and report was offered to the C. W. B. M.

. . . The reports from the various congregations showed our present church membership in the State to be 1,055; money raised by the churches for all purposes was $5,336.80. This was supplemented by $3850 from the National C. W. B. M. 14

13 Ibid., p. 163. See Appendix for complete text.
14 The Missionary Tidings, January, 1898, XV, No. 9, p. 231.
Or, in an evaluation, the reaction of those who sat in the congregation in the pews and made up the membership can be sampled. In 1898, Sallie Batterton of Deer Lodge, Montana wrote the following letter:

It seems almost impossible for the people outside its limits to appreciate the magnitude of this great western field.

One of our western States, with its 146,000 square miles and a population of a quarter million, can enumerate but few more than a thousand Disciples—a whole state with a much smaller membership than a single church in some of the central states.

Can you realize that a State officer in this western field, to attend one of our annual State Conventions, must do so at personal expense, frequently of not less than $25 traveling from 50 to 200 miles? This part of America must be won for Christ that we may accomplish His great purpose—the evangelization of the world.15

Again, from the letters of Martin L. Streator, a citation from his last report to the C. W. B. M. in 1898, as follows:

Dear Sister White: In presenting to you this, my final report of work for the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, I wish first of all, heartily to thank you as Corresponding Secretary, and Sister Burgess as the President, and along with each of you the other officers and members of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, for their kindness and

confidence, their sympathy and support, frequently during great and perplexing trials and difficulties during these long years of service for our common Lord. When, in October, 1833, my wife and I, with little Annie, then a babe only nine months old, went to Helena, Montana, we had no expectation that we would be retained in the service of the Christian Woman’s Board of Missions for fourteen years and three months... Throughout this period we have striven, above all things else, to be faithful to the Lord in performing the duties entrusted to us. The principle enunciated by the apostle Paul, 'It is required...stewards that a man be faithful.' (See I Cor., IV: 1-5) has been my constant motto. When the C. W. B. M. began their mission work in Montana we had but three churches in the Territory. Now we have fourteen churches in the State...16

The time was now the turn of the century. It was for Disciples in Montana, the end of an era. An important phase to them shepherded by Martin L. Streator. It was his era and to him much credit was given by his colleagues. He had succeeded basically in understanding Montana, her people, and the West's way of doing things. He understood vastness, bigness, richness, and the magnetic hypnotism of the mountains and the plains. Some things he misunderstood, but in turn, helped to correct misunderstanding where Montana was concerned. What he could not defy he decried. His church and its

people were to him all-important and what he did, he did with the Disciples of Christ welfare and interest uppermost.

Streator was not a saint but a strategist.
"Regular meeting of Christian Church Board met at Parsonage."\(^1\)

Church boards in the Disciples churches were meeting regularly and determining the policy and future of their individual churches. Churches were inviting Disciples to worship with them and members of the congregations were encouraged for a period and then discouraged as the history of the Disciples of Christ in Montana followed the cyclical frontier pattern of development of the territory and the state.

When Martin L. Streator concluded his work in Montana in 1898, he left fourteen churches of the Disciples of Christ. The churches were not all strong churches and their existence was a struggling one. Churches of the Disciples were located at Anaconda, Bozeman, Butte, Cascade, Corvallis, Deer Lodge, Fish Creek, Florence, Helena, Highwood, Missoula, Hogan, South Boulder, and Virginia City. Membership totaled over 1,000 with total offerings over $9,000.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Unprinted record book of the Anaconda Christian Church.

\(^2\)The Missionary Tidings, January, 1896, XIII, No. 9, p. 225.
According to a report of the United States Census Bureau for the year 1906, the Disciples of Christ had a total of twenty-two organizations in Montana with 2,008 members; 632 men; 1,226 women; 18 churches; 5,150 seating capacity. Church property of the group was valued at $92,600. Six of the churches were in debt; the amount, $7,585. There were five parsonages; value, $10,300; twenty-one Sunday Schools; 190 officers and teachers with 1,291 students.3

With a total population of 303,575 in the year 1906, the state of Montana was represented by the following breakdown regarding the number of communicants or members per thousand population in the special census report. Communicants or members per thousand for the various churches and beliefs were listed as follows: all Protestant bodies, 80; Baptists, 7; Congregational, 3; Disciples, 7; Lutheran, 10; Methodist, 23; Presbyterian, 13; Episcopal, 11; Latter Day Saints, 2; all others, 5 and Roman Catholic, 238.4

According to the 1906 statistics, the church in Montana was still for women and children with the

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4Ibid., pp. 240-41.
5Ibid., pp. 240-41.
number of men members considerably less.

Fifty years after Streator's departure in 1898, the Disciples of Christ in Montana in the year 1948 had a total membership of over 4,000 with total offerings of $21,716.41.⁶ Per capita offerings were $5.00 plus which seems meager compared with the offering of $74.33 per capita of the Cascade church in 1898.⁷ Montana's per capita offering does not, however, compare unfavorably with other states of the Northwest with $6100 plus for Oregon and $7.00 plus for Washington. It is higher than the per capita offering for strong Disciples states such as Indiana with 143,563 members and $3.50 per capita church contribution; Missouri, another Disciples stalwart, has 126,756 members with $3.60 per capita.⁸

In 1948, the Montana Disciples had twenty-one churches. In fifty years, there had been churches

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⁷ "Our Montana Churches," The Missionary Tidings, October, 1889, VII, No. 6, p. 11.
added to the fourteen which Streator left and some of those fourteen had disappeared and new names and places were added to the roster. Disciples in 1948 had churches at Joliet, Great Falls, Fort Benton, Miles City, Anaconda, Lewiston, Kalispell, Bozeman, Havre, Gallatin Gateway, Whitehall, Polson, Ronan, Helena, Missoula, Conrad, Deer Lodge, Hamilton, Butte, Glasgow, and Billings.⁹

Many of the same problems that confronted Streator confronted churches in 1948. Among the twenty-one churches were weak ones with only part-time pastoral arrangements and not a very hopeful future.

Measuring results of a church enterprise is difficult because one is forced to deal with intangible commodities and quantities. Communicants, members, and converts can be listed and discussed; property valuation can be measured and per capita offerings and total offerings cited. Still, the total and complete worth or weakness cannot be computed.

⁹Ibid., pp. 520-21.
What of human resources and leadership; did Montana produce vital leadership for the Disciples of Christ church? That too, seems an unfair question. From a single itinerant mining-teaching-preacher to twenty-one churches, strong and weak, seems an important and long-term gain. What men of renown and rank came out of the Montana Disciples membership? Perhaps, none who would prefer to name himself as the top of the social ladder but he was important to his church and his church important to him. He was loyal to his church even though in the surroundings of mountains and streams, he might decide to miss the sermon on an occasional Sunday to go hunting or fishing. That made him no different than a Methodist or Presbyterian or Episcopalian. Ministers and preachers frown up the practice from the pulpit and label it a kind of indifference.

Members of the Disciples of Christ in Montana controlled no vast wealth or prestige. It was never a wealthy group or one which would attract the banker, capitalist, or conservative. It made and makes its appeal to the agrarian groups and those of middle-income.
Early members of the Disciples of Christ in Montana probably were not reached soon enough and the church's national missionary organization was too slow in the beginning at recognizing the situation as it really existed. The area, for many years, was basically misunderstood and the motives of its people misconstrued. Support and help from organized national sources did come to Montana but the aid never seemed to be quite enough. Montana Disciples attempted as best they could to help themselves and what they were able to do for themselves was courageous and honorable.

National church aid through the perservering Christian Woman's Board of Missions, accomplished much but could have accomplished more if it had arrived sooner and in greater monetary quantities; however, C. W. B. M., at that time, was a new organization and was undergoing the testing period under double jeopardy. It was not only a new organization, but it was a woman's organization!

Disciples of Christ in Montana, as a church body, was never to become as effective or as important in numbers or influence as counterpart groups in the bulwark states of Indiana, Missouri, Kentucky, West
Virginia, Ohio, and Tennessee.

Distance, vast and great, and decentralization were felt nowhere among Disciples as acutely as in Montana. Individual churches were too greatly isolated in many cases and were forced by geography, the elements, and the economy to remain weak and struggling. Montana represented a new era and a different way of life and new religious techniques were introduced.

Small and isolated ranching and farming areas, within their communities, did not have the capacity nor the urban characteristics necessary to support several different churches of different denominations. Community churches were established and denominational identity was no longer important. Many Disciples became members of such churches.

The Disciples men who came to preach in Montana and to evangelize did the thing they were sent to do. Without exception, they were sincere in their convictions. They struggled and groped and hung on, cursing a thing they understood to be materialism. It was wrong and evil and they lashed out against it. Those who came to Montana and who preached—men like Streator, Lear, and the others—upon leaving, understood, from a churchman's viewpoint, Montana as an enigma and a paradox.
Even if its influence was not overwhelming in Montana, the Disciples of Christ church served the needs and desires of its members. It was a comfort to the wife of a rancher, or a merchant, or a miner and to the rancher, or the merchant but Montana traditions and environment made the admission, upon the part of the latter, difficult. Men and women prayed and offered thanks in their own unique way, but to one only slightly acquainted with the way of the West, their way was not always a part of convention or orthodoxy.

Disciples churches and other churches were entrenched in Montana and would stay. The teachings interpretations attracted those of like mind and background. They would still decry pleasure-seeking and pews would be too vacant to suit the clergy—vacant, if not because of "materialistic" influences because of recreational. Trout and elk too have allure.

They have served their own—the Disciples of Christ churches. Perhaps, other churches will be added. The struggling existence of Montana Disciples churches will not cease. They are still detached in many ways from the heartland of the church. There was a place for the church in Montana; although
it was not as important as the church thought it should be, it was there.

Montana was a big state, and still is, and no being or anything could detract from her bigness and her seeming aloofness.

Men are still trying.
APPENDIX


Helena, Mont.,
August 25, 1889

Mrs. Maria Jameson: Sister I write this to express very earnest commendations of the services of Brother Streator as our Evangelist at large. No other man has, and no other man can, in a short time become so well acquainted with the needs of this field as Brother Streator. He is known to a great number of our people in almost every inhabited section of our territory. Wherever he is known he is respected, esteemed and admired, as well for his devotion to the cause he represents, the integrity and purity of his character and his genial companionship, as also for his scholarly attainments, untiring industry, exceptionally accurate and correct business methods, and splendid tact. These qualities commend him to his brethren, and enable him to exercise controlling and healthful influence in every part of our work, without arousing even a tendency to opposition, or engendering the least shadow of jealousy or envy. They commend him to the people of the world, who because of their friendly regard for him are inclined to a favorable consideration of the cause he pleads. They commend him to people of learning and influence, thus giving weight to his utterances, making him a welcome guest in cultured circles; and in many ways greatly enlarging his opportunities for so presenting the cause that it may command the attention of all classes. Such a man is of inestimable value to our frontier communities in this formative period of our history. He is preeminently the right man in the right place.

Massena Bullard.
Martin L. Streator made a report to the C. W. B. M. in 1897, regarding Butte and conditions there. The report appeared in The Missionary Tidings, December, 1897.

Under the orders of the National Executive Committee of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, the time of your Evangelist for the West has been divided between Colorado, Utah, and Montana. Under special orders from the National Board, I have made two trips to Montana chiefly in the interest of the Shortridge Memorial Christian Church in Butte City. Frequent and detailed reports of the progress and the final results of the work have been made to the National Board from time to time. The outcome of the repeated effort was the securing of a new loan for the Butte church, and the location of a new pastor in Butte City, for whose entire support the church agreed to provide.

During my last visit to Montana, I learned that the Methodists have invested $100,000 in the State. While I was in Butte, the Presbyterians dedicated two new houses of worship, one at a cost of $2,500, and the other at a cost of $25,000. They now have three churches in the city of Butte.

While the edifice of the Shortridge Memorial Christian Church has been expensive, it is only equal to the demands of the enterprising and growing city. It is not near as costly as the new building of the Presbyterian Church. Those who complain about the extravagance of our church in Butte would remember that it is the largest and most thriving city in all Montana, a vast region, more than twice as large as all New England. It has a dominating influence over the State. The appalling need of Christian work in this metropolis among the closing of the racing season, stated that it had very successfully closed as $2,200,000 passed through their pool-rooms. Women vied with men in the wild whirl of the gambling mania, and dragged down the young and the pure with the debased and the vile. It
is worthy of heroic Christian effort to establish a primitive Church of Christ in this city of marvelous growth, limitless resources and abundant material prosperity, a city of 30,000 souls but a place where Satan sits enthroned amidst abounding iniquity... here is one of the most needy and important fields that the wide world can afford. May the Almighty God strengthen and sustain Brother Sherman Hill and his young wife in their efforts to build up and firmly establish the Church of Christ in Butte!

In order to prevent the foreclosure of the old mortgage, C. W. Pool had advanced $1,725. But did not avail. Had it not been for his magnanimity in proposing to cancel his mortgage, and take, if necessary, a second mortgage. We are under many obligations to Brethren Lewis A. Smith and J. C. Bender, attorneys-at-law in Butte City, and Brethren J. H. Meyers and E. Scharnikow, attorneys-at-law in Deer Lodge, and Brother Massena Bullard, the C. W. E. W. attorney for Montana, in Helena, for the valuable council and service, and hearty cooperation in securing the loan that saved for the Disciples of Christ, the Shortridge Memorial Christian Church in Butte City...

A financial report for Montana Disciples churches was published in The Missionary Tidings, December, 1896.

...I am unable to find a record of the number of Disciples in the 3 churches in the territory at the time the C. W. B. M. began their work in that field. But I am confident that 200 would fully cover the membership at Helena, which was 37, Deer Lodge, and Corvallis. On this basis the Disciples in Montana increased fivefold during 13 years. People are amazed at the rapidity of our increase throughout the nation, which, according to Dr. H. K. Carroll, 164 percent in 15 years. Yet in Montana they increased 500 percent in 13 years. What mission field can show a more fruitful record?

CHURCH FINANCIAL REPORT

Amount paid for regular preaching------$7,833.34
Transient preaching------------------------377.26
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>$16,428.93</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average per member: 15.61

This is an average per member that strong and well-established churches might do well to emulate.
The author received the following letter from Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, General Secretary of the National Council of the Churches of Christ regarding the participation of the Disciples of Christ in the organization of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America:

April 25, 1951

Mrs. H. A. Demaree
515 East Pine Street
Missoula, Montana

Dear Mrs. Demaree:

In reply to your inquiry of April 11, I write to say that the Disciples of Christ were one of the charter members of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. According to the official report of the first meeting of the Council held in Philadelphia in 1908, there were 28 official representatives of the Disciples of Christ in attendance. These included such distinguished figures as J. H. Garrison, B. A. Abbott, Peter Ainslee, Herbert L. Willett and Levi G. Bachman. In the first Executive Committee of the Council, which was appointed at that time, I note the following members representing the Disciples of Christ: Rev. F. B. Power of Washington, D. C., Prof. Herbert Martin of New York, and Rev. L. G. Batman of Philadelphia. As a Vice-President representing the Disciples of Christ I find the name of Rev. J. H. Garrison of St. Louis.

The Disciples of Christ were also officially represented at the Inter-Church Conference on Federation held at Carnegie Hall in New York in 1905 which drafted the Constitution of the Federal Council and submitted it to the various denominations for their official approval. I find his picture on page 192 of the report as a member of the Executive Committee of the Conference. I also note that he presided at the afternoon session on November 16 and gave an introductory address on that occasion on the theme, "A United Church and Religious Education." The list of delegates to the 1905 Conference includes 39 representatives of the Disciples of Christ.

Very sincerely yours,
Samuel McCrea Cavert
General Secretary.
INTERVIEW WITH MR. BEN H. CHAFFIN

Mr. Ben H. Chaffin, 1126 Taylor Street, Missoula, Montana in an interview with the author on May 16, 1951, related the following information regarding the establishment of the "Christian" or Disciples church at Corvallis and the role of the Chaffin family in the establishment of that church.

According to Mr. Chaffin, who had heard his grandfather, father, and uncles describe and discuss beginnings of the Corvallis church, it was built, probably in the year 1877, or as Mr. Chaffin indicated, at about the time of the Nez Perce War and Chief Joseph's "rampage," which occurred in that year.

He stated that the building cost $2500 and that the following men contributed approximately $500 a piece toward its construction: Milton P. Chaffin, Thomas A. Chaffin, Elijah Chaffin, Amos Chaffin, James A. Cowan, and J. L. Humble. As Mr. Chaffin remarked, "Five hundred dollars was a lot of money in those days."

W. D. Lear, according to Mr. Chaffin, was not the first Disciples minister to preach in the Corvallis church. He stated that "Campbellite circuit riders" came to the Bitter Root and held services at the church
before Lear came to the "Valley." There were a number of those preachers, none of whom he recalled by name except for one, "called Flowers."

During the summer months, baptisms (immersions) were held in the "warm slough" which was back of the church and during the winter, in the church building, Mr. Chaffin related. The original structure, which has been remodeled, still stands, although, now it serves as a community center and church for Corvallis.

The Chaffins had been "Campbellites" while still in their native Georgia and brought their belief with them to the Bitter Root Valley. Moses E. Lard, whom Mr. Chaffin cited as a "great Campbellite preacher," was a cousin of Elijah Chaffin.

When the Chaffins left their native Georgia, they intended to go to California and had no idea of coming to Montana, until, "they got into Mormon and Indian Country," and heard about the gold discoveries in the Montana region, stated Mr. Chaffin. Amos Chaffin arrived in the Bitter Root in 1863; Milton and Elijah Chaffin, September 4, 1864. Milton and Elijah came through Missouri to Montana by wagon train, which according to Mr. Chaffin, was commanded by Seth Bullock, with "Uncle Anthony," second in command. J. L. Humble, who also contributed to the building fund of the Corvallis
church, was a native of the Cumberland Valley in Kentucky.

Mr. Chaffin did not recall that any of the Chaffins had ever done any gold panning but were for the most part, "stock raisers." "The Indians," according to him, gave land to the Chaffins and his "dad and grandfather (father was Thomas and grandfather, Milton) had 480 acres." The location of the Chaffin ranch was given as two miles north of Corvallis; the original Chaffin ranch now is cut up into five or six smaller ranches. "Uncle Anthony," according to Mr. Chaffin, at one time owned the land which later became the "homestead" of Marcus Daly.

Milton and Thomas Chaffin, according to Mr. Chaffin, brought the first sheep to the Bitter Root Valley and engaged in the butchering and slaughtering business at Henderson Gulch. (Jesuit missionaries had introduced sheep earlier but not so much for commercial purposes or on a very large scale.) "In 1884, Dad took sheep to Yellowstone (Yellowstone Park)." The Chaffins had few difficulties with Indians except in "freighting through Hellgate to Benton," when the Blackfeet and Piegans carried on some raids.
Father Ravalli, Jesuit missionary to the Flatheads, often visited the Chaffins and according to Mr. Chaffin, "was welcome to eat and sleep without any cost."
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The Missionary Tidings, for many years the official publication of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions, provided the bulk of the material for this thesis. The periodical enjoyed only limited circulation and was not widely read except by the ladies of the C. W. B. M. and other interested Disciples. The Missionary Tidings, a monthly, was not indexed and consequently, a page by page search of the early issues now in the files of the United Christian Missionary Society Library, 222 S. Downey Ave., Indianapolis, Indiana, was necessary in order to obtain the information for this thesis.

The following issues of The Missionary Tidings were used:


A number of issues for the year 1884, whose date could be determined only by the nature of the contents of the articles they contained. Volume numbers were available, as follows: I, no. 1; IV, no. 4; I, no. 6; a letter from Martin L. Streator in IV, no. 12 and January, 1884, I, no. 4.


November, 1887, V, no. 7.

December 8, 1887, V, no. 8.

March, 1888, V, no. 11.

July, 1889, VII, no. 3.


December, 1889, VII, no. 8.


May, 1890, XVIII, no. 1.
September, 1890, VIII, no. 5.
March, 1895, XII, no. 11.
October, 1895, XIII, no. 6.
December, 1895, XIII, no. 8.
January, 1896, XIII, no. 9.
December, 1896, XIV, no. 8.
January, 1898, XV, no. 9.

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Record Book of the Anaconda Christian Church, 1895-1914


Letter to the author from Dr. Samuel McCrea Gavert regarding Disciples participation in the founding and organization of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, April 25, 1951.

Personal Interview with Mr. Ben H. Chaffin, May 16, 1951.

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