

BILLINGS THE GREATEST WOOL MARKET IN THE WORLD

In the Heart of One of the Richest Tracts in the Americas, Both for Grazing and Farming, Thriving Little Yellowstone City Forges to the Front in an Industry Which Is Rapidly Becoming One of the Very Greatest in the Treasure State—Facts and Figures in the Wool Industry and Something About Billings as a City and How It Has Grown and Prospered.

BILLINGS, Dec. 31.—Billings, the county seat of Yellowstone county, is without doubt the liveliest and thriftiest city of its size in the state. It has a population of nearly 5,000 and is steadily growing. Its buildings are largely of brick and stone and have a substantial, modern appearance, while the streets are broad and clean and well kept. A modern electric light station and water-power plant keeps the town well lighted and adequately protected from fire. Commercially, it is the largest trading center in Eastern Montana. The town derives its patronage from a

first rural free delivery to be established by the postoffice department runs out from Billings and brings a daily mail to a rural population of about 800; the postal business at Billings, as shown by the department statistics, is the greatest of any city of the United States of a similar size, except Sterling, Illinois, which is the home of a celebrated patent medicine laboratory. The streets of the city are all graded and equipped with sidewalks, and most of them lined with shade trees; the lawns and flower gardens of Billings are admirably kept and greatly admired. Notwithstanding the erection of many new

Snidow Sheep company. Each of these sheep companies shipped more than 100,000 pounds of wool in 1902.

EMPORIUM POPULAR WITH THE BILLINGS FOLK

SPECIAL TO THE INTER MOUNTAIN.
Billings, Dec. 31.—One of the largest and most progressive wholesale liquor houses in the state is that of L. H. Fenske of Billings. The firm has been doing business in Billings for 20 years and is recognized by the liquor men of the state as one of the

of the most impressive things to the visitor at Billings is the mammoth stock of goods carried by the merchants. The stores in this thriving city are up-to-date in every particular.

The A. L. Babcock Hardware company is one of these progressive firms. Aside from the big hardware store the firm owns the Yellowstone Valley flouring mills, which grind 150 barrels of flour daily. The mills run night and day and employ constantly 10 or 12 men. The principal grade of flour manufactured is "Billings' Best," which is known in every household the length and breadth of the state.

A. L. Babcock is president of the company and F. B. Connelly secretary. The store was established 20 years ago and by its enterprise and progressiveness it has become the objective point for purchasers of hardware for many miles around.

Colonel Babcock was born in New York state about 50 years ago, and went to Illinois, where he stayed until 1882. There was a great rush for the West in that year occasioned by the completion of the Northern Pacific road.

When Colonel Babcock came to Billings the town was composed almost entirely of tents. He brought a stock of merchandise up the Yellowstone river by boat. In the fall, when the railroad was completed, he brought more goods, and since that time has been building up and enlarging his business until it is second to none in the state. The firm of the A. L. Babcock Hardware company does a large wholesale business, and two traveling salesmen are on the road continuously, selling flour and hardware. Gradually the firm is working toward a wholesale jobbing business, and commands a territory extending 150 miles south into Wyoming.

The town of Billings is well located for a distributing point for wholesalers and the A. L. Babcock Hardware company has not been slow in recognizing these features. During the past few years trade has been increasing rapidly and doubtless will continue to do so as the country surrounding Billings is developed and settled.

Colonel Babcock is president of the Yellowstone National bank.

BILLINGS STEAM LAUNDRY IS AN UP-TO-DATE PLANT

SPECIAL TO THE INTER MOUNTAIN.
Billings, Dec. 31.—Among the many thriving business houses in Billings, the steam laundry, owned by Erickson & Scott, easily takes front rank for its up-to-date-ness and enterprise. The establishment is equipped with all the latest machinery and is thoroughly capable of turning out the finest work from St. Paul to Butte.

The firm consists of W. J. Scott and E. Erickson, two gentlemen fully alive to the needs of the public, and anxious to please customers.

The building, on First avenue north and Twenty-sixth street, is a model of convenience and neatness. It is 120 feet long and 45 feet wide, and built of brick.

Mr. Scott, planned the building and the admirable arrangement of the machinery within. The machines are placed in two lines, the entire length of the building, while the huge boilers which furnish the hot water and motive power, are stationed in the rear. The apparatus is thoroughly modern, which makes it possible to do fine work with neatness and dispatch.

In the rear end of the spacious work room is an apparatus for making the soap used in the laundry. Here also is the place where silks and other delicate fabrics are washed by hand.

One department is devoted to repairing clothing which comes to the laundry torn, while near the front of the building is the marking room, which like the rest of the laundry, is spacious and well lighted.

The laundry makes a specialty of one-day work for the convenience of the traveling public. You may send your bundle to the laundry in the morning and in the afternoon it is returned to you neatly washed and ironed. One thing you may always be sure of and that is, when your bundle comes back to you it's clean.

Traveling men from as far west as the coast and east as far as St. Paul save their laundry until they reach Billings, knowing that the work will be done promptly and in the neatest possible manner.

The laundry has out-of-town agencies in every town east to the Dakota line; west to Livingston; on the Burlington, to

are not acquainted with the product of F. B. Chapman's store at Billings.

He makes a specialty of manufacturing saddles, and for durability, beauty of design and excellence of workmanship they cannot be excelled in the state.

Mr. Chapman employs only the most competent artisans in his establishment, and the work which he turns out has won for him an enviable reputation among the men who spend the greater part of their time in the saddle.

There is a good variety of designs, ranging from the most exquisitely-carved and handsomely-decorated saddle down to the plain sort, all so strongly sewn and constructed as to meet the severest requirements.

Every saddle turned out from this establishment is guaranteed to be as represented. He also sells a great number of the best saddles to dealers outside of Billings.

Mr. Chapman's harness store on Montana avenue carries a superb stock of everything needed for riding or driving, for the comfort of the horse or the convenience of the owner. A fine assortment of handsome harnesses, for work or driving horses, is constantly kept in stock and

river by a system of turbine wheels. It has a capacity of 4,000,000 gallons daily.

The electric light station, which is run in connection with the water pumping plant, furnishes the current for 7,500 incandescent and 75 arc street lamps. It is equipped with three general electric generators of the latest three-phase type and one arc machine.

NEW HOTEL IS SOON TO BE PUT UP AT BILLINGS

SPECIAL TO THE INTER MOUNTAIN.

Billings, Dec. 31.—Something that the busy town of Billings has needed for many a day, and one that will soon be established, is a thoroughly modern hotel, run on up-to-date principles. A large handsome three-story brick building is now in process of construction and will soon be ready for occupancy.

The proprietors of the new hotel are H. W. Rowley and P. B. Moss, two well-known business men of Billings. The hotel will be elegantly furnished with all the modern conveniences and comforts that money can buy. Billings is a convenient point for commercial travelers to stop for



THE SHEARING PLANT OF THE SNIDOW SHEEP COMPANY, IN BILLINGS.

rich agricultural district and draws trade from 150 miles north and fully the same distance on the south, and about 75 miles east and west.

It does not depend upon any one industry and is rapidly coming into prominence as a jobbing center.

WOOL, MUTTON AND BEEF ARE THE STAR PRODUCTS

The principal lines of industry are the growing of wool, mutton and beef. Great stretches of wonderfully rich grazing land lie on every side of the town, and any number of the most fertile farms in the state can be found within a few miles of the city.

The town is built on an undulating plain between high sandstone bluffs, and the great Yellowstone river, which rises in the famous "Wonderland," flows through the valley, watering the whole of Eastern Montana and turning north, empties into the Missouri.

The portion of the Yellowstone valley of which Billings is the center has the finest climate in Montana. The influence of the warm breath of the Japan current, or equatorial river in the Pacific, is felt over the entire state. There are occasional cold spells, which rarely last over three days, when the mercury drops lower than 20 degrees below zero, but in the dry air it is not felt so severely as zero weather in the lake or Atlantic coast states, and the wind never blows when the temperature falls below zero in Montana. The recorded mean temperature in Montana is 48 degrees. The average rainfall is 20 inches. The snow fall is less than in New York or Ohio, except in the mountains. A day when the sun does not shine is a rarity, and building operations and work in the open air can be carried on in every month. The elevation of Billings above the sea level is 3,112 feet. The climate is unsurpassed for healthfulness.

PUBLIC UTILITIES IN HUSTLING LITTLE CITY

Billings contains the improvements and advantages usually to be found in cities of 25,000 inhabitants. She has a fine modern sewerage system; water works, with a capacity of 4,000,000 gallons a day, and 14 miles of mains, capable of sup-

houses each year, there is not an empty house in the city.

GREATEST WOOL MARKET IN ALL THE WORLD

Billings is the greatest primary wool market in the world, over 14,000,000 pounds of wool having been sold and consigned to eastern centers during the season of 1902. It is also the greatest mutton shipping point on the Northern Pacific railway. Other exports are cattle, horses, agricultural products and building stone. About 5,000 horses were purchased here last year by the remount department of the British army.

The commercial interests are larger than in most cities of several times the size of Billings. One firm pays nearly \$50,000 annually in freights, while several others pay two-thirds and half that amount. There are three wholesale houses, and several very large retail firms. Billings as a railroad center will ultimately be the wholesale point of Montana. The four banks have an average deposit of \$1,750,000. All the banks then in Billings stood firm through the panic of '03.

FACTS AND FIGURES ON GREAT AND GROWING TRADE

Mr. Henry White, secretary of the Billings club, who is in a position to tell perhaps better than anyone else, stated to a representative of the Inter Mountain that the total shipment of wool from Billings during 1902 exceeded 13,000,000 pounds. While these figures do not quite equal those of the preceding year, yet it is a distinct gain when one takes into consideration that over 2,000,000 pounds were shipped from the Burlington warehouse on the Cody branch. This wool was formerly shipped from Billings.

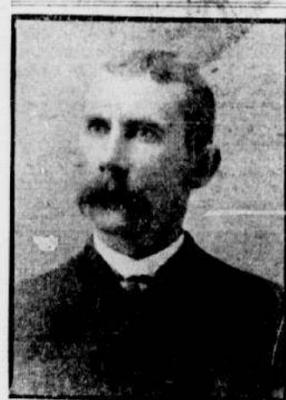
This makes Billings easily the largest primary wool market in the world, the fact being proved by three years' statistics. There is no other place where so much raw wool is handled as in the metropolis of eastern Montana.

The town is also an important cattle shipping point. All of the cattle south of the Musselshell mountains are driven to Billings to be shipped to the eastern markets.

Every year a large number of cows from

most reliable houses. The establishment, on Montana avenue and Twenty-seventh street, is well stocked with old whiskies and the choicest wines and brandies to be obtained anywhere in the market.

Twenty years ago L. H. Fenske, the proprietor, came up the Yellowstone river from Bismarck, N. D., with a boatload of freight. Billings was a canvas town at that time, but even at that early date gave



L. H. FENSKÉ OF BILLINGS.

promise of a great future. A few frame shacks and a handful of tents were all that marked the site of the town which today is one of the liveliest and most progressive cities of the state.

Mr. Fenske, with true business instinct, recognized the possibilities of the country and unloaded his freight and opened his establishment.

HIS BUSINESS GREW AS BILLINGS GREW

The town prospered and Mr. Fenske's business continued to grow until today it is second to none in Eastern Montana. For 20 years he has occupied the same location, replacing his first building by a handsome brick structure, and by fair dealing and a strict integrity has won the confidence and esteem of every business man whom he has met in a commercial way.

His wholesale house is orderly and well-kept and his customers are always treated with courtesy and consideration.

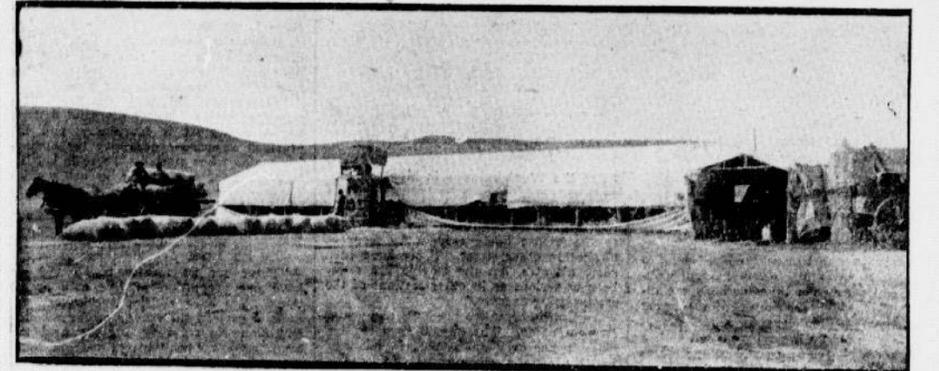
He is the agent for the famous Val Blatz beer of Milwaukee, and the justly celebrated products of the great Anheuser-Busch brewery of St. Louis. A big stock is constantly kept on hand and dealers may always feel confident of having their orders filled.

His leading brands of whisky are "Old Crow" and "Bond & Lillard," which he keeps in large quantities. He also has a big stock of these goods in bond at the distilleries where it is taking on age. "Hunter's Rye" and "Lewis' '66" are two of the popular brands of bottled whiskies which are constantly kept on hand in quantities that always makes it possible to fill the wants of dealers.

A full line of choice cigars is carried. Mr. Fenske's establishment is one of the pioneer landmarks of Billings and is recognized throughout Eastern Montana as one of the city's most substantial business houses. The proprietor is an enterprising, public-spirited citizen, always ready and willing to lend his assistance and influence to any worthy project which has for its object the upbuilding and advancement of the town. It is his open, fair-minded manner of doing business that has won for him the esteem and respect of a big list of customers.

BILLINGS PIONEER WHO HAS GONE TO THE FORE

SPECIAL TO THE INTER MOUNTAIN.
Billings, Mont., Dec. 31.—One



EXTERIOR VIEW OF THE SNIDOW PLANT AT BILLINGS.

Sheridan, Wyo., and on the Cody branch to Red Lodge.

Its enviable reputation has been justly earned and is one of the institutions of which Billings may well feel proud.

ONE OF THE LARGEST STORES IN THE COUNTY

SPECIAL TO THE INTER MOUNTAIN.

Billings, Dec. 31.—Billings is easily the center of the wool industry of the state of Montana and is fast forging to the front as a point for shipping cattle. In handling these great branches of the state's wealth there is nothing more important to the man who rides the range than a strong, comfortable and durable saddle, and there are few cattlemen or sheepmen in this part of the state who

at prices that are commensurate with the quality of the goods.

Mr. Chapman, during his two years of business in Billings, has won for himself an enviable reputation for honesty and integrity in all his dealings. The prices at his store are certain to please you, and the articles manufactured by him are guaranteed to be strictly first-class, both in workmanship and material.

Aside from his large stock of saddles and harness, Mr. Chapman has a handsome assortment of bits, spurs and bridles, the equal of which cannot be found in Eastern Montana. His steel bits and spurs, beautifully inlaid with silver, are sure to catch the eye of any horseman and his stock of whips and robes is full and complete.

One very attractive feature of his spacious store is an assortment of Indian

Sunday, and the erection of a new hotel will make the town more popular than ever.

It is planned to devote part of the ground floor to store rooms and offices. The building has a frontage of 150 feet and is 80 feet deep. This will be ample for the requirements, and will be a handsome addition to the substantial structures that grace the broad streets of Billings.

BILLINGS BREWERY IS ONE OF THE BEST IN THE WEST

SPECIAL TO THE INTER MOUNTAIN.

Billings, Dec. 31.—One of the most important business interests of Billings is that of the Billings Brewing company. Three years ago last April a large, handsome brick brewery, second to none in the state, was erected, and under the capable

and efficient management of Phil Grein the business has made wonderful progress.

The brewery turns out 15,000 barrels of beer annually in kegs and bottles. The beer is made by one of the best brewers in the country and is always cool, palatable and refreshing. The modern machinery and advanced methods in brewing give the product of the Billings brewery a distinct quality and have made it popular throughout Eastern Montana. It is thoroughly aged before it leaves the brewery, and by this method of preparation the beer never causes biliousness.

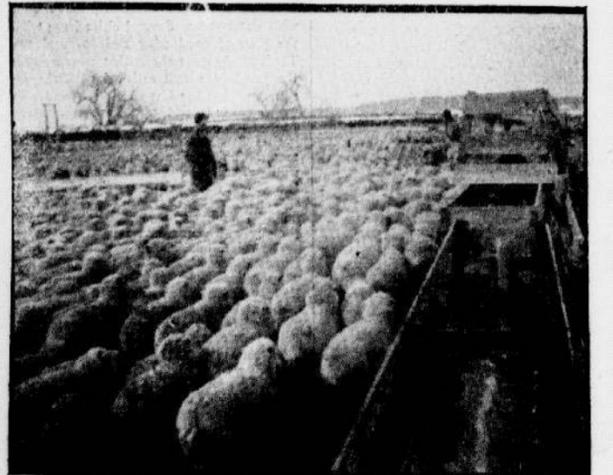
The Billings Brewing company sends its product into Wyoming on the south; to Lewistown on the north, and to Livingston on the west. Its eastern territory extends to the Dakota line and beyond.

The offices of the company are Henry Mueller of Butte, president; Phil Grein, secretary and manager, and Collins West, treasurer.

ELECTRIC LIGHT AND WATER POWER PLANTS

SPECIAL TO THE INTER MOUNTAIN.

Billings, Dec. 31.—Billings is particularly fortunate in having one of the most modern and satisfactory electric light and water power plants in the state. The plant is situated one mile from the city upon the Yellowstone river and is thoroughly up to date in the matter of machinery and equipment to give satisfactory service. The power is obtained from the



HESPER FARM NEAR BILLINGS, OWNED BY I. D. O'DONNELL.

plying a population of 8,000 with pure, wholesome water; an electric lighting system, with night and day circuit for light and power; local and long-distance telephone exchanges; the best equipped fire department in the Northwest. It possesses the free mail delivery, and the

Texas and Old Mexico are distributed at Billings to stock the ranges tributary to the town.

Among the large farmers near Billings may be mentioned I. D. O'Donnell of the Hesper farm, W. O. Parker and Charles King. The principal sheepmen are C. M. Bair, the Custer Sheep company and the