

Benton, Richest Town Per Capita in World

Founded as Fort Lewis in 1843; Home of Cattle Barons; Head of Navigation

Panoramic View of Historic Fort Benton, River Town, and Said to Be Richest Place, Per Capita, on Earth

FORT BENTON, the oldest settlement in Montana that ever became anything more than a trading post, is the richest town per capita in the United States, and which means the world. Its bank vaults are fairly choked with money. They contain enough to give every man, woman and child in this happy community \$2,000 each.

Fort Benton was formerly the head of navigation on the Missouri. This was in the days when all the west was young, and the great state of Montana had not come into being. It was the home of the cattle baron in the free range days, and is still one of the great beef producing centers of the state. Now the countryside around it is growing wheat, and lots of wheat at that.

Now Fort Benton is expending a considerable sum in improving herself.

Along the bank of the Missouri where the Indians who came to trade formerly pitched their tents and by the three or four portions of adobe wall still standing that mark the site of the old fort, a "great white way" has come into existence and is being rapidly extended.

60 New Electroler Posts Now Being Installed.

Seventeen electroler posts set up two or three years ago by the merchants are being refitted for more powerful lights and 60 new electroler posts are being installed. The lighting district includes all of Front street along the river, comprising ten blocks. The lamps are of the same type as has been installed in the residence and business districts of Helena, Anaconda and Great Falls.

For seven blocks Front Street is being parked in a manner that will make it one of the most attractive boulevards in the west. This work alone, with the planting of grass and trees and the digging of irrigation ditches, is to cost \$22,000. Hereafter Fort Benton will have the substantial appearance and the attractiveness of the best built portions of any town of 25,000 or 50,000 population.

\$70,000 Being Spent For Walks and Curbs.

Nine miles of sidewalk and curbing are being put in at a cost of \$70,000, while \$27,000 is being spent for paving and \$5,000 for grading. The new sewer system is to cost \$35,000, and the street lighting system \$6,000. The effulgent light from the scores of electroler lights is reflected from the waters of the river, which here broadens out and flows more slowly and majestically than elsewhere along the upper waters of the Missouri. The glow brings into relief the great bridge that spans the stream at this point and the abandoned steamer—the "Baby Rose"—that has its berth at the bank close to the doors of one of the town's leading hotels. Of the new electroler posts 26 bear three lights, one five lights and the rest one light of 100 candle power.

New Pavements of Highest Type Used in Montana.

The new pavements are of the highest type used in Montana—two-inch Bitulithic on a five-inch concrete base. Montana materials are being used largely in the improvements and the contractors and engineers are Montana men. All the work except the street grading and sewer system is being done by the Two Miracle Concrete corporation of Great Falls. C. H. Kelley of Kalspell is doing the engineering work including the installation of the sewer system, while Gerharz, Jaqueth company of Great Falls is doing the grading.

Stockraising Is Still Important Industry.

Stockraising is still an important industry especially in the nearby Highwood mountains and herds of cattle are still driven through the streets, but now this vast area tributary to Fort Benton is being gradually put under the plow and is producing abundantly.

With the automobile and farm implement dealers of Fort Benton it is not a question of how many sales can be made, but of how soon they can get the shipments in to meet the demand. With the farmer it is a question not of how much wheat he has raised, but of how soon he can get the elevator to receive his load.

This Flourishing Town Is the Direct Continuation of the Old Trading Post Founded Under the Auspices of the American Fur Company in 1843 as

Fort Lewis, and rebuilt nearer the Teton river in 1848.

The second building in Benton, however, was not erected until the spring of 1864, when Matthew Carroll and George Steele constructed a store building of sawed logs, prepared at

the Fort Labarge sawmill. Several other buildings went up the same season and it was then that the place began to assume the appearance of a town. In the spring of the next year the town was regularly laid out according to its present plan by Captain

W. W. DeLacy, a civil engineer, and called Benton City. With the rise of still other new buildings, streets and squares began to be defined upon the prairie bottom. The name thus given, however, refused to stick. "Fort Benton" it is called, except by the

railroad, which denominates it simply "Benton."

\$500,000 Worth of Robes Shipped Annually.

Fort Benton always has been a busy little place. In the earliest days more than \$500,000 worth of robes and furs was shipped annually after the diversion of traffic its stores continued to do a big business supplying the cattle men. Within the last three years the town has been growing rapidly in both volume of busi-

ness and population. In the last year probably 300 persons have been added to the number of its inhabitants.

In the seventies Fort Benton was not only the trading center of Montana, but of the entire northwest, including all of Canada west of Winnipeg. When the Canadian mounted police under Colonel McLeod in 1874 and 1875 undertook to drive the American whiskey trader from the western part of the dominion, all their supplies were received from Fort Benton. Now the town supplies the farmers for 40 miles in some directions and for 20 to 30 miles in others. It has three elevators and a flour mill.



Fort Benton in Stagecoach and Steamboat Days.

A Political Revolution in North Dakota

How Farmers of Neighboring State Won at the Polls

"We'll Stick and We'll Win."

This was the appealing slogan adopted by the militant organization of North Dakota farmers when they started out last spring to capture the republican primaries. They won in the primaries, and so kept the slogan nailed to the masthead for the general election in November.

The victory in the primaries was a smashing one. The hitherto unbeatable machine crowd were swept into the discard. The majorities for the farmers had stuck and they had won.

Some idea of the sweeping nature of this political revolution may be gathered from the fact that it won the governorship and state offices, the supreme court of three members, the railroad commission of a like number, and a majority of the legislature.

The overturn was complete. It has put the farmers in a state where they make up 80 per cent of the population in absolute and undisputed control of the agencies of state government, legislative, judicial and administrative.

Attracted Country-Wide Attention.

So amazing a political change of course attracted country-wide attention. Many of the big eastern publications sent out to North Dakota their special writers to "lift the lid" and tell what they saw underneath. And when the lid was lifted there was revealed a great, compacted, militant organization of tillers of the soil, knowing perfectly well what they wanted and quite confident of their ability to get it and keep it.

"These other fellows," they declared, "have been running the game too long their own way. They have

been making us play against loaded dice and marked cards. We're not only going to have a new deal, but we are going to shuffle, cut and deal the cards. It's been a good game—for the other fellows.

"We produce by far the biggest part of the wealth of the state. We pay by far the biggest part of the taxes. Our exploiters live in the brown stone front, while we delve and dig and pay. We're going to pass laws—and see to their enforcement—that will give the men and women whose toil and capital produce the wealth of North Dakota a just and equitable portion of the wealth, and with each recurring season. We want what is ours by natural right, and we're going to take it."

Assessed the Farmer Members

There was the wisdom of astute political genius in the methods by which the great revolution was brought about. The leaders of the farmers knew that the "other fellows" were organized, and had plenty of funds. So the old idea of voluntary association was pushed aside as futile. Organization plus money was to be met with organization plus money. This meant also the printing press and widespread publicity.

Farmers who signed the non-partisan pledge were required to pay a membership fee—first six dollars per head, and later nine dollars. Before the primaries had come more than a hundred organizers, each being duly compensated, were in the field in automobiles. When the first issue of the Non-Partisan Leader came off the press, 30,000 farmers had signed up and put up their fees.

There wasn't anything of the hit or miss, either, in the plan of organization. Each five organizers had a foreman, and in each county the foreman reported to a county manager. These in turn reported to and were

directed by the state organization. Daily reports in writing were required. There wasn't any favoritism. The only reports that "went" were reports of success. Slackers and incompetents were brushed aside, relentlessly.

Publicity With the Lid Off.

There was an equal amount of good sense displayed in the publicity department of the League's campaign. The farmers were not newspaper men, but, unlike a great many other folks, they knew it. So they sent out and gathered a force of high class editors, and turned them loose on the "enemy" without let or hindrance. There were no "strings" on the publicity department. "Get the facts, and print 'em," they were told. And get the facts they did. The records of the state house, of the courts and of the legislatures were ruthlessly ransacked, and there was "pitiless publicity" of the real sort.

The daily press of North Dakota, without a single exception, fought back. They were for the established order of things, for the "let us alone" policy behind which Big Business had so safely and so profitably concealed. It was futile. The farmers who had for years and so repeatedly "petitioned for a redress of grievances" only to be denied, had taken to "direct action" politically, and were not to be turned aside.

"You have scoured our petitions and derided the petitioners, until our patience has been exhausted. We know our power, and we are going to use it in our own interest—just as you have been misusing the power we have heretofore given you. The stuff is off."

A National Movement.

The virus in this North Dakota revolution seems to be both infectious and contagious. It has spread into the three states touching that state—Minnesota, South Dakota and Montana. And the Fargo headquarters of the league reports that thousands of letters are pouring in from other agricultural states, until the demonstration promises to be nationwide.

There have been many protest movements of American farmers, but none comparable with this one. Usually the protests have been of the poverty stricken tillers of the soil. They organized as other political parties were organized; but, unlike other political parties, the protesters had no permanent form of campaign funds. Without funds for organization and publicity purposes these protest movements quickly aneighed and died.

But this league plan is different. Its philosophy is that benefits cannot come without they are fairly paid for in effort and hard cash. Adding these to a perfectly well understood program will make for permanence. And perhaps the league folks are right; who knows?

The American farmer has always been the great, steady influence in the nation. As the gyroscope steadies the movements of great ships at sea, so the "farmer vote" has been the nation's reliance in times of great political stress. Suppose, in a country-wide sense, he elects to take and to exercise that power which is his, by law and by natural right?

What then?

SAM W. TEAGARDEN.

Homesteaders Grow Bumper Grain Crops Far From Railroad

In the most of the newly settled farming districts of the west the growers of grain crops have followed in the wake of the new railroads, but the homesteaders of northern Montana have reversed the trend of development and by making the prairies yield abundantly far from the nearest elevator have provided a freight business that awaits only the laying of the rails to put dividends in the pockets of the railroad builders. South of the main line of the Great Northern from Cutbank to Havre there are more than a 100 ranches over 20 miles from the nearest railroad. These ranches have given a combined yield of half a million bushels.

"Bill" Earl, who has a ranch between Marias and Goosebill, 25 miles from the nearest railroad, this year raised 11,500 bushels of wheat.

Throughout this section talk that started two or three years ago of the building of an electric line to run south from Chester is being revived. Homesteaders and other farmers say that they are ready to double and triple their acreage in wheat as soon as they are assured of the building of a new line to eliminate the present 25 or 30 mile haul in wagons.

NORTHERN PACIFIC TO GROW ITS OWN TROUT

SUPERINTENDENT TITUS BUILDING HATCHERY AT MISSOULA; BRED SPECKLED GOODIES.

It will not be long before Northern Pacific dining cars will be supplied with trout from the company's own hatchery, which is now being built at Missoula, says Hazen J. Titus, superintendent of the dining car service.

"We plan to have several varieties of trout in the hatchery," said Mr. Titus, "including the cut-throat, mountain and eastern brook trout, and will eventually have the supply large enough to furnish from 1,500 to 2,000 trout a day for our diners."

"It will be so arranged that the fish will be placed on the diners from 20 to 30 minutes after they are taken from the water. We will have experienced attendants to look after the finny tribe and believe that the serving of trout on the diners will be a great drawing card to have easterners visit the Pacific northwest."

The Northern Pacific has its own bakery in Seattle, where much of the bread and pastry used on its diners is made. The company's dairy and poultry farm is located at Kent, Wash.

MONTANA PUPILS RIDE TO SCHOOL

USE OF VEHICLE TENDS TO CENTRALIZE AND IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES.

Libby and Geraldine Schools Have Purchased School Wagons and Other Schools Are Following Example; Helps to Do Away With the "Little Red School House."

Have you heard of the school wagon? It is the newest feature of rural school life. It is a wagon, built along the lines of a stage coach, only not so cumbersome. It is being introduced to Montana by the General School Supply company of Great Falls. The schools at Libby have purchased a car, and the people in and around Geraldine are delighted with their school car. Inquiries are coming for information about the school wagon from all over the state, and the Great Falls concern has just ordered another car load of these popular vehicles.

School Consolidation Certain.

With a first-class school in a central location, thus doing away with the "little red schoolhouse," the pupils get the benefit any city child might obtain by attending a city school. School consolidation is bound to come to Montana, where people are more progressive in educational matters than in many other states, and the school wagon will do its share towards this desirable end.

The General is the first school supply company to incorporate in Montana—and are the first people to cartload school furniture to Montana. This will prove a great benefit to rural school people as they can get their material in short time, whereas it used to take them weeks, and sometimes months, to ship material from the east.

Exhibit at Missoula

At the teachers' convention in Missoula recently the "General" had an exhibit which proved that they carry "everything for schools." The exhibit won much favorable comment for the Montana concern.

In addition to school wagons the company carries a large stock of school desks, teacher's chairs and general school supplies, such as maps, globes, charts, crayons, kindergarten material and "busy work."

Pupils Fight Fan Weed.

The Fergus county high school has started a campaign against fan weed, and teachers in rural communities in the county are being asked to cooperate.

JAMES BURLINGAME, SENATE PRESIDENT, ACTING GOVERNOR

Governor Samuel V. Stewart has been called east to attend the meeting of the governors of all the states.

Lieutenant Governor W. W. McDowell, who would discharge the functions of the chief executive in his absence, is also outside the confines of the state.

Hon. J. M. Burlingame, senator from Cascade, and president pro tem, of the upper house, in the absence of these two officials, becomes acting governor of the state, and is in Helena, sitting in the gubernatorial chair, with his feet under the gubernatorial desk, and his overcoat hanging in the gubernatorial closet.

MILES CITY AND ITS HORSE MART

HAS GROWN INTO GREATEST PRIMARY MARKET IN UNITED STATES.

More Horses Change Owners at Miles City Than at Chicago and St. Louis; Federal Government Has Established Remount Station at Fort Keogh, Near Miles.

It is a far cry, in time and importance, from the moment some 15 years ago when A. B. Clarke conceived the idea of bringing the buyers and sellers of Montana horses together at Miles City.

The first sale, in fact the first season's sales, were held in the Northern Pacific stockyards west of town, and "Mitch" Ball clerked the sale, sitting on the highest point of vantage in order to escape the onslaught of the historic "FUF" representatives, who never missed an opportunity to climb trees or telegraph poles.

Those were the days when a train load of horses could be bought for a song, and the seller usually did his own singing. It was a discouraging fight, but Mr. Clarke persevered and gradually and surely the horse raisers of the entire state became convinced that Montana could raise the big boned horse as well as the squealing, bucking bronco.

Greatest Primary Market.

The years passed, and the fame of the sale yards of Miles City under Mr. Clarke's management became nationwide. Miles City became known as the greatest primary horse market in the United States; more horses changing hands there from the original owners than even at the great markets at Chicago and St. Louis.

Nine years ago Mr. Clarke died and his place was taken by C. B. Ingham, a horse man from South Dakota. He had visions of even a greater market than that which Mr. Clarke had built up, so that during the following five years the A. B. Clarke Horse Sales company showed bank clearance each year of more than a million and a quarter dollars.

At the death of Mr. Ingham some three years ago the company was incorporated as the "Miles City Horse Sales Co."

New yards have been added to the old ones, a large amphitheater has been erected and today the company with its headquarters at Miles City has other branches in Utah, Oregon and other western states. The sales yards at Miles City cover over ten acres of ground.

The officers of the new company are: Ed Love, president; Luther Milligan, secretary; Guy Crandall, manager.

Government Remount Station.

In addition to this great public horse sales market there is just west of this city the Fort Keogh remount station, which is in charge of Captain Winterburn, U. S. A.

This remount station is one of two of its kind in the United States, and has for its purpose the buying and training of artillery and cavalry horses for the United States army. Hundreds of horses are bought by the government each year and fattened for service. This is one of the most important markets in the west for animals suitable for "war horses."

Would Build New Road.

The commissioners of Lewis and Clark county have been petitioned to assist in the construction of a good wagon road from Helena to the Smith river valley. It is thought that if the county will supply half the funds the federal government will contribute an equal amount under the new federal law.