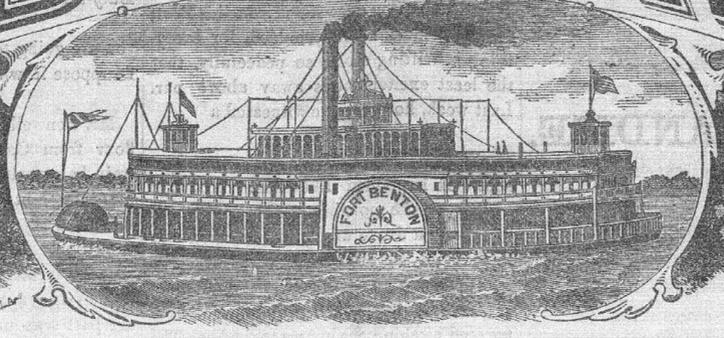


FORT BENTON RECORD



Vol. 1.

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THE BENTON RECORD,

Fort Benton, M. T.,

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RATES OF SUBSCRIPTION.

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One copy, three months,	1 50
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1 inch.	\$2 50	\$3 00	\$4 00	\$5 00	\$10 00	\$16 00	\$24 00
2 "	4 50	5 00	6 50	8 00	14 00	20 00	30 00
3 "	6 00	7 00	8 00	10 00	16 00	24 00	40 00
4 "	7 00	8 00	10 00	12 00	24 00	35 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	35 00	50 00	80 00
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OUR LEGISLATURE.

The coming session of the Territorial Legislature is no doubt looked forward to by all classes of people in every section of Montana with unusual interest. The result of the Legislative meeting may prove an important stride towards establishing the reputation of our Territory, commercial and otherwise, upon a sound and permanent basis. It is for our representatives to decide whether they will leave behind them records similar to those of their predecessors, or take the initiatory step towards inducing practical recognition of the immense and constantly increasing advantages and inducements which this Territory holds forth to capitalists, farmers, mechanics, laborers, and others; and thus place upon the pages of Montana's early history a mark to which, when our fertile plains and valleys are teeming with an industrious and prosperous population, they and their children, and others equally interested, can refer with pride and satisfaction. At no period since the organization of our Territorial Government have we stood so much in need of prompt and judicious legislation. The East and the West are just awakening to the fact that a region of country whose gold-bearing mines and auriferous fields outshine in wealth the riches of California or Australia in their most profitable and promising periods, while it has in addition to these, agricultural and stock-growing resources that are second to none in the world. The Territorial Press has of late heralded the fact of our increasing industries far and wide, from the Golden Gate to the Atlantic coast, and lo-

cal journals have ably and diligently set forth the peculiar advantages and resources of their respective localities, all of which must have exerted some influence towards bringing to our doors the capital and the population which we so much need. But the most forcible incentive to legislative consideration lies in the spirit manifested by the general public. Every person displays more or less anxiety to advance the prospering condition of the Territory; every locality is zealously laboring to win the race for supremacy; the most determined efforts are made on every side to concentrate trade and commerce, and an air of stability surrounds every business house and dwelling, from the merchant's residence to the miner's hut, and from the smallest retail establishment to the largest wholesale firm. All this proves the commendable inclination of the people, and their efforts should be encouraged by the most wise and clearly defined legislative acts.

Our representatives at the next session will have many subjects of importance to deal with. The question of railroad communication will perhaps demand a large share of their time and attention, as it is a matter of deepest concern to some localities and of more or less interest to all. A railroad would perhaps benefit Choteau County less than any other section of Montana, but any medium by which the tide of emigration may be turned this way, must eventually benefit every town village and hamlet in the Territory. Another, and by no means unimportant, duty of the legislature, will be the enactment of proper stock laws. The one at present existing is, for all the service it renders, a dead letter. We are in favor of railroad communication or any other enterprise that will benefit the Territory and, as a consequence, this and adjacent localities; but we are desirous that precedence should be given to those measures which will have the most immediate effect.

GENERAL SHERMAN'S REPORT.

The annual report of General Sherman places the aggregate strength of the army at 1,540 line officers and 24,031 enlisted men, made up as follows:

Five regiments of artillery, 180 officers, and 2,504 men.

Ten regiments of cavalry, 422 officers, and 7,206 men.

Twenty-five regiments of infantry, 848 officers, and 11,000 men.

Available recruits, hospital stewards, &c., 3,321.

The number of enlisted men allowed by Congress is 25,000. The number of effectual troops cannot be more than 19,000. Still, retrenchers and reformers insist that the army is too great an expense, that it must be cut down to 10,000. At no time has the army been up to the numerical standard, either before the last reduction or subsequent thereto. The cry was well, if you can muster an army of 30,000 at an allowed maximum strength of 60,000, surely you can muster the same number at a reduced permissive maximum strength. The same argument is now used, the fact however being entirely forgotten that the number of ineffective men will be the same under every circumstance. We can plainly perceive that the actual strength of the army relies on the maximum to which it can be raised. Every report verifies this. The consequence, then, of a further reduction of the army from 25,000 to ten thousand would be a practical reduction from 24,000 to probably 8,000. If the present number is ineffectual towards establishing peace and quiet along the immense frontier border, what a pitiable situation would be presented in the event of a further reduction. Were the interests of the people alone in determination the army instead of being reduced should be increased to a maximum strength of at least 50,000.

Touching the relation of the military towards the Kiowa, Cheyenne, and Comanche Indians, General Sherman says:

"If military commanders can have control over the supplies needed by these Indians, as they now have over their persons, I am convinced that a condition of peace can be maintained. The Sioux recently made incursions into Northern Nebraska, mostly to steal cattle and horses along the Pacific railway, and north of it. General Crook is of opinion that the whole army, acting defensively, cannot prevent these incursions, and suggests that troops be placed in the midst of the Indians, so as to watch them and prevent their leaving on pretense of hunting. This is impracticable, unless the army have supervision of the necessary supplies of these tribes within the reservations. Damage to life and property is believed to be less dur-

ing the past year than any former year. The prospect is, that as the country settles it will be less each year, till all the Indians are on small reservations; but till they acquire habits of industry in farming or stock-raising they will need food from the Government, because the game on which they have subsisted has diminished very rapidly."

Judging from the present condition of the Comanche and Apache Indians, the most fitting agent for compelling a peaceful attitude on the part of the Indians towards the white settlers is the army. This fact cannot be concealed. In our own midst it is apparent, to a trifling extent, certainly, but then sufficient to satisfy the most impartial judges; yes, even those who once earnestly advocated the peace measure, so called. The only guarantee that the people of this Territory can have that the Government intends to protect them from Indian depredations in future is the knowledge that the Indian Department has been abolished, and that the army has the sole control of Indian affairs.

THE BELKNAP LETTER.

In last issue of the RECORD we published a communication from Maj. Fanton, Indian Agent at Fort Belknap, in connection with some late instructions from the Indian Department relative to the duties of Agents in regard to the arrest and punishment of lawless Indians. In the present issue we publish a letter from a resident of Benton, who seems to doubt the sincerity of Major Fanton's expressed intentions to use the authority lately invested in him, for the benefit of the white residents of this community, and the writer suggests that the arrest and punishment of Little Mountain would satisfy the friends of the unfortunate men whom this Indian is supposed to have murdered that the Agent of the Assinaboins means for the future to deal justly and impartially between the members of this tribe and all white citizens.

Whether or not Major Fanton has ever taken proper measures to prevent depredations by the tribe of Indians under his charge, we believe that he now intends to exercise the full extent of the authority lately invested in him for that purpose, and if a proper demand is made for the arrest of the alleged murderer Little Mountain, we have

no doubt that that individual will at once be placed in the hands of the military. It is but fair to state that a short time following the murder of Gorman and Kesee, Little Mountain was examined by Maj. Fanton, in the presence of a party of soldiers and citizens from Fort Benton. The Indian told a very unsatisfactory story concerning himself and the murdered men, but there appears to have been nothing in his own or the evidence against him to prove that he had any hand in the murder, at least such was the opinion of Maj. Fanton and the interpreter, Maj. Culbertson. That Little Mountain is really the murderer of Buckshot, Poliet, Gorman, and Kesee, no one in this vicinity can well doubt as Little Mountain himself has openly acknowledged that he committed all of the murders, and has even described the manner of killing Gorman and Kesee in a way that agrees with all the known circumstances of the horrible deed. If the friends of the murdered men desire to have the matter again investigated they have a perfect right to do so, and Major Fanton will either assist them or prove false to his trust and his promises.

The annual report of Brigadier General A. H. Terry, Commanding the Department of Dakota, shows that the total force in that Department consists of 224 officers, 3,423 enlisted men, and sixty-two Indian scouts. He recommends that a post of four companies be established at the Forks of Muscleshell river, to be composed of mixed cavalry and infantry, with a view to abandon Camp Baker in Montana, and also to establish another post near the head of navigation of the Yellowstone, near the Mouth of the Big Horn.—[Helena Herald.]

The "Independent" says: "Flour is declining, dealers refusing to buy at present quotations and holders are storing."

Well that is encouraging news but the "Madisonian" says: The advance in the price of flour in Montana is not caused by any ring combination, but from an actual scarcity of the article."

There may be a scarcity owing to an unlooked for demand but that there has been a combined endeavor to hold the market we are confident, and it seems that the dealers have arrived at the same conclusion. In this event we shall be anxious to learn the cause of the sudden depreciation in the price of flour.