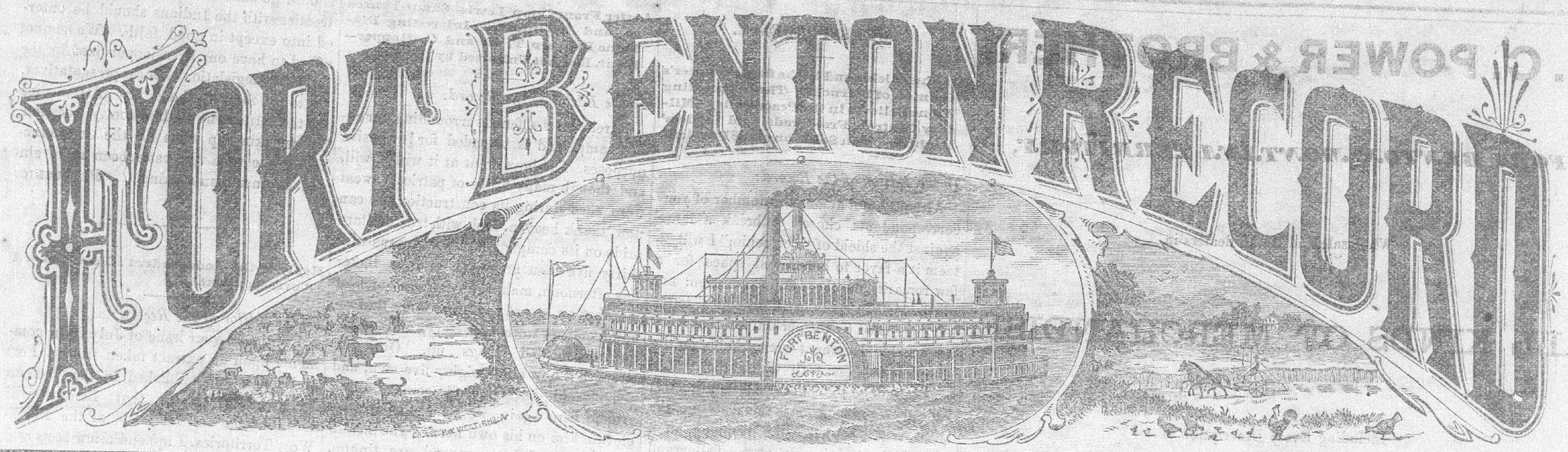
Historical Society



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Fort Benton, M. T.,
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W. H. BUCK, - - - Editor & Proprietor.

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4 "	7 00	8 00	10 00	12 00	24 00	36 00	52 00
5 "	8 00	10 00	12 00	14 00	30 00	40 00	64 00
6 "	9 00	12 00	14 00	16 00	36 00	50 00	80 00
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column	20 00	30 00	36 00	42 00	80 00	120 00	200 00

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THE INDIAN QUESTION.

The recent depredations on the Carroll road and in other parts of our fair Territory, may lead the public generally to look upon the Indian question in a different light to that in which it has heretofore been presented to them. At times—during an approaching election for instance—many journals have presented true views of the situation, and entered the arena against that gigantic fraud called the Indian Ring, with an apparent determination to crush it out of existence or perish in the encounter; but for some reason inexplicable to the public they have suddenly retreated to their corners and again left the field clear to their herculean antagonists.

Since the advent of the RECORD every phase of Indian legislation worthy of notice has been reviewed through its columns. Fearlessly, and in the spirit of true frontier experience, we have endeavored to show the futile result of a policy—which certainly must have emanated from misguided or mercenary minds—placarded to the people of America, under the attractive title of "peace;" and at the same time we have advocated a stronger and more effective policy, one that would result beneficially to the Indian as well as the white residents of the Territory. Knowing the unprotected situation of Montana, and particularly of our own prospering section, which on the north, the east, and the west invite hostile demonstrations, we have long since entered our demand for a change in the Indian administration. This demand we now press in the name of the people of Montana, in the name of the thrifty settlers in our own vicinity, in the name of the fearless pioneers of American civilization, who are developing the riches of this Territory, placing within reach of emigrant and settler a field of life-long industry, and revealing the foundations of happy homes for the destitute and oppressed subjects of foreign climes.

NEED OF REFORM IN OUR COUNTY OFFICES.

We desire to say a few words regarding the need of reform in our county offices. A short time ago notices were posted in different parts of the town informing the residents of Choteau County that vacancies in the offices of one County Commissioner, County Clerk, and Treasurer were to be filled at the ensuing election. The notices were duly signed by the clerk of the Board of Commissioners. Inquiry into the matter brought out the fact that the office of Probate Judge and Sheriff were also to be filled at the coming election, and the County Clerk must or should have been aware of the fact. Wishing to regard it as an over sight, however, we allowed it to pass unnoticed. The record of the meeting held last Monday evening for the purpose of nominating opposition candidates, whose names appear on our local page, forces us to believe that the clerk had purposely neglected to inform the public of all the offices open for nomination. He presided at this meeting, and there for the first time admitted the fact that one Justice of the Peace and one Constable for this township were to be nominated, and that the office of County Coroner had also been proclaimed vacant to be filled at the ensuing election. And this is not all. The bonds of the Coroner elected for the present term have never been filed at the office of the Probate Clerk. It was the duty of this clerk to notify the Board of Commissioners of the non-filing of these bonds, and the Commissioners would then have appointed a Coroner. The people of the County were not aware of this state of affairs until the gentleman who now holds the offices of Probate Clerk and County Clerk, and who desires a re-election to these positions, publicly declared it on Monday evening. This open confession of a glaring neglect of duty must convince every honest minded man that a change in at least one of our county offices is sadly needed.

END OF THE EXTRADITION TRIAL.

The extradition trial is over, and the defendants are discharged. The decision, of course, surprises no one; we only wonder that it was not rendered at an earlier date. But it was better for the prisoners, perhaps, that the case should have the fullest investigation, that the question of their guilt or innocence might be forever decided. Their statement regarding the so-called massacre must now be believed by every unbiased mind in the country.

During the progress of the trial, the RECORD was furnished by a special correspondent with full reports of the evidence for the prose- these papers failed to discover the slightest proof of any crime worthy of extradition according to the letter or signification of the treaty between Great Britain and the United States. Our prediction of the result of the trial was therefore based upon facts. The published decision of Commissioner Cullen covers all the important points of the case that we would now care to review, and it is quite consistent with the dignified and impartial position maintained by the worthy gentleman throughout the long, tedious proceedings of the trial. The order for the discharge of Messrs Evans, Hale, Harper, and Hardwick reminds us of the remark made by this upright juror when deciding on the motion for the discharge of E. J. Devereaux. Counsellor Page, in opposing this motion, in his usual off-of-the-subject style dwelt at great length and with much emphasis on the "presumption of the guilt of Mr. Devereaux. Commissioner Cullen treated the proposition of presuming an American citizen to be guilty of a crime punishable by a foreign government, in this manner: "In regard to presumptive evidence, as I understand it, the law ignores the presumption of guilt, and it has laid down a distinct rule which governs all questions of that nature—'that a person is always presumed to be innocent until proven guilty.'" This opinion carried with it the conviction that an honest, conscientious juror held the lives of our citizens at his disposal, and his decision and review of the testimony proves that only upon such evidence of guilt as the laws of nations strictly demand, would an American Citizen be condemned to a British gallows.

MORE TROOPS.

We do not know how far the petition for more troops has gone, or whether the prayer of the people of Helena and vicinity will receive the same answer as that which has been repeatedly returned to the demands of the residents of this locality for a sufficient supply and proper distribution of troops on our frontier. But in any event we shall look forward to the action of the government with interest, to see what steps it will take in regard to the late raids, and murders of soldiers and civilians in this properly garrisoned [illegible] number of troops properly distributed, all army officers and citizens acquainted with the situation will admit. The larger posts and greater number of troops are located at points which, though once exposed, no longer require a large force for their protection. The smaller garrisons are situated where they can do the least service, where the extensive frontier presents numerous duties which they are unable to perform on account of their limited numbers. While Fort Shaw, with its four and sometimes six companies of soldiers, enjoys "weak, piping times of peace," and its immediate neighborhood reposes in tranquil security, the little garrison at Fort Benton is hard at work. The detached and scouting duties performed by this one company of soldiers during the last two years, exceed those performed by any four companies of infantry in the United States army. And yet this gallant little company has failed to perform all duties required of frontier commands.

We are informed that there is a party now repairing the telegraph line between Helena and Fort Shaw. Why not also repair the line between Benton and Shaw? If the public aud private interests of the town justified the erection of a line some years ago, surely the increased population and business enterprise of the town during the last twelve months will amply repay the trouble and expense of keeping it up. Proper measures have never been taken to keep this end of the line in working condition although of far more importance than any other point this side of Helena.

The Bozeman "Times" takes us to task for our published remarks concerning the terrible struggle of an empty steamer to reach Pompey's Pillar. We have no desire to quarrel about the matter, but we do think the "Times" was somewhat premature in dubbing Bozeman "the river metropolis of Montana."

The N. Y. "Herald" says "That, laying aside any question of duty to the Indians as our wards, we see a system so corrupt in all respects that it is a question whether it is red man. [illegible] mis-government on the part of our authorities at Washington, that make us fear that an administration which can tolerate such a state of affairs in the Sioux country must be corrupt in every department.

Now that the extradition trial is over, we hope the residents of Benton and vicinity will not forget that the "Independent" was the only Helena journal that stood by the prisoners in their hour of trouble. This excellent paper is now the unrivalled leader of Montana journalism, and as such is entitled to a large circulation in this locality. But aside from this, our people owe the "Independent" a heavy debt of gratitude, which should cause them to feel in duty bound to make large additions to its subscription list.

Indian frauds are still being unearthed and discussed by our eastern friends, but more substantial grounds for a change of policy are furnished right here in this Territory almost daily.

The "Madisonian" of the 24th says: There is considerable rivalry between Carroll and Benton. The steamers are running to Carroll from Bismarck in one week. But Benton has the advantage of being the shortest route to Helena." The Benton route is not only the shortest, but the cheapest and surest. We hear no murmers of dissatisfaction about the freight that comes this way not being on time for the markets this year, and we are confident that the merchants of Montana will have no cause to complain of any late freight which they may ship by way of Benton.