

FORT BENTON RECORD

Vol. 1.

FORT BENTON, M. T., AUGUST 14, 1875.

No. 17.

THE BENTON RECORD,

Fort Benton, M. T.,

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

W. H. BUCK, - - - Editor & Proprietor.

RATES OF SUBSCRIPTION.

One copy, one year,	\$4 00
One copy, six months,	2 50
One copy, three months,	1 50

SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS.

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TO THE PUBLIC.

Our attention has been called to the fact that an impression exists with some of our readers that the RECORD is owned and controlled by one or more of the business firms of Benton. The course which this paper has invariably pursued since its establishment—a course precisely opposite to that which it must necessarily have taken if published for the sole purpose of expressing the views or advancing the peculiar interests of any one of the merchants of this community—should be ample evidence that no such ownership or control could exist. We do not regard the error as of vital importance to the prosperity of the RECORD, but there is reason to believe that it might very materially injure some of our most esteemed patrons. For instance, the present head of administration at Washington has no firmer friend or more earnest advocate than Mr. T. C. Power, of the firm of T. C. Power & Bro.; while the RECORD, if not unfriendly to President Grant, is decidedly opposed to his Indian policy. In expressing our views upon this question, we have frequently trod severely upon Mr. Power's corns. In a late article relative to the presentation of a rifle to Sitting Bull, we even referred indirectly to this firm as among the victims of Grant's speculations on the Upper Missouri. Mr. Power denied the truth of the statement and objected to the use of his name in that connection, but very sensibly concluded that as he was not responsible for the opinions of the paper, he had no right to demand a retraction, or reason to publicly define his position.

Other instances equally conclusive might be cited to prove that the RECORD is pursuing a free and independent course, though surrounded on all sides by shoals of conflicting interests; that it is subservient to no firm or corporation, but sincerely devoted to the general welfare and prosperity of Benton and vicinity, as well as the Territory at large, and that it is wholly uncontrolled by any person or persons except the one whose name appears in its columns as editor and proprietor. All, or nearly all, of the business firms of Benton and Sun River have contributed liberally towards the establishment and support of the paper, but none claim any pecuniary interest in it, and, to their credit be it said, not one has ever attempted to influence its opinions.

BOZEMAN TO BENTON

Did no other circumstances require it, the erection of the Ferry across the Missouri at this point, invites immediate attention to the importance of opening the old and shortest road to the Gallatin. The distance by the present route, via Helena, is two hundred and fifty miles, while the old Highwood road, according to the estimate of persons who have travelled it, is not more than one hundred and thirty-five miles. What is needed to be done to save one hundred and fifteen miles of unnecessary travel, to give the residents of Bozeman an equal advantage with Helena in regard to river freighting? Very little, and the expense so trifling that it would be worse than foolish to suffer any delay in opening a route which leads to unity of local, and consequently Territorial business interests. From the crossing of the Missouri to Highwood creek the road is in good condition for freighting purposes, and continues in that state to the crossing of Belt creek. There some grading will be required, the ascent from the bottom being almost too steep for heavily loaded teams. From thence a fine rolling road is found to Belt creek gap, where a spur of the mountain forms a slight obstruction, which can be removed with little labor and made equal to any other part of the road. And only at these two points does the road require any repair, except such as is done every day on every road by passing teams. From the

gap to Camp Baker, the road traverses an open and almost level plain, thence up Deep creek to the intersection of Cliff's old Musselshell road, which crosses Twenty-five Yard creek, and thence to Bozeman. From one end to the other of this route abundance of wood and water can be found at all seasons, and a grass range second to none in the country presents itself. These advantages every freighter on the Helena road can well appreciate, and taken in connection with one hundred and fifteen miles of travel saved, this road presents inducements to our freighting interest which must soon make it the highway between Benton and Bozeman.

A WORD TO OUR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

It is unnecessary, perhaps, to urge the performance of any work which is likely to prove beneficial to Choteau County. We are confident that our Board of Commissioners can readily comprehend by what means the interests of the County can be best served. We know that every effort will be made to consummate any practical project necessary to this end. But notwithstanding the confidence and esteem we entertain for our County Fathers, duty requires us to refer to every subject in which the interest of the people may be involved, with a view to hastening or preventing its execution, as the case may seem to require, and to keep the general public informed of our progress.

The Fort Benton Transportation Company have effectually established the fact that in the absence of a railroad, the Missouri river is the sole reliable avenue for freight to this Territory, and that Benton is and must remain the great switch off to the Interior, the levee for Montana freight. The large amount of freight shipped by this route, to and from the Gallatin this season, has suggested to our Bozeman friends inquiries concerning the old road and its practicability for freighting. Our answer should be the opening of the road at once, for the traffic that must necessarily follow is of great importance to Benton, and the convenience of intercourse between the two towns of value to both. In another article we briefly refer to the repairs needed on the road to render it one of the best in the country for

freighting. We earnestly hope that our Commissioners will give the subject their earliest attention.

A DISTRICT COURT FOR BENTON.

Benton wants a District Court. Something should be done to secure one or more sessions, as our citizens are now compelled to travel to Helena to attend court, and the distance is so great, and living at Helena so costly, that the fees allowed to witnesses do not begin to cover the expenses of the trip. This is unjust to persons who are so unfortunate as to be witnesses, very expensive to the County, and entirely unnecessary. Our County bordered as it is by Indian reservations and penetrated by a navigable stream, is more liable to, and we believe does, furnish more business for the U. S. Courts than any other County in the District. It is therefore a great injustice to compel our people to travel to Helena at an expense of twenty-five cents per mile, when they are only allowed five cents per mile to pay it with, to say nothing of other expenses and loss of time, much of which might be saved if the court were held here. In addition to all this, the money required to pay these expenses is taken out of circulation here, and is not likely to be returned, thus seriously crippling trade as well as distressing individuals. The Legislature will meet in January, and if anything is to be done in this direction, now is the time to rustle.

We clip the following from an exchange:

"The Key West was making remarkable quick time, having left here on Tuesday, Sunday morning she was met 40 miles above Buford by the Carroll."

We fail to see what could have prevented the Key West from making the most remarkable quick time on her last trip. The boat that once wore the "horns" arrived at Carroll with her full cargo—no doubling up on that trip—consisting of thirteen tons. Is this the Upper Missouri popular packet trade?—It is a failure on the face, and doubly so from the necessities of the Territory.

The Helena press have our thanks for kind notices of our traveling agent. Hope we shall soon have an opportunity to return the compliment.

RIVER IMPROVEMENTS.

The following letter from Gen. Humphreys to Major Maginnis, is ample evidence that our Territorial Delegate is endeavoring to perform his duty to Choteau County. The absence heretofore of any official information regarding the progress of the improvement of the Missouri River, has led many of our readers to think that our Delegate had not properly attended to our wants. We are glad to know that the obstacles to Montana transportation are in a fair way of removal.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,
Washington, D. C., July 28, 1875.
HON. MARTIN MAGINNIS, HELENA, M. T.

DEAR SIR:—
Your letter of March 22d, relative to the necessity and importance of improving the Upper Missouri River, was forwarded to Major C. R. Suter, in charge of the improvement of the Lower Missouri. His report, with an estimate of the cost of carrying on the work for one year, has been received and will be transmitted to Congress in the next annual report from this office.

The usual annual estimates, which by law are transmitted to the Secretary of the Treasury, embrace only those for works which have been heretofore appropriated for by Congress, or which are authorized by special enactment.

Very Respectfully,
Your Ob't Serv't,
A. A. HUMPHREYS,
Brig. Gen'l and Chief of Engineers.

The Bozeman "Times" enters protest against the concentration of the troops on the Carroll route. If Eastern Montana has reason to be alarmed for its safety, how critical must be the position of this section. While it is publicly understood that an effective protection is granted to this locality, that one full company of soldiers is stationed at this post, the truth is that to-day more than five soldiers are not at this post for duty; a few are on detached duty, the rest are with Gen. Gibbon on his raid against the Sioux.

The Helena Daily "Independent" is out in new dress, and presents a neat and attractive appearance.