

# THE PHILIPSBURG MAIL.

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### OUR GOLD HISTORY

Condensed History of Its Discovery in Different Parts of Montana.

FOUND ON GOLD CREEK IN '61.

"Gold Tom" Made the First Discovery and the Next Was John White at Grasshopper Gulch.

The first discovery of gold in Montana, says the Helena Independent, was made in 1861. On Gold Creek, five miles below the little village of Pioneer, in Deer Lodge county, "Gold Tom" found placers where there was gold in paying quantities, and in the most primitive manner possible worked some of the ground. No attempt was made to systematically operate the locality until a full year afterwards, when Granville Stuart, now minister to Uruguay and Paraguay, and his brother James bought some necessary appliances and operated the first placer mine in Montana in 1862. Their tools and appliances they imported into the country at infinite labor and expense.

Many millions were taken from the vicinity in time. The Pioneer, Independent and Pike's Peak districts lay along Gold Creek. At the highest point on Pilgrim bar four men in two seasons took out \$230,000. Down the valley there was gold in large quantities, but it was so fine miners would not bother with it. The gold on the bars further up was coarser and there was plenty of it and many men were made rich on that single creek, which was subsequently overshadowed so completely by the discoveries at other points that later on ditches were put in and the ground worked on a still larger scale. One of the ditches cost \$300,000 and had a flowing capacity of 10,000 miners inches, an inch being equal to the supply of 17,000 gallons in 24 hours. Under these ditches the ground was worked out over an area of 2,500 feet of an average depth of 15 feet to bedrock, and a total yield of \$12,000,000.

The next discovery of any importance was made by John White and was called Grasshopper gulch, where the town of Bannock stood soon afterward. The ground was of wonderful richness and before the year was out mining had been inaugurated on a much larger scale than on Gold Creek.

More than \$20,000,000 worth of gold was taken from the vicinity. Last Chance gulch, where Helena now stands, would cause a Klondike rush all by itself, if it were once more stripped of the valuable houses that now stand upon it and the industry of the miner were given field for work.

The four original discoverers took out of their five claims, one claim for each man and the discovery claim, nearly \$200,000 each, the richest of it being not far from where the corner of Clove and Wall streets now are. And there was another wonderful rich portion, a strip of ground 200 feet square near where the Montana Central depot now stands that yielded its owners, Taylor & Thompson, \$330,000. And in the estimation of many, the lowest bedrock ought to have the richest dirt, and it was not reached. The output of the Last Chance gulch has been estimated at from \$230,000,000, and some do not believe that figure was high enough.

Confederate gulch was discovered in 1865, east of the Missouri river, where Diamond City afterwards stood. From three of the bars above the bed of the gulch about \$3,000,000 were taken. From Montana bar the Wheeler party, consisting of four, took out of the territory in a single season \$600,000, or nearly half the aggregate product of the whole ground. A single pan full of dirt, taken from a rock in the diggings of the junction of Montana and Confederate gulch where the deposit was richest, contained \$1,585 of dust at current value. And in the two years of 1865 and 1866 discoveries extended over the well known gulches of Ophir, Bear, Highland and Lincoln, in Deer Lodge county, and many others of lesser value in other counties. There was not a gulch in that number that did not yield more than has already been sent to the assay offices of the United States from Alaska upon which the present excitement is founded.

In Bear gulch placers were discovered in 1865. The yield in gold in two seasons alone was not less than \$1,000,000.

Ophir gulch, on a tributary of the Blackfoot river, has yielded as high as \$300,000 to the claim, and in some parts of McClellan gulch the same gravel has been worked over as many as five times and has each time paid for the work. In one instance a fair

sized fortune was taken out of a claim that was found to have cracks in the bedrock, which were filled with gold and the miner made a stake by digging the gold out with a tablespoon.

As compared with the output of the new fields in Alaska the output of Montana was wonderfully large during the first years of the gold era. For the first five years, from 1862 until 1867, the yield of Montana gold was \$866,000,000, and then in the succeeding years until 1880 it was: 1868, \$15,000,000; 1869, \$9,000,000; 1870, \$9,100,000; 1871, \$9,050,000; 1872, \$6,068,000; 1873, \$5,187,000; 1874, \$3,844,000; 1875, \$3,573,000; 1876, \$3,078,000; 1877, \$3,200,000; 1878, \$2,260,000; 1879, \$2,500,000; 1880, \$2,400,000. The total output for placer mines for the time from 1862 until today amounts to in the neighborhood of \$235,000,000.

The country, wherever it is, that is more truly a land of gold, than Montana, will be rich indeed.

### CARTER AND SILVER.

What the Montana Senator Has to Say About the White Metal.

Senator Thomas H. Carter, when asked for his views on the Wolcott mission said: Senator Ed Wolcott and his associates in the administration from the start have most vigorously stated that they have found the French government willing and anxious to earnestly co-operate with the commission in bringing about international bimetallicism on a safe, substantial and enduring basis—in other words, to return to the monetary conditions existing prior to 1873. It may be that in dealing with the matter of ratio, 15½ instead of 16 to 1 may be insisted upon by our associates. This change from the coinage system of our own country would be to our advantage, while the adoption of 16 to 1 ratio would be decidedly to the disadvantage of France, as all money of that country has heretofore been coined on the ratio of 15½ to 1. We should be in money by recoining it at 15½ to 1, while France would lose money by recoining at 16 to 1. The French ambassador in London is cooperating with Senator Wolcott and his associates for the purpose of securing the most liberal cooperation on the part of Great Britain, and assurances are encouraging as to the opening of the Indian mints and possibly an increased use of silver as part of the reserve of the Bank of England. Our envoys are prosecuting their work in a most judicious manner. It is worthy of note that the effort now being made is being conducted in a wise, prudent and diplomatic way, whereas conferences heretofore called have been without previous understanding, and resulted in an open debate in conference before the whole world, each country contending for its own particular views, and ministering to the popular prejudice or feeling in the country represented. I am informed that when the commissioners understand definitely what England will do they contemplate visiting Germany for the purpose of ascertaining what that government will contribute toward facilitating the very sagacious movement where Ambassador White has been instructed to cooperate with our envoys and the French ambassador to that country. It seems reasonable to suppose that Germany will agree to keep all her present silver in circulation and will likewise in the future coin at least all of the German product, amounting to over 12,000,000 ounces per annum.

"After ascertaining what these large countries of Europe, especially those which were members of the Latin union, together with the Russian government, will do, it is understood that our envoys and the French government will consider whether or not the situation is sufficiently promising to justify the restoration of free coinage, and if so, what the terms and methods of reaching that end should be. Of course a report will be made by the envoys to our government, and the French plan will be submitted to the French chambers. All of this work takes time, but no one can doubt that when a conclusion is reached, upon the broad and intelligent basis suggested, it will have the element of permanency, achieved without violence to any interest and to the satisfaction of all. The president is most earnest in his co-operation and intensely desirous to bring about a solution of this coinage question at the earliest practical date upon a solid, substantial and permanent basis. I may be over sanguine, but I feel inclined to predict that within two years we shall see the restoration of silver to free coinage at substantially the old ratio, which of course means a return of the market value of silver to its old price of \$1.29 per ounce, in international as well as home trade. The extreme gold men in all parties are insufficient in numbers and influence to prevent the success of the movement, if the friends of silver will patiently and cordially support the administration in the honest effort now being so intelligently made.

### FRASER RIVER RUSH

Old Montanians Tell About the Stampede to That Country.

HELENA MAN TELLS OF HIS TRIP

Dangerous Journey Through the Canyon—How the Whirlpool Was Safely Passed.

Intending stampedees to the Klondike country, who have never worked their way into and out of a wild and uninviting country, should have a talk with some of the old timers who were carried away with the Fraser river rush late in the '50s and in the early '60s. There are a number of them in Montana, and from the accounts of the hardships they endured and the chances they took, no matter how much money they made. There are a number of the Fraser river stampedees in Montana. Among them is J. J. Hall, who lives near Jefferson City, in Jefferson county, Mr. Bart, the sheepman of Meagher county, and John R. Stanford, the furniture dealer in Helena. The latter has a pretty good memory, and though it is almost forty years since he followed or led the rush into the Fraser river country, and he is a much older man and not so active today as he was then, the hardships he endured are still vividly impressed on his mind. He left Fairbault, Minn., in July or August, 1858, and the following year he was in Hudson Bay company's country in the far northwest Canadian provinces. He was accompanied by two other venturesome spirits. On the trip to the Fraser the little party had many narrow escapes, but their first thrilling experience was when they made their trip down the Fraser river. Talking of it recently Mr. Stanford's description recalled the recent stories of the attempts to shoot the rapids in the Klondike, certainly the trip down the Klondike is not more than that down the Fraser river.

"Our party started down the Fraser river," said Mr. Stanford, "in an Indian canoe. For many miles the river runs through steep banks, rapid and dangerous, but the most dangerous part is what is known as the canyon, the rocky walls rise up for several hundred feet, while the whirlpools and sand bars in addition to the swift current make the trip doubly dangerous. One of our party just before we reached the canyon, left the boat, taking with him our guns and ammunition. He was to go overland and keep the powder dry. We had scarcely got started in the canyon before the boat was upset. My partner landed on a little projection on the main shore, while I managed to stick on a little island with the boat. There was no chance for me to get to him, and none for him to get to me, because the water was running too swift. He shouted that he would try to climb the steep wall, and climb it he did, cutting as he went places for his fingers and toes to rest in. I expected to see him fall every minute, and as he climbed I made up my mind I would take my chances with the river. Finally he reached the top and threw down a bit of tree to let me know he had reached solid ground. I told him if he reached the top to go down to the end of the canyon and watch for the boat; that if I did not get through the boat might, and that they would need it.

I waited for an hour and a half, and all the time I was watching a whirlpool that was not twenty feet from me, and which I feared more than anything else.

I saw great trees, seventy-five feet high, come down the river, with the roots and tops on. The pool would suck them in, and then suddenly disappear, leaving a chasm fifty feet deep into which the tree would disappear and I would not see it again. After watching the pool for a long time I came to the conclusion that if I could get my boat on it just the moment it was full and calm, and then get over the center of it before it began to boil, I could make it. At a favorable moment I pushed the boat off, got into it and started. I had just got over the center of the pool when it commenced to boil, but I was far enough out of it for the force to send me along all right. Then the trip began. It was three miles down the canyon, and I made it, it seemed to me, in two minutes. I laid flat in the boat, which was half filled with water, and went a-flying. I rose up once and looking ahead saw three huge rocks right ahead in my path. By some fortunate circumstance the boat barely touched the one closest to the shore, threw me into comparatively still water, and in a minute I was on the land. I beat both of my partners

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down and they joined me in half an hour. No one would believe afterward that I had come through the canyon in a boat, but my partners, and they only because they witnessed it from the banks. But we lost everything we had in the boat save a little pemmican which we had tied to the seat.

"I was a sight when I reached the first point where there were any people. My pantaloons were torn off up to my knees, I had no hat, nor sleeves to my shirt. We did not have a quarter of a dollar. Lew Bart had just come in with a pack train, and he gave us a piece of bacon. I cut off a piece and was preparing to cook it on a shovel when an Indian dog stole it. He took it to an Indian camp, and soon returned. As he had stolen my bacon, I caught him, and soon we were eating dog instead of bacon."

Speaking of the gold finds, Mr. Stanford said he had pretty fair luck. "But I made more money trading. While I was in that country he" said, "I carried the mail an express. That was at the beginning of the war and I used to carry newspapers and sell them for \$5 to \$10 each. They cost me \$2.50. I got \$5 for carrying a letter. I see that about the same conditions prevailed up in the Klondike country. I had a little claim out of which I used to take \$200 or \$300 each season, as a result of a few day's work. "I understand that some men are going to drive stock up through the Northwest Territory and into the Klondike country. I know that the country has not changed in the last thirty-five years. I was through Athabasca and the country it will be necessary to cross to take stock through, and I tell you if a man starts with 1,000 he will have few left when he gets to Klondike. The moss in that country is above your knees and it is worse to travel through than snow. Then, in addition the country is thickly timbered. There are no roads, and the only way to get through some sections for miles is by slowly pushing through the trees, which are very thick. Why, when I ran pack trains up there, we used to feed the horses flour and water. It was the only food we could get to them, and the pasturage was the pine bough.

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