

THE BENTON RECORD.

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The Benton Record.

A SEMI-MONTHLY JOURNAL, DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF BENTON AND SUN RIVER VALLEY.

W. H. BUCK, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

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NOTE.

In order to avoid complications, the above subscription rates will remain unchanged during the first year of publication; although, at an early date, the Record will be changed to a weekly journal, and tri-weekly editions will be issued during a portion of the summer season. Under this arrangement the Record is the cheapest journal published in Montana.

Until further notice, address all communications, W. H. BUCK, FORT SHAW, M. T.

PROSPECTUS.

It is with feelings of deepest pleasure, and a full sense of responsibility, that we present to the Public of Montana the first number of the Benton Record: a journal to be devoted to the interests of Benton, Sun River Valley, and adjoining country. We shall endeavor to explain, as briefly as possible, the circumstances which have prompted our enterprise, and to define the course which the Record will invariably pursue while under our management.

Our long connection with temperance interests had caused us to cherish a desire to establish in this Territory a journal wholly devoted to the advancement of temperance efforts, but recent inquiries have assured us that such an enterprise can not as yet be sustained. Friends of the cause may rest assured, however, that our interest in the good work is not in the least abated, and that, while we can not in this journal give expression to sentiments that might prove distasteful to the community to which we look for support, we shall never oppose those principles which we know to be just and right, and which are too firmly implanted in our nature to be eradicated by any motive of self interest.

Montana is, however, afflicted with other evils as well as intemperance, and which, if not less detrimental to her interests, are certainly as worthy of the best efforts of her citizens to remove. A correspondent observes, in another column, "Fraud is associated, in the opinion of many, with almost every enterprise necessarily required in the progressive movements of our people." The country is controlled by Rings, and officials acting for their own interests and contrary to the expressed views of the people. While admitting that affairs at the agencies of our neighborhood are not properly conducted, still, the utter mismanagement of Indian affairs in general is a by-word in the community. The appropriations of money intended for the general government for the welfare of both Indians and settlers have been expended by corrupt agents that have accrued to any one but themselves. We do not deem that we are warranted in saying that the time has come for a sweeping change in the Indian Department; and not a mere change of the set of civil officials for another, but

the complete transfer of the whole management of Indian affairs to the War Department. Such is the stand we take, and in maintaining it we hope not to be misunderstood as waging warfare against individuals, when, in point of fact, our chosen foe is a corrupt and rotten system.

There is no question of more importance to the residents of Montana than the one of quick and easy transportation. On this matter we propose to express our views plainly, regardless of whom they may affect. Experience has shown, beyond a doubt, that the new route from Carroll City to Helena has proved anything but a success. And although abundant means and almost superhuman energy were expended last summer in that direction, the expectations of the business men of this Territory were sadly disappointed. The public had been led to believe that all merchandise would be delivered at its proper destination greatly in advance of any previous means of transportation, but so far from this being the case, a longer delay than ever before known was the result. This statement can easily be verified by many sufferers in Helena.

On the other hand, the former mode of transportation, via. Benton, gave perfect satisfaction to all concerned; and whilst we are always ready to hail with delight any move in a new direction which is really a benefit to the people, we are not prepared, simply for the sake of change, to advocate a measure that is more nominal than practical. To be weighed in the balance and found wanting, is the criterion which no enlightened American citizen can refuse to receive; and we earnestly contend that we can produce solid evidence of success on the part of the Benton line, whilst, on the other hand, partial if not total failure is the prominent characteristic of the Carroll route.

Another object of concern with us, and a leading one, will be to set forth the advantages of this Territory in general, and in particular the section we represent, so as to induce immigration, and promote the development of our vast natural resources. If we have not the gold and silver of our sister sections, we have what is not a whit less important—a commanding commercial point, and an agricultural and pastoral country that is without a superior beneath the firmament of heaven. It is our expectation that the present sparse and scattered settlements will, ere many years, become compact and populous communities; and what aid the Record can extend to hasten this desirable consummation shall be freely and frequently employed.

In politics, either National or Territorial, we do not propose to take any decided part. Nothing is more injurious to the people than to be constantly exercising their minds as to which political party has a mission to save the country. It will be time enough for that when our Territory has arrived to the maturity of a State, and we have neither time nor inclination to discuss side issues whilst interests of a more material nature are constantly demanding our attention.

In conclusion we would add, that all communications that can throw any light upon the agricultural, mineral, and commercial resources of the Territory, will

always be most gratefully received, and properly noticed in the Record.

BENTON.

Benton is rapidly emerging from the darkness, the fog, of adverse journalism, and is appearing fresh and awake to its duties. Benton, in the grand picture of Montana, naturally takes a strong position; its formation is solid. Change the position, as has been attempted, and still it appears to advantage—more to advantage even in the panorama of improvement and prosperity.

The picture of Montana, with Benton giving place to a town of less advanced qualifications, would be but the daubing of a prejudiced or inexperienced hand. Despite the coloring so liberally bestowed, no other town in the Territory can be found whose every point, shade, and natural proportions shows more clearly in the general appearance of the commercial carte, or more striking to the general view. Pleasantly located upon the banks of the Missouri; encompassed on either side by the beautiful and fertile vallies of the Sun River, Teton, and Marias, whose broad acres, untouched by ploughshare or scythe, yield abundant sustenance to the myriads of animals that roam their grassy wilds; protected by the thickly wooded sides of the Highwood, along whose base for many miles extends a scene unrivalled for picturesque grandeur, and glowing with all the loveliness of bright fertility. No other section of Montana offers greater inducements to the immigrant and settler, as no other part of the Territory is more suggestive of commercial, agricultural, and mineral wealth.

Benton advances an ever mindful fact, wishing it to be understood, as indeed it must, that in the interests of transportation it commands the traffic of the country, holds the key to the business homes of the Territory, and without dispute can thus place the question of low rates in the most direct path in the way of cheap markets; in short, Benton is the transportation centre of Montana.

A view of the town of Benton is in every respect favorable. Business—the quick, pushing, profitable business in which so many are concerned through the amount of labor required to conduct it—is ably represented by the Firms of I. G. Baker & Co., T. C. Powers & Bro., and in a lesser way, by Wetzel & Co., Thompson & Conway, and others. The Stores and Warehouses, the spirit of enterprise displayed by the business men of Benton, speak well for the prosperity of the town, and, as a consequence, the Territory at large.

Mr. J. W. Powers has charge of the post office, and a more obliging and attentive postmaster would be difficult to find. Our educational interests are guarded by Mr. J. A. Kanouse, and the rapid spread of intelligence among the rising generation, shows the successful efforts of the master.

The Overland Hotel is admirably conducted by Messrs Rowe & Bro. The proprietors are gentlemanly, painstaking landlords, and their house well deserves the liberal patronage it receives. The bill of fare at the Overland is all that an Epicure could desire, and appears more

attractive in view of the reasonable amount of the other bill.

Mr. Mills is proprietor of the "Restaurant," and his cheery countenance, beaming with smiles of good nature, is alone sufficient to create an appetite for his luxuries. "Just enough to give Bob a lift, you know."

Those desirous of refreshments of an exhilarating nature can be supplied with samples of three or four "Anchor"—ain't that it? Well, the "cable" of this brand, as they say, though not having the spark of the electric cable, shocks like—no, not thunder—lightning!

Not for the purpose of preventing any unusual demonstration of joy arising from the successful tapping of this cable are our "boys in blue" (Company "B," 7th Infantry,) quartered in town. The cause of the company's removal is so well known that reference to it here is unnecessary. It is not customary, perhaps not desired, to extol army officers in the performance of their often arduous duties; yet we deem it but proper to add a few words by way of representing the unanimous opinion of both officers and citizens regarding the commandant of Fort Benton—Major Guido Ilges, 7th Infantry. Since arriving at this post, Major Ilges has won the esteem and friendship of his command, and the respect and highest opinion of citizens of all classes, by his soldierlike, gentlemanly, and humane disposition in his relations with those who, through duty or otherwise, have had any dealings with him.

One of the most useful and interesting institutions at Benton, is the U. S. Signal Office, established in 1870, and now conducted by Sergeant McGillivray; a most clever, gentlemanly soldier belonging to the U. S. Signal Corps. The office is supplied with an anemometer, of the self-register electric clock form; rain gauge; vanes; mercury and spirit thermometers; barometers, and other instruments necessary for observing the weather, prognosticating storms, and producing cold snaps when the residents of Benton feel inclined for a buffalo hunt. Sergt. McGillivray is a skillful observer, attends to his duties faithfully, and is a general favorite with citizens and soldiers.

A solace in the hour of intemperance may be found in the Father Mathew Society in existence here. It is mainly composed of soldiers, who cheerfully welcome to their sides the wandering sons of temperance.

Two blacksmith shops are in running order, and perform satisfactory work. Thompson & Co. conduct a bakery, and have on hand a large supply of canned stuff of every description, at reasonable prices.

The Hon. J. M. Arnaux attends to the "Diamond R" and other companies of the enterprising business firms of Montana.

The Western Union Telegraph Company extends to Benton, but for a long time past—for some reason or reasons inexplicable and not to be understood—the line has been in sad need of repair. It is expected and hoped that the necessary repairs will soon be made. They are only trifling, and yet, trifling as they are, occasion a serious impediment to the prosperity of the town.

Benton is frequently visited by repre-