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A Study of Early Utah-Montana Trade, Transportation, and Communication, 1847-1881

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A STUDY OF EARLY UTAH-MONTANA TRADE,
TRANSPORTATION, AND COMMUNICATION
1847-1881

A Thesis
presented to the
Department of History
Brigham Young University
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In partial fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
L. Kay Edrington
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Roy P. Hafen
Committee Chairman

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Josephine. Wife and typist, whose ancestors were "Bullwhackers" on the Montana Trail.
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INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents the proposition that Utah and Montana had an important inter-relation during much of their formative period. This inter-connection has never been fully studied and presented to students of western history. The "formative period," above alluded to, has been arbitrarily set by the writer as the time between the arrival of the mormons in the Great Basin in 1847 and the extension northward of the Utah and Northern Railroad to Butte in 1881. This is admittedly a wide area, and perhaps does not permit a detailed study within this time period, but, on the other hand, it is restricted enough to allow a general approach and still leave room for considerable attention to detail.

This work has been prompted by a personal interest in the geographical areas concerned, the writer having been born and reared in Utah and employed for several years in southwestern Montana. It was here that he met his wife, an Idaho girl whose ancestors freighted from northern Utah to various Montana points. Interest in the subject changed to enthusiasm when preliminary research indicated that almost nothing had been done on the subject in the way of theses. Several works on different aspects of the Utah freighting trade had been done, but none purported to include the "Utah-Montana Relations" topic in all of
its significance.

The theme proposed here is that Utah, acting as a base of supply, a communication and producing center, and as a transfer or forwarding point, exerted a considerable influence, directly and indirectly, upon the molding and development of the State of Montana. Also, that Montana influenced Utah history by presenting opportunities for enterprises of different types and by serving as a consuming center for northern Utah agricultural products.

The writer will begin with the entry of the Mormons into the Great Basin in 1847. Prior to this time there was no "dividing line" between the two territories, but the whole of the intermountain west was freely traversed by a few hardy trappers and traders. The only others in the area were the Indians, an occasional government exploring party, or a wagon train crossing to the Pacific slope. The first five chapters will deal with this earliest period and will portray a few of the leading characters and events associated with the theme, along with developing a foundation upon which to place the general study.

The second, and major part of the thesis, is inaugurated by the discovery of gold, in Montana in 1862 and the subsequent stampede of miners into the area. It was during the next seven years that Utah served as the center for Montana communication and supply. In this section chapters will deal with the discovery of gold; the developing
of markets; Utah's ability and preparation to supply the new markets; freighting procedures and importance of this enterprise; and, over-all, a glimpse into the lives of men, institutions, and situations existing during the period. This last will be done through the media of diaries, contemporary publications, government sources and a few selected secondary works.

Finally, the last part will contain a chapter on the arrival, in 1869, of the transcontinental railroad to Utah and the subsequent extension northward of the Utah and Northern. With the completion of this railway to Butte in 1881 the old era came to a close.
PART I

CHAPTER I

THE OLD NORTH TRAIL

Modern scholars are not agreed on the origin of the American aborigines. It is likely that they came from several sources over a long period of time. One thing is fairly certain and that is that after arriving in North America they migrated in a north-south direction. Being hunters they kept to the foothills bordering the long range of mountains that stretched from the Aleutians in the far north to Mexico in the south. To the west lay the barrier of the broad Pacific. To the east was the expansive plains of the midwest, penetrable but uninviting. For unknown hundreds of years they traversed up and down the length of the mountain chain. Descendants of these original inhabitants called this route the Old North Trail. Cities in Montana, Idaho, and Utah sprang up on trails made by the Indian travois.

This thesis deals with only a small portion of the Old North Trail, that distance of approximately 500 miles from the shores of the Great Salt Lake to the valleys of western Montana. This road has become known as the Montana Trail. The men that moved over this route, and their experiences during a 20 year period, provides the material...
for this thesis.

Many authorities believe that thousands of years ago our American continent was peopled by a migration movement of Asiatics coming across the Bering Strait. The newcomers may even have tried navigating the Yukon River. Others struck out southward along the Pacific coast. "They were not invaders, these first Asiatics, for they came to an unpeopled continent; they were frontiersmen, curious and courageous."¹ Many students of our American Indian origins say that they are convinced that these first Asiatics formed the nucleus of the race we know now as Algonkian, which is the root of the aborigines of the eastern United States and Canada as well as most of those of our own west. "And the inland course which they may have traveled--which certainly some prehistoric peoples traveled--came to be known to tribes descended from the "pioneers" as the Old North, or Great North, Trail. It is so known today, and in some places it is still visible."² This migration from the Old World was a gradual thing, extending over many thousands of years. Even as late as 1936 investigators found that "visiting" was carried on between Siberia and

²Ibid., p. 324.
and the Alaskan island of St. Lawrence. Some of the newer settlers of the island had just recently crossed over from the barren lands of Siberia.

After the first wave of settlers had come into the new land they were followed by another. "It did not altogether succeed, though Indians of Algonkian stock still hate and fear the people who came in this new wave, the people we know as Eskimos." Still another thrust was to come from the Asian base. This, according to some scholars, happened probably not more than two thousand years ago.

It brought the fierce Athapaskans, most terrible of all the races whose skin boots or moccasins or snowshoes (last of which they invented) had scuffed the sod and snow for centuries along the old north Trail. Some believe their ancestral home was on the Himalayan slopes bordering Tibet. Whatever their origin, they were born to the sword: for hundreds of years they scouraged the Trail, destroying or dispersing weaker tribes, terrorizing whole Indian and Eskimo cultures—until, reduced by incessant bloodshed, they were themselves dispersed and absorbed by their victims. Indians of Athapaskan stock are today the most widely distributed of American aborigines. Dog-ribs, Chipewyans, Slaves of the north country, Sarcees of the plains and Montagnais of the snowy peaks, the mysterious Haidas of the north pacific coast, the Navajos and bloody Apaches of the southwest—all these are Athapaskans, and most of them were terrible foes to enemy Indian or to white.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 325.
These tribes had spilled much of their blood along the Old north Trail. Though they were strewn over the face of the land, they worked their way back to the trail from time to time. One reason was because the vast buffalo herds followed along the north Trail in their yearly search for forage grass. As they came in contact with each other they chose warfare as the means to settle disputes between themselves.

Walter McClintock, noted Indian historian, was told by an aged Blackfoot chief, Brings-Down-The-Sun, the story of the Trail as was known by the old Indians.

There is a well-known trail we call the Old north Trail. It runs north and south along the Rocky Mountains. No one knows how long it has been used by the Indians. My father told me it originated in the migration of a great tribe of Indians from the distant north to the south, and all the tribes, ever since, have continued to follow in their tracks. The Old north Trail is now becoming overgrown with moss and grass, but it was worn so deeply, by many generations of travelers, that the travois tracks and horse trail are still plainly visible.... In many places the white man's roads and towns have obliterated the Old Trail. It forked where the city of Calgary now stands. The right fork ran north into the barren lands as far as people live. The main trail ran south along the eastern side of the Rockies....It ran close to where the city of Helena now stands, and extended south into the country inhabited by a people with dark skins and long hair falling over their faces (Mexico). In former times, when the Indian tribes were at war, there was constant fighting along the
North Trail.\textsuperscript{5}

The Trail became the Indian's last stand. It was along this trail that Chief Joseph lost his last battle with his white pursuers. Pestilence, famine, and death rode the trail from time to time. The white man brought the scourge of smallpox and hunger to the Trail. He was also responsible for the introduction of liquor among the Indian and its consequent evils. "In the early 1880's the last few hundreds of the doomed millions of buffalo fled north on this road, and their descendants live now in the northwest territories."\textsuperscript{6} On the heels of the buffalo came the cattle. A new race of people now took over the command of the Old North Trail.

\textsuperscript{5}Walter McClintock, Old Indian Trails, Boston and New York; (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923). p. 88.

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid. p. 92.
CHAPTER 2

THE MORMONS IN THE GREAT BASIN

In the year 1847 the Mormons entered into Salt Lake Valley in what was then the Territory of Mexico. Driven from locations in several states of the Union they had moved across the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, had traversed the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains, and on July 24th of the above year the vanguard reached the barren valley of the Great Salt Lake.

The West was still new at this time. True, fur traders and trappers had been traveling in the area for years, but there were no permanent settlements. Between the Great Salt Lake and the frontier along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers there existed a few scattered forts to break the monotony of distance and wilderness. One of these, to the east, was Fort Bridger. Brigham Young and the Mormons had visited here a few days prior to entering their "Sagebrush Utopia."

To the south-east several hundred miles, lay such centers as Fort Bent on the Arkansas River, and New Mexico's Taos and Sante Fe. To the west lay the California missions and some small pueblos. An uninviting salt desert and the lofty and dangerous Sierras made the distance between
the central Rockies and the Pacific Coast seem even further than it was. To the north nearly 150 miles was Fort Hall, one of the major stops on the historic Oregon Trail. Just as it served as one of the center stops in the east-west traffic, it would soon become a major station in the north-south trade also. Fort Hall was destined to serve but not to endure. Far to the north of Fort Hall was Fort Owen, situated in the fertile Bitter Root Valley of what was to become in turn Washington, Idaho, and Montana territories. Along with Fort Owen was another early outpost to the northward. It was Fort Benton, at the navigational head of the Missouri. This fort was later, in the 1860's, to become a worthy and successful opponent of northern Utah in the struggle to corner the Montana market.

Outside of the small farming area in the Bitter Root Valley around Fort Owen, there was no source of agricultural products in the Montana area. Farm products and manufactured goods had to come from points as far away as Walla Walla, Salt Lake City, or Fort Benton. The inhabitants of southwestern Montana supplied themselves by occasional trips to these distant points. Major Owen's journal is replete with information about trips of this nature. The region north of Fort Hall in Idaho was ignored by the rest of the nation until 1862, when gold discoveries brought thousands of emigrants swarming into the country and
created a vast market for any area with proximity and potential for supplying it.

Many factors could be included in the success story of the Mormon Empire, but one of the more basic of them would be the decision to base the Mormon economy on agriculture and home-manufacture instead of on mining. This decision not only provided the Mormon people with a means of sustaining themselves, but presented them with a future opportunity to strengthen their economy by mercantile and freighting ventures. This opportunity came when the gold rush to Montana began. A Utah historian, Orson Whitney, says this on the subject:

...There was no particular desire on the part of the general community to avail themselves of the opportunity to grow rich by mining. When the proper time should come, their leaders declared, the riches of the earth would be theirs, would be emptied into their laps, as it were, and they should have gold, silver, precious stones and all that such baubles would buy to their heart's content. But until that time they should seek for the true riches, knowledge, wisdom and righteousness, the riches of eternity, for wealth that fades not away nor perishes with the using. Among their temporal pursuits agriculture was exalted and extolled as the basis of their prosperity, and home manufactures stood next. They were to till the earth and raise and store up grain against times of need; for gold and silver could not be eaten, nor could it purchase provisions in seasons of famine, such as early Utah had seen, and which might at any time recur. They were to build mills and factories and seek to become a self-sustaining people, benefactors to their kind in
event of war, famine and general distress overtaking the nations. Iron and coal mining was encouraged, but not the mining after precious metals, the love of which would fire the passions, engender greed and avarice, promote pride, vanity and class distinctions, and so divide and demoralize the community.¹

So concerned were the leaders of the mormons to steer the people away from mining enterprise that they lost out to a 'Gentile' element in this respect. "Thus it was that the Gentiles of Utah, and not the mormons, became the pioneers and earliest promoters of this now flourishing industry in our mountain Territory, aptly termed by president Lincoln 'The treasure-house of the nation."²

The desert gave way to the industry of the mormons. Wheat and rye and corn thrived where once sage brush and sego lillies grew. Fruits of all types grew readily. Of course this all took time and work, and according to the mormons, divine intervention. In her weaker days, while trying only to subsist, Utah's supplies came mostly from the Missouri-Kansas-Nebraska freighting towns. This was a long

²Ibid., p. 107.
overland haul by ox and mule train and made supplies expensive. One Captain Grant, the Hudson Bay man in charge of Fort Hall, received outrageous prices for hauling in such common necessities as coffee, calico, sugar, and selling them to hungry Great Salt Lake settlers for an outlandish profit. He was probably the first man to commercially freight over a portion of what later became known as the "Montana Trail."

The Deseret News Weekly of September 28, 1854, says of his visit:

MERCHANDISING IN UTAH
Captain Grant, of Fort Hall, was the first person from outside our community, who brought goods to this market for sale. He sold sugar and coffee at one dollar a pint (less than a pound), 25 cent calico at 50 and 75 cents a yard, and other articles in proportion. Why did he not sell higher? Perhaps he had some conscience, and it is probable he thought the then poverty of the settlers would not admit of any dearer rate, and it must be confessed the above were pretty high figures.3

This same article goes on to extol the virtues of those merchants who did not take advantage of the Mormon's peculiar situation. For instance, Kinkhead and Livingston sold coffee and sugar at 40 cents a pound and calico at 25 cents. This may well have been the basis for the enmity

3 Deseret News Weekly (Salt Lake City), Sept. 18, 1854.
between the Mormon people and Captain Grant. In the year 1857 we find him disturbed by reports that the Mormons are out to "get him." "It was on the return trip that Maillet spent a few days in the Beaverhead with Captain Grant, John Jacobs, Joe Meek, and other prominent characters of the Rockies. Captain Grant was quite infirm, and upset by a report that the Mormons were out to get him, so he requested Maillet to assist him and his family in moving to a place of safety...."

Besides an occasional merchandising visit by such as Captain Grant, another profitable enterprise grew up which took men and stock over the "Montana Trail" in an economic venture. This was a result of the Emigrant Road and the business it brought to enterprising ex-trappers and traders, as well as others. Emigrants would start out from the border towns, such as St. Louis or Independence, with fresh stock. Horses, mules, or oxen would be used and as they toiled westward under their burdens, month after month, they became tired and footsore. By the time they reached the Utah area the stock would be completely worn out. It was at this time that someone thought of the rich and fertile valleys of

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southwestern Montana, specifically the Beaverhead and the Bitter Root. Here the stock could be wintered on luxurious grasses, rested up, revigorated and then taken back to the Emigrant Road in the spring and exchanged for more tired stock at a good profit. Many traders and trappers engaged in this profitable enterprise and it lasted for several years. Many Montana historians give this enterprise credit for bringing into Montana stock herds that eventually became one of the great assets of the state. Mr. Weisel states that the largest group of Fort Owen customers between 1853 and 1858 were men who traded along the Emigrant Road. "These included a few of the old mountain men who found this trading their only means of livelihood, now that the country was depleted in Beaver, and pelts were low in price. Starting in 1849 the gold fields of California and the fertile lands of Oregon drew a continual stream of Emigrants westward over the trail and its various cutoffs." Old trappers were not alone in this undertaking. Many Mormons saw the profit possible and turned their hands to "swapping stock." This took them on trips to the north of Utah and they became acquainted with the valleys of Montana and Idaho. "The Beaverhead and Bitter Root were favorite wintering grounds. In the latter valley, cattle could be exchanged for the fine
horses of the Flatheads and traders were attracted from as far as Salt Lake. Some of the horses and cattle procured from the emigrants were blooded animals that materially improved the northwest stock. They also formed a nucleus for the vast cattle herds that were established in Montana soon after the buffalo were decimated.6
CHAPTER 3

THE SALMON RIVER MISSION

The Mormon leader, Brigham Young, was a colonizer. By 1857 settlements under his direction had been started in many parts of the intermountain area. The colonization efforts tended southward.

At any rate there was, before the spring of 1851, a Mormon settlement some 250 miles south of Salt Lake City, with many others at intervening points, and a group of colonists was being dispatched at that time to settle San Bernardino. But northward there were very few, and the most distant one was only about fifty-nine miles from Salt Lake City.¹

Scores of small communities grew up between Salt Lake City and the southern extension of San Bernardino. The route between these two became known as the "Mormon Corridor." Gradually, however, the people began to learn that the land north was as productive as that south, and that farming

conditions were as promising. In harmony with this new idea communities began to appear in the Weber and Cache valleys. These settlements were still not very far from the main base of Mormondon.

The Mormon leader made one major attempt to penetrate far northward and this came in the year 1855. Prior to this time several efforts had been made to do missionary work among the Indian people by the Mormons but the effort had not been attended by any great measure of success. At a General Conference of the Church held in Salt Lake City, April 6, 1855, Brigham Young appointed twenty-seven men to conduct missionary work among the buffalo-hunting Indians of Washington Territory. The plan was to travel north until a suitable spot could be found to establish a settlement. This base was to be a nucleus for missionary work to be accomplished among the Bannock, Shoshoni, or Flathead nations. The expedition left Farmington, Utah, on May 16, 1855.

For the purpose of this thesis the northward journey of this group is important because of the route which they

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2Ibid.

traveled and the train of wagons they took with them. "It consisted of eleven wagons loaded with wheat, corn, flour, and other provisions, and sufficient tools to begin farming operations." This made a fairly large assemblage, perhaps the first of its size to travel over a major portion of the Montana Trail.

Leaving Farmington they skirted the end of the Great Salt Lake and then headed north through the Malad Valley, crossing the divide in the area where later was to run one of the two branches of the freight road from Utah to Montana. Traveling for 20 miles along Bannock Creek they reached the Portneuf River and crossed it at McArthur's toll bridge. On June 1st they used an old boat to ferry their belongings across the Snake River about four miles above Fort Hall. From this point they followed up the Snake River until opposite the present site of Idaho Falls and then they veered northwesterly across the sagebrush desert. Their journey now was taking them to the west of the Montana Trail.

They soon encountered Indians of the Bannock tribe whose chief rode 75 miles to encourage them to settle near his people. "He also stated that the Mormons were welcome to any land that they might select for farming purposes.

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He was also very anxious that they go no farther north than Salmon River. Following his entreaties a settlement was begun on the Lemhi River, which unites with the South Fork of the Salmon River. This spot is located about 2 miles above the present site of Tendoy.

On June 18, the company reached the selected site. The missionaries began to dig an irrigation ditch, plow the ground, and build a stockade which they called Fort Jimhi (now Lemhi) in honor of a Book of Mormon character. The stockade was made of logs twelve feet long, three feet of which were in the ground. As soon as possible they constructed a sawmill, a blacksmith shop, and thirteen cabins in the fort.  

This stockade, then, became a major post of habitation for the next 3 years. During its prime the settlement at Lemhi contained 100 settlers. This was in 1857, and at the same time Fort Owen, just over a hundred miles to the north, could boast only a fraction of this amount. Some significance of the Mormon penetration can be seen when a map of Washington Territory is consulted. While falling perhaps 30 miles short of being as far north as Virginia City, and the early gold mines at Bannock, nevertheless, it was only a few miles from them in an east-west direction.

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5 Hunter, op.cit., p. 335.
6 Ibid.
7 See note 4, chapter 6 of this thesis.
was only 40 miles from Fort Lemhi, through Lewis and Clark Pass, to Bannock. Had the Mormons been able to maintain their settlement during the Sixties it would probably have won for itself a major role in the development of the new area. The farmlands along the Salmon River would have furnished an easy-to-reach supply for the early Montana miners.

The farming venture at Lemhi, was starting to adjust itself at the time the mission was abandoned. "Four days after their arrival, the missionaries had planted several acres of peas, potatoes, corn, and turnips. Hordes of grasshoppers appeared late in July and ate the crops..." The shortage of food was offset by sending to Utah for supplies. During the next 3 years numerous freighting ventures were carried out between Lemhi and Salt Lake City.

"By the spring of 1857, the mission showed signs of becoming a prosperous settlement, and it was with an air of some pride that the inhabitants made preparations to receive a visit from their president and prophet, Brigham Young." President Young's trip in April of 1857 was of sizeable dimensions. Northward from Utah, over the scarcely-rutted roads came 115 men, 22 women and 5 boys, with 168 horses

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8 Ibid.
9 Madsen, op. cit., p. 92.
A train of this magnitude was not equaled again until at least six years later when the gold rush to Montana began.

During the time that the Mormons maintained themselves at Fort Lemhi they were in frequent touch with the inhabitants of the Bitter Root valley to the north. Major John Owen and George A. Smith maintained a correspondence with each other. These letters were mostly concerned with Indian matters.

Disturbed by the unrest among the Indians, President Smith of the Salmon River Mission wrote to Major John Owen, at Fort Owen in Bitter Root Valley, asking the major to persuade the Pend d'Oreille to return the stolen Bannock horses. At the same time Smith promised to get the Bannock to return the sixty horses stolen from the Nez Perce. Shortly after receipt of the letter from Fort Lemhi, Owen received news that the Nez Perce had lost a number of horses to Bannock raiding parties in the Big Hole country.  

It was trouble with the Indians, as mentioned above, that helped bring about the abandonment of the Salmon River Mission. It is not necessary to go into detail about the Indian attack at Fort Lemhi on February 25, 1858. Several

10Deseret News, June 10, 1858.
Mormons were killed in this and following battles and on March 26th orders arrived from Brigham Young to abandon the Mission.

In ensuing weeks and months charges were made against the U.S. Army for instigating the attack.

The attack on the Salmon River settlement seemed to give additional proof to the Mormons that the troops and the mountain­eers were arming the Indians and instigating them to attack Mormon outposts.12

Thus came to a close the attempt at northern penetration. Had the experiment been allowed to continue for another decade the Mormon people would undoubtedly have played even a more dominant role in Montana and Idaho history than they did. The three­year experiment of the Salmon River Mission was a worthwhile venture from many viewpoints. Travel back and forth between this point and Salt lake City helped to mark out wagon­roads, explore the country, and to promote understanding and negotiation with the Indians of the area. When gold was found in southwestern Montana, Utah had a large number of experienced, energetic men who were acquainted with the trails that led northward and who had no hesitancy about setting out on ventures that would prove providential to the new mining camps.

CHAPTER 4

EARLY UTAH-MONTANA RELATIONS

Two men who are very important in the history of Montana and the Northwest must be considered in any historical work dealing with the area. One of these men, Major Owen, ran the fort in the Bitter Root Valley during the 1850's and 60's and was a well-respected, influential man. The other person was Granville Stuart. Of the two, Granville probably left the more permanent record of accomplishments in Montana. He participated in the early gold mining, merchandising, stock-trading on the Emigrant Road, and eventually became Montana's great cattle baron. "Stuart's Stranglers" struck fear into the hearts of cattle rustlers in eastern Montana and his experience as a member of the Vigilantes in Virginia City in 1864-65 stood him in good stead when it came time to rid the Missouri bad lands of rustlers in the 1870's. Through all of his experiences he remained an educated, well-rounded man. One of his employees remembers him:

In Granville Stewart, part owner and manager of this outfit, I had found a man who so commanded my respect and admiration that his influence upon my character and conduct was profound. A Virginian by descent, one of the earliest of Montana's pioneers, an instinctive gentleman, self-
educated, well read, fearless, a man who had married a Shoshone squaw who held her place in his household as a loved and respected wife and mother—he needed no other qualities to make him my ideal....

The main reason to refer to these men at this point is because both men left good, vivid diaries, which give us insight into the period of time with which we are dealing. Secondarily, they have importance in this thesis because of their connection with Utah and the Mormon people. In both cases their is nothing direct in their association or of far reaching consequence. However, their examples help to portray the role of influence that the Utah area inhabitants played in the development of early day Montana.

Granville Stuart became interested in adventure and travel on the frontier at the age of 18. In company with his brother James he set out for California in the year 1852. An uneventful trip across the prairies brought them finally to the Green River of Wyoming. "We went down this stream seven miles, to the lower ford and ferry, where we found some Mormons, who were ferry-men and traders...." It was not long


after this that they were camped on Weber River and Granville says of the site: "When we camped on Weber River, where is now the city of Ogden, the sagebrush, just after sundown swarmed with skunks, and I felt certain that Great Salt Lake could beat the world for bed bugs and skunks." Despite his uncomplimentary entry describing the Ogden site, he changed his approach after entering the Salt Lake Valley. His description of their stay there is interesting and informative as it gives a view of life in the Great Salt Lake Valley in those early days.

Our horses were greatly in need of rest so we stayed with the "LDS," as the Mormons called themselves, for several weeks and were kindly treated by them. In fact, I have got into better society than I have been in since, for I lived a month with one of the "12 apostles" and his family. It was "Apostle John Taylor," a pleasant old gentleman, who succeeded Brigham Young as head of the Mormon Church. He wore a snuff colored suit, and a rather rusty old plug hat. He owned a whole block and had an adobe house on each of the 3 corners, in which lived his three wives, each in her own house. I had the honor of living with the apostle and wife no. 1, in the house on the 4th corner. She was a most amiable woman, a good cook, and a good housekeeper. She kept everything nice and clean, but the confounded bedbugs ran us out of the beds in the house, and we all slept out in the yard. Luckily it never rained. Mrs Taylor felt greatly mortified about the bed-

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bugs and said that she just couldn't keep them out. Although she fought them all of the time, and when one day, I pulled a piece of bark off a fir pole on a nearby fence and found innumerable bedbugs under it, I knew why Mrs. Taylor could not keep them out of the house. The entire valley swarmed with them.  

Sometime after leaving Salt Lake they arrived at the gold diggings in California. Upon seeing a tribe of Indians living without clothes in the Redwood forest Granville made a remark in his diary to the effect that he felt as though he had come from the "12 apostles" to the "Garden of Eden."

By 1867 James and Granville grew tired of prospecting in the gold fields of California and set their faces eastward once again. It was their intention to visit at home for awhile. They didn't have any idea at that time that circumstances lay awaiting them in the "Land of Deseret" that would change their route, their lives, and effect the future development of what later became the State of Montana. 

The year 1867 was an eventful year in the history of Utah and the Mormons. The great Mormon War was in the making. Passions ran aflame. "Brother Brigham" and his right hand man, Heber C. Kimball, preached inflammatory speeches from the pulpit and the Mormon people, as a whole, were re-

\[4\text{Ibid., p. 50.}\]
senting vigorously the government's attempt to interfere with them and their ways. "...woe, woe." said Governor Young, "to that man who comes here to unlawfully interfere with my affairs. Woe, woe to those men who come here to unlawfully meddle with me and this people. I swore in Nauvoo where my enemies were looking me in the face, that I would send them to hell across lots, if they meddled with me, and I ask no more odds of all hell today." If Brigham was vindictive in his speech he was not more so than fiery Heber C. Kimball. "Drummond and those miserable scoundrels and some that are now in our midst, how do I feel towards them?—pray for them? Yes, I pray that God Almighty would send them to hell, some say across lots, but I would like to have them take a round about road and be as long as they can in going there....send 2,600 troops here, our brethren, to make a desolation of this people: God Almighty helping me, I will fight until there is not a drop of blood in my veins. Good God; I have wives enough to whip out the United States, for they will whip themselves. Amen." Heber even told the women to arm themselves. "I told you last Sunday

5Young's speech of July 26th, in the Deseret News, August 5, 1857.

to arm yourselves, and if you cannot do it any other way, sell some of your fine bonnets, fine dresses and buy yourself a dirk, a pistol or some other instrument of war. 7

It is small wonder that traveling "gentiles" stayed clear of the Mormon capital. Stories were circulated that many gentiles were being intercepted upon the road and never heard of again. Such stories reached the ears of James and Granville Stuart. Prudence dictated that the Mormon center be widely circled. So it was that in July of 1857 Granville fell sick of Rocky Mountain Fever while in the area north of Malad, Idaho. This caused a delay of weeks and resulted in an eventual decision to put off returning home and to seek a wintering spot in the valleys to the north. During the long days of convalescence Granville kept his diary up to date and wrote years later about the episode:

During the time we were delayed here many important events had taken place. Brigham Young, president of the Mormon church, had as we now learned, declared the state of Deseret, now Utah, free and independent of the United States. In fact he had seceded from the union.

I remember hearing Brigham Young in 1852 preaching and abusing the United States, calling them, "a union with Hell and the Devil" and assuring the Saints, that the Mormon Church would overcome all its

7Ibid.
enemies, that the Lord would yet guide them back to Jackson County Missouri, that he would deliver the United States over to them and they would establish the kingdom of God over the world. I thought at the time that Brigham was tackling too big a job, but I found that now five years later he had started in to make good.9

Mr. Stuart's opinion of the Mormon people at this time underwent a change that continued throughout the rest of his days. The diary continues on and tells how the government at Washington tried to reason Brigham out of seceding, but to no avail. The government finally started five thousand troops commanded by General Albert Johnston to Utah in order to humble him. Brigham only countered with the statement that "The Lord was on the side of the Saints and that they could and would lick the United States and all the legions of hell that were helping them."9

As Granville lay sick the war preparations to the south continued. His diary tells of Brigham's Declaration of Martial Law, of the Saints being organized and drilled. "...and they made it high crime to sell or give away any food or ammunition to a gentile, and they got ready for war."10

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8Stuart, op. cit., p. 119.
9Ibid.
10Ibid., p. 121.
By this time the U.S. troops with long slow moving ox trains of supplies, were coming up North Platte and Sweetwater rivers and the Mormon troops patrolled and guarded all the roads, and when at last I was able to mount my horse, we found all the roads guarded, and we could neither go forward to the states nor back to California. To attempt it would cause us to be arrested as government spies and that meant sure death. A few persons found traveling were arrested and were never heard of afterwards. No doubt Brigham's corps of "Destroying Angels," under Porter Rockwell, and Bill Hickman, could have pointed out their graves. Five years later I became acquainted with Hickman at Gold Creek, Montana, and found him a genial sort of man. I think Byron's description of "The Corsair"—He was the mildest mannered man that ever scuttled ship or cut a human throat, would have fitted him quite well. We now found ourselves in a very dangerous situation. We could not long remain where we were, and if we tried to go anywhere else we ran the risk of losing our lives.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}

The situation seemed hopeless to the two men when a well known character arrived upon the scene. Jake Meek was known all over the Rockies, and his arrival at Malad Creek provided the Stuart brothers with the opportunity that they needed. They discussed their situation with Meek and he told them that the previous winter (that of 1856) he had wintered in the Beaverhead Valley some three hundred miles north. The Indians in that region were reported as being friendly and game was plentiful. Meek had just done some trading along the Emigrant Road and was headed back to
the valley to winter his stock where the weather was not too severe. The advice he gave to the brothers was to accompany him and then return in the spring when the Mormon war would undoubtedly be over. This they decided to do. "Then came the problem of getting supplies in a hostile country in time of war. Meek told us that forty miles down the stream on which we were camped, was an outlying Mormon fort and a small settlement, he thought the bishop who ruled the settlement, as was always the case among the Mormons, might possibly be induced by a good price to sell us some food and ammunition secretly, in spite of Brigham Young's prohibition against letting gentiles have anything." According to the diary they found the bishop an amiable sort of person who secretly sold them a limited quantity of flour, bacon, coffee, and sugar. Also they obtained some powder, lead, and percussion caps. At about this time, far to the south, the episode known as the Mountain Meadows massacre was being enacted. The three men did not know about it at this time and if they had it is likely that their actions would have been different. "Had we known on the eleventh day of September, 1857, as we were packing up, of the dreadful deed being done at Mountain Meadows, instead of travel-

\[\text{\textsuperscript{12}}\text{Ibid., p. 123.}\]
ing leisurely along, we would doubtless have traveled without camping day or night, as long as our stock could go, in our desire to get as far away as we could in the shortest space of time. We did not hear of the massacre until June 26, 1858, when James, Anderson, Ross, and I went to Fort Bridger, Utah for supplies.  

The Stuart's went on to Montana, as intended, and while there they turned their hand at the newly acquired skill of prospecting. While they are not actually acknowledged as having discovered the first gold in Montana, they are, none-the-less, given credit for finding it in significant quantities to start the Montana gold rush. The discovery of gold was inevitable, but it was unwittingly helped along by the situation in Utah among the Mormons. Stuart's edited diaries are full of allusion to the Mormon area and of relations between the two Territories. In about 1875 Stuart again wrote of his party and the reasons for going to the Deer Lodge Valley, "we were actuated by a desire to investigate the reported finding of float gold by a Red River halfbreed, named Beasetsee, in the lower end of Deer Lodge, in 1852, and its subsequent discovery, in 1856, by a party on their way

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13 Ibid., p. 124.
to Salt Lake, from the Bitter Root Valley," Stuart elaborates on this in an article written in 1876.

In 1852 a Scotch half-breed from the Red river of the north, named Francois Finlay, but who was known among his associates as Benetsee and who had just returned from California to the Rocky Mountains, began to prospect on what is now Gold Creek, in Deer Lodge county and found light float gold but as his prospecting was necessarily of a superficial character he found no mines that would pay. The fact of gold being discovered there, however became noised about among the mountaineers still in the country, and in the spring of 1856, a party among who were Robert Hereford, late of Helena, John Saunders called Long John, Bill Madison and one or two others who were passing Benetsee Creek on their way to Salt Lake from the Bitter Root Valley where they had spent the winter trading with the Indians, and prospecting a little found more gold than had been obtained by Finlay. One piece weighed about ten cents and they gave it to old Captain Grant, who used to show it, up to the time of his death in 1852 as the first piece of gold found in the country.

Another example of how Salt Lake and Utah elements kept appearing in the northern territory is the story of the salt bed found by Stuart and his party in September of 1860.

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as they headed for the Beaverhead valley to do some prospecting. Reaching the lower end of Salt River Valley they found a little flat of about three or four acres that was white as snow although the grass was green all around the borders. Camping nearby the party examined the white spot and found it to be a layer of pure white salt about four inches thick which had evidently been deposited by a spring flowing out of the side of a bench nearby. "We scraped up enough to fill a two bushel sack and took it with us. Later when the gold mines brought a rush of people to Montana and Idaho a company from Salt Lake established salt works there and supplied all this section with the finest quality of salt and from 1864 to the present time have paid dividends that far exceed those of any of the gold mines that we were interested in."16 It might be well to make one more quote from the diaries of Mr. Granville Stuart.

May 26, Sunday. This has been a beautiful day. Warm, calm, and nearly clear. Thomas Pambrum and Oliver yeClaire arrived from Bear River, near Box Elder Utah, Mormon settlement. They do not bring any news of any consequence. They went down there with Van Etten's party to help drive a band of horses that Van traded from the Flatheads last winter. They all got through safely. Van's home is down near Salt Lake City. Gold Tom visited our ranch today. We had

16Stuart, op. cit., p. 120.
found some tolerable good prospects up the creek. 17

In the above quotation a mormon by the name of Van Etten is mentioned. He seems to have been a well known personality of the period and something further is said of him in the following chapter.

17 Ibid., p. 169.
CHAPTER 5

FROM SALT LAKE VALLEY TO THE BITTER ROOT

Van Etten was a Mormon trader who was engaged in the emigrant road stock trade that was mentioned earlier. He has the distinction of being the first man to take a wagon northward from Salt Lake over the "Montana Trail" by way of Fort Hall, Eagle Rock (Idaho Falls), Monida pass, and thence up the Big Hole Valley, through Gibbons pass and into the Bitter Root Valley. He had come to trade with the Indians on this trip and so he pushed northward past Fort Owen. Major Owen mentions Van Etten upon occasion, and finally had to order him out of the valley.

He left, driving a band of horses, and supposedly returned to his home in Utah. George Weisel, in his book, Men and Trade on the North West Frontier, gives us this sketch of him:

Van Etten was a Mormon who freighted goods into the Flathead's country to trade for their horses. These he sold at Salt Lake and on the "Road." His home was near Salt Lake City, but he made regular trips north and spent the winters of 1854 to 1861 in the Bitter Root and Flathead Valleys. He first arrived at Fort Owen on November 1, 1854, and had with him two wagons. On his third trip to the Valley (1856) he brought two wagons loaded with trade goods and each drawn by four yoke of oxen. George Goodwin
James Brown, Bill Madison, and Frank Woody were in his party and they traveled in company with the Hooper and Williams outfit. That winter he spent on the Jocko of Flathead valley trading with the Indians, and the next spring drove a large band of horses south.

Van Etten had a trading camp seven miles above Flint Creek in 1858. He was procuring horses for the Pony Express, an organization which required superior animals... Some of the well-bred stock traded or bought along the "Road" were taken to the Bitter Root Valley and undoubtedly improved the strain of the ponies.¹

Van Etten must have followed the custom that so many other men of the period did. That is, he took for himself a wife from among the Indians. This was about in 1859. Weisel infers this from the fact that she was described by Major Owen as a "young and agreeable spiritual bride," indicating that she was an Indian woman not bound by legal ties.² Van Etten soon found himself in an argument with the owner of Fort Owen and was ordered to get off a particular piece of land. "The limitations of his freedom and activities may have decided Van Etten against spending more time in western Montana. He drove a band of horses back.

¹Weisel, op. cit., p. 97.
²Ibid., p. 98.
to his Salt Lake home and evidently never returned."3

With Van Etten's outfit that entered the Bitter Root Valley in 1856 was a gentleman named Franklin H. Woody. Woody wasn't a Mormon, but he had just spent about 18 eventful months living among them. Woody was an unusual man for the period inasmuch as he was not by nature a roving person. After arriving in the Bitter Root Valley he never left again, but settled down near the Hell Gate region (modern Missoula) and lived out an eventful and useful life. He held many civic posts and was a great leveling force in the area. He was born in 1832 at Chatham, North Carolina, and became a school teacher at the age of fifteen, and at nineteen he left home to seek an independent livelihood. It was while he was at Leavenworth, Kansas, that Frank made his first contact with the Mormon people. Along with several other young men he hired out to a John Waddell, who was sending a supply train to Salt Lake. "The wagonmaster drove his men so hard and treated them so badly that in the middle of the prairie the young recruits mutinied and left the train. A few days later they were picked up by some kindly Germans who were on their way to Washington, but Woody became ill at Sweetwater and had to be left behind with a boy to care for him."4

3 Ibid., p. 99.
4 Ibid., p. 154.
Fig. 1. - Fort Owen

Fig. 2. - Old Fort Hall, Idaho
It was now, for the second time, that he came into contact with the Mormons. A couple of Mormon prospectors happened to pass by and were persuaded to give Woody a lift to Salt Lake. Woody found no solace in Salt Lake. The people were strange to him and he longed to leave as soon as he was able. Shortly he was hitch-hiking again on the Emigrant Road. At Willow Creek he was told that due to the uprising of the Modoc Indians there would be no traffic on the "Road" for a while. Once again Woody started southward and at Boxelder he found a friendly Mormon family that boarded him for the winter in return for his tutoring the daughters.

The following year found the Salt Lake Valley in pitiful shape. Due to droughts and grasshoppers and blizzards an unpleasant situation existed. It was no place for an unemployed man of different faith. After spending some time down at Spanish Fork, Utah, he returned to Salt Lake and contacted W. H. Hooper to receive some back wages.

In the store Captain W. H. Hooper offered him a job bull-whacking to the Flathead country with Van Etten's outfit. The train, two wagons pulled by four yokes of oxen, started in September. Their trail took them to Fort Hall, then present Dubois, Red Rock Creek, Big Hole, and over Gibbon's pass to the headwaters of the Bitterroot in Ross's pole. The northern slope of Gibbon's pass was so steep they had to chain the wheels and put two yokes of oxen on the rear of each wagon. The
train creaked into Fort Owen in October, 1856.6

Woody says that throughout this trip he gained much solace from a copy of Milton's Paradise Lost, which he always carried with him. No one can really appreciate the character of Franklin H. Woody unless he reads Woody's own story in one of the volumes of the Montana Contributions. Here he goes into detail about his humorous attempts to pass himself off as a new convert to Mormonism in order to not be mistaken as a gentile. This was during his 18 month sojourn in Utah. It also helped him in obtaining food and lodging. One of the secrets that he soon learned was how to bless the food in a Mormon household. We always ended with "and God bless the Quorum of the Twelve, even Brigham, Amen." This usually wiped away any doubt that his hosts might be entertaining as to his authenticity. All histories of Montana treat Mr. Woody very kindly.

Several personalities and their Mormon connections have been discussed during the last few pages and there is still to be mentioned at least one more. This is major Owen. Owen operated his Fort in the Bitter Root Valley for two decades, 1851-1871. During this time he received his supplies from Fort Hall, Fort Benton, Walla Walla, and occasionally
from Salt Lake City. His diary mirrors the feelings of himself and others as they awaited the outcome of the "Utah War." It is hard to imagine that an area isolated by several hundred miles could become so concerned over events so far away. To Major Owen the danger was real and imminent. One of his first entries deals with the arrival of Jake Meeks and the Stuart brothers in December of 1857.

Christmas is passed and gone. McGeever came up today from Hell's Gate saying that a man by the name of Meeks had arrived from Beaverhead and that the parties which intended wintering in that section were on their way for this place from fears of the Mormons. If so we will soon know it. No words yet from Mr. McArthur yet who has been expected some days from Vancouver.\(^6\)

Later in his journal he records their arrival at his fort. Owen was anxious to get possession of one of Brigham Young's proclamations of martial law and after several months one of them finally entered the valley. The proclamation ended with the following words:

Therefore, I, Brigham Young, Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Territory of Utah, in the name of the people of the United States in the Territory of

Utah:

1st.-Forbid all armed forces, of every description, from coming into this Territory under any pretense whatever.

2nd.-That all the forces in said Territory hold themselves in readiness to march, at a moment’s notice, to repel any and all such invasion.

3rd.-Martial law is hereby declared to exist in this Territory, from and after the publication of this proclamation; and no person shall be allowed to pass or repass into, or through, or from this Territory, without a permit from the proper officer.

(Signed by Brigham Young Sept. 15, 1857).

Evidently the rumors and reports that reached northward into the valley of the Bitter Root caused great alarm for Mr. Owen. At least he became concerned lest the Mormons, in an attempt to flee the troops of the United States, should move into his valley and confiscate everything. His entry for Monday, December 28, 1857, mirrors his anxiety. "Commenced baling furs preparatory to taking annual inventory of property on hand. Mess Mr. Anderson and Ross arrived from Beaver head they report Captain Grant with his family and Stock some 250 head on the way from same place having become

alarmed from the mormon Difficulty they say that Brigham Young had declared Martial law in utah Territory that a printed copy of his proclamation was brought to Beaver head this fall, and that 60 u.s. Wagons loaded with supplies had been captured and all burned by a party of 500 mormons. 8 This entry was followed by another one on the following day. "we have for the most of the day kept closely around the fire smoking our pipes and ruminating over the news of the mormon War. making many Speculations as to the final close of the outbreak...."9 Two weeks went by and after giving it much thought Owen decided to put off a trip to the States which he had contemplated making for some time. he says that this was the fourth time that he had been disappointed in this respect. "Things from the mormon quarter are rather too alarming to leave at the present I have had all my property carefully invoiced also the property of the employees. In case of loss by a mormon job when proper care has been taken to secure property the government may take a favorable view of Claims of such loss. There from all appearance must be an open rupture between the u.s. government and the mormon Clan."10 Another entry was made on Friday, 19 of

8 Owen, op. cit., p. 187.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., p. 189.
February.

The snow going fast Jas. Mine singer came down from Mr. Burr's. I have engaged him for a year at $40.00 per month.

Mr. Pattee arrived late. He came from Wells Gate today. He has been absent since 2nd ultimo during which time he has been to Salmon River. He reports the Mormons in fine spirits having no fears of Brigham being routed from Salt Lake by the U.S. troops. Mr. P. found them very short of supplies... particularly Tobacco and Ammunition. We say some of them will be over in the Spring in search of work. I will give them a hearty welcome as I need them. 12

Mr. Pattee tells me that the Mormons on Salmon River are in fine spirits. They have plenty of wheat. They contemplate strengthening their position by building an adobe wall 16 feet high and 12 feet thick. I am inclined to think he is mistaken about the thickness but he says no. They think it is a great feat the burning of 120 Government Angus. They say they will have to flee to the mountains to carry out the prophecy of Jos. Smith the founder of the Society they say that Brigham Young is to save the republic and that he will be President of the U.S. I suppose they have had some recent revelation poor deluded beings. What is to become of them? Be it as it may it is going to cost uncle Sam more than he first anticipated.... 13

11 A footnote on page 192 mentions that James M. Mine singer came from Salt Lake City to the Beaverhead in 1856 with a herd of cattle for Fred Burr. We went to the Bitter Root in 1857.

12 Ibid., p. 192.

13 Ibid.
There are many other quotes of a similar nature that could be read with interest. Enough has been given, however, to establish the fact that John Owen was deeply concerned over the state of affairs in Utah. The question that he was unable to answer for himself was: Which way would the Mormons flee? He decided that his favorable position was in jeopardy and resolved to do something about it. He made a careful inventory of his belongings and those of his employees. This consumed a full week, but he felt the time was well spent. After completing his inventory he sent two letters to responsible authorities with the inventory list and an explanation.

Fort Owen M.T., January 9, 1858.

Dear Sir,

Herewith please find schedule of property on hand certified to by responsible persons all of whom are known personally to yourself except Mr. Harris who Mr. Bernhart in your office is personally acquainted with. My object for taking this step was prompted by prudence. Whether it will ever redound to my interest will probably some future day be known. Since hearing of Brigham Young's proclamation of martial law in Utah Territory and the flowing reports in circulation through the country I will not be surprised at anything. The Mormons from personal observation and reports will know that I have a desirable location with good comfortable buildings, outhouses, mills and Enclosures all of which under the present state of affairs might prove beneficial to them. To see a host of them here at any moment to take possession of the whole would not surprise me in the least—"as desperate cases require desperate means." Evidently from all I hear a State of war does exist
between the U.S. Gov't and the Mormon clan. Whether in case of loss to myself the Government would favorably consider my claim I can't say. I have taken this step as I before remarked through prudence alone.

Please deposit the papers in your office for future reference if required. (To Col. T.W. Nesmith, Supt of Ind. Affairs of Oregon and Washington Territories.)

His anxiety was short-lived, however, as the Mormons and the U.S. Government came to peaceable terms during the spring of 1858.

"When the army was finally stalled in the Green River Valley, and was forced to spend the winter in the Fort Bridger area, there was ample time for the government in Washington to appraise its actions and give re-considerations to its policies. Congress and the press became critical of Buchanan's administration for getting itself into such a position."  

Things had so calmed down that in the summer of 1858 the Major visited Salt Lake via horseback on a buying and merchandising trip.

There were many other men who helped to establish relations between Salt Lake City and the valleys of western Montana. Emmanuel Martin, generally known as "Old Manwell" the Spaniard, was a Mexican trapper who had spent a lifetime

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14 Ibid., p. 170.
15 Hafen, op. cit., p. 327.
in the Rockies and knew the country perfectly from Mexico to Canada. "Somewhere between 1850 and '54 he guided the 1st wagons into the Bitter Root Valley, leaving from Salt Lake City or Fort Hall...."\(^\text{16}\) Dr. Richard H. Taisdale was an early Trader and agent who made a trip to Salt Lake in 1856 for supplies (as well as at other times). Louis R. Maillet was a French Canadian pioneer who moved up and down the Montana Trail.\(^\text{17}\) Perhaps we should mention another Frenchman, named Louis Clairmont who, "To make his life complete, he had an Indian woman by the name of Rosalie who came from Utah."\(^\text{18}\) Of interest also is Major McCormick, the man who took over the Fort after John Owen departed. He was originally from the state of Indiana and started west at age 22 as Secretary to Federal Judge Eckles, traveling to Utah with a detachment of troops under the command of General A. S. Johnston. "In the Mormon State he rose to some prominence as Attorney General and Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court, but due to differences with the head of the Mormon Church he found it expedient to leave Utah, which he did in 1863 by

\(^{16}\) Weisel, op. cit., p. 147.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., p. 179.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 38.
having himself smuggled out of the territory in a buggy. That same year he reached the booming town of Virginia City, Montana Territory, where he practiced law... An interesting character also was John Silverthorne. He is disputedly the first to find gold in Montana and there are stories of his having a fabulous gold mine, but none of this is substantiated. He became eventually an ordinary farmer in the Bitter Root Valley. He came to the valley from Salt Lake as a drover for Fred Burr's cattle in November of '56... Three months later, on the 10th of January to be exact, in perhaps the earliest instance of a formal wedding between a white man and an Indian in the region, Silverthorne took a wife... There are hints that he was selling liquor to the Indians in the winter of 1859-60... One other man will be mentioned to complete the partial list. Edward Williamson was in some way connected with the Army of General Johnston in 1857. The Army found itself in winter quarters at Fort Bridger without sufficient supplies. Williamson led a group of ten men northward to purchase beef from the traders. He never did make it back to Fort Bridger. Trapped in the Big Hole Valley in the middle of the winter the men were reduced to eating their saddle-horses. Williamson ended up at Walla

19 Ibid., p. 233.
20 Ibid., p. 131.
Walla and then for a while was with Lt. Mullan for two years during construction of the Mullan Road, while with Mullan he made a trip to Salt Lake which was an epic. "Since mules were worth $150 in the Bitter Root but only $15 to $50 in Salt Lake Williamson was sent to requisition some of these animals. He had not traveled far when he lost his horses in the deep mountain snows. Gone-the-less, he completed his mission by constructing snow shoes from his saddle rigging, and walking the remaining 600 miles, although he was badly snow blinded."21

Mormons and non-Mormons alike traveled over the Montana Trail. At the time of the approach of Johnston's Army, many Mormons left the "fold" to be assimilated into the surrounding areas. Gentiles also left Utah by the hundreds.

This was the pattern of Utah-Montana relations from 1847 to the early 1860's. The great bond in their relationship came about as a result of the discovery of gold on Grasshopper Creek in 1862. It was then that thousands flocked into Montana looking for the yellow metal. They had to be fed, clothed, and sheltered. They needed mail facilities, transportation and banking facilities. Utah, with her strong agricultural and home-manufacture economy was in a position to enhance her position financially by entering the new

21Ibid., p. 202-203.
market. With the Mormon economy now fairly secure the industrious Utahns were ready to branch out into such fields as merchandising and freighting. Located centrally, northern Utah could act as the forwarding station for a large proportion of the emigrants flowing into the new gold fields. And flow they did. From California, miners left their diggings, and also from the pikes peak area. Thousands began the trek overland from the Midwest. It was during the 20 years between the discovery of gold in 1862 and the completion of the railroad northward to Butte in 1861 that the Utah Territory exerted a considerable influence in the molding of the new Montana Territory and the eventual State of Montana.
PART II

CHAPTER 6

THE BEGINNING OF TRAFFIC ON THE MONTANA TRAIL

In this section a new phase of the Montana Trail will be dealt with. In fact, this is perhaps the most important one of all. It can be said that there are three distinct phases in trade relations between Utah and Montana prior to 1881. The first of these, dealing with the early period discussed in the first part of this thesis; was typified by little of a concerted nature in the form of travel and trade between the two areas. Men and stock moved over the Montana Trail in a generally haphazard fashion, their moves dictated by individual needs.

In the second phase, the seven year period between 1862 and 1869, trade on a large scale was carried on between Montana and Utah. The movement started quite casually but developed rapidly as gold was discovered in considerable quantities on Grasshopper Creek, and as the new influx of miners into the area needed a base of supplies. Due to immediate proximity and transportation availability this base naturally became the northern Utah towns. They were prepared to meet the challenge and were anxious to strengthen
their economy by utilizing this new market to the full advantage. As gold was found at Alder Gulch, thousands began streaming into the new "utopia." "Gallant Californian's" came, as well as "lousy pike peaker's". Miners on the Kootenai of Eastern Washington and Idaho streamed over the mountains to get in on the easy diggings. They also came north from Utah, and over the Oregon and Bozeman Trails through Wyoming from the Missouri River towns and the midwest. Others came up the Missouri River by steamboat to Fort Union or Fort Benton and then overland by horseback on the Mullan Road. From nearly every direction they converged on southwestern Montana.

In the area to which they were traveling were located no farms, no livestock for butchering purposes, no poultry, no hardware supplies, in short--almost nothing. Wherein lay an excellent opportunity for some trade center to enrich itself. Utah was not slow to take advantage of its position. Other areas also cast envious eyes at the new market. San Francisco, Walla Walla, St. Louis, Denver, and Fort Benton, were alert. Due to their great distance they were at a distinct disadvantage, but they had many items for sale that Utah could not furnish to the miners and so their long trains began moving towards Montana. Even in this competition Utah saw a blessing. Centrally located, she could, and did, become a transfer point for trade coming from the East, West,
and South. Commission buyers came into being. Warehouses did a fine business. Repair shops, blacksmiths, freighting outfitters, and similar businesses began having very prosperous times.

The great challenge to Utah's supremacy came in 1866 and lasted until the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869. This resulted from the cheaper freight rates from St. Louis by way of the Missouri River, Fort Benton, and the Mullan Road. The death blow to this avenue of trade was struck when the final spike was driven at Promontory Point. Thus was ushered in the third phase of Utah-Montana trade relations. Corinne, in Utah, became the terminal point for all the East-West-South trade entering into Montana. The terminal point gradually advanced northward with the building of the Utah and Northern Railroad and when it finally reached Butte in 1881 the era of freighting came to an end.

As has been stated previously, the Mormons had been acquainted with the Idaho and Montana terrain for years. This was due to their experience at the Salmon River mission, individual freighting ventures, and experiences as dealers in worn-out stock on the Emigrant Road. The pressures engendered by the Utah War also caused many Utahns to move into less troubled areas.

In 1867 the Mormon controversy broke into open flame in the Utah region, and the Gentiles left hastily, a number of them bringing substantial herds into the mont-
Ana valleys. The cattle multiplied rapidly, but with a then widely scattered population, there was little local market. In 1859 the army contracted for three hundred head in the Deer Lodge for the use of the troops in Utah at ten dollars a hundred pounds on the hoof. The stock was not delivered because of unsettled conditions, but the proposed transaction indicates something of the numbers and the price. There is some record of cattle being driven from Montana to California in the early 1860's in search of a market.¹

Individual initiative moved men, as always, into new areas. Freighting on a small scale was engaged in, even before the discovery of gold. In Granville Stuart's diary we find a typical entry on October 9, 1861: "Gold and stormy with west wind. I banked up earth against the house, preparing for cold weather. Dempsey's and Joe Blodgett's wagons passed loaded with flour and other goods, which were bought in Salt Lake City, five hundred miles away, but there is no food any nearer except at Fort Walla Walla, four hundred and twenty-five miles west, over nearly impassable road for wagons. Two emigrant teams were with Dempsey and Blodgett...."² These wagons followed the typical trail from north to south. "The road from Fort Hall to Deer Lodge has been used by

²Stuart, op. cit., p. 169.
wagons for many years, and though not worked is quite practicable.\(^2\) It was over this route that men like Joe Blodgett traveled.

Joseph S. Blodgett came to Utah in 1850 and from there he went into the Oregon country. Early in 1859 he was at Major Owen’s place in the Bitter Root Valley. While here he purchased from Mr. Owen a pack train. (Probably one that had come in from Walla Walla.) \(^3\) "At that time there were only 29 men in the Bitter Root Valley."\(^4\) Blodgett must have liked the pleasant area around Fort Owen for he stayed there until 1862. When he returned to Utah he brought with him wagons, teams, and farming implements.\(^5\)

On his return trip to Utah he undoubtedly stopped at Fort Hall, as nearly everyone did. Fort Hall had been established in July of 1834 by Nathaniel J. Wyeth. Wyeth was a man of varied abilities who had come west first in 1832 after he had listened to the emphatic speeches of hall J. Kelly. While Kelly was a dreamer, Wyeth was a practical man who believed in action. After his first trip west in 1832 he re-

\(^2\)Captain John Mullan, Miners and Travelers Guide (New York; William M. Franklin, Publisher, 1865), p. 10.

\(^3\)Shirley Fisher, "Early Utahn in Montana, Heart Throbs of the West, ed. Nate B. Carter (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1952), p. 316.

\(^4\)Ibid.

\(^5\)Ibid.
Fig. 3.—Mr. Alexander Tophouse

Early Day Freight Train Utah, Idaho and Montana.

Fig. 4.—Typical mule train
turned to set up a trading post on the Snake River two years later. On August 5, 1834, the American flag flew over the completed Fort Hall, the first time the flag was raised in Idaho since Lewis and Clark had camped at Lewiston in 1806. The fort soon passed into the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company and remained in their possession during the days when it was an important stop on the Oregon Trail. After the days of the "Oregon fever" the post remained for years as a favorite haven for travelers of all descriptions from any direction. "That post, ... apparently had been decreed by fate to be a 'centrifugal point of trade, commerce, and recuperation.' To this situation many geographical and natural causes were contributory... There was an abundance of grass for game or stock, a natural winter feeding ground...."6

Besides the Oregon and California Roads "There also were trails leading north from Fort Hall. One went northwest to the Salmon River... another trail surveyed by John McLoughlin in 1853... crossed the Snake... followed along the west bank of the Snake... then going northward it entered the present state of Montana."7

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7 Ibid., p. 250
Fort Hall lived on until 1865 when it was partially destroyed by a flood and then abandoned. It was later rebuilt some miles to the east to facilitate the freighting trade of the later sixties. The new Fort Hall could not compare with its predecessor. "To this strategically located trading post on the Snake River, about fifteen miles northwest from where Pocatello, Idaho now stands, came people of all ages, from all walks in life, and in various physical and financial conditions. There passed in motley array the Indian, the fur trapper with his squaw and half breed children, the cultured traveler from Europe, the frontiersman with his heroic helpmate, the devoted, often fanatical American missionary, the black-robed Catholic priest, and the United States army officer with his engineers and mounted riflemen."8

Here might be exchanged news items from all directions, and any news item was important to an isolated people. Significance of this statement can be seen in a quote from the Deseret News of May 3, 1851.

Fort Hall-. A small party, in search of provisions and Indian goods, arrived from

8 Ibid. p. 251.
Fort Hall on the 17th ult. and reported deep snow on the route also that the Mary's river Indians have been very troublesome about the fort the past winter, killing many of Captain Grants cattle, and stealing horses. No news from Oregon, or any other point, at Fort Hall, since fall. 9

Utah, in 1862, was maintaining herself well. She was storing surplus grain, experimenting with new crops, and stressing home industry. She was prepared for any advantageous opportunity, and this came in the eventful year of 1862. In the spring of this year some significant events transpired on the banks of Grasshopper Creek in Eastern Washington Territory.

9Deseret News, May 3, 1851.
CHAPTER 7

DISCOVERY OF GOLD IN MONTANA

The discovery of gold was not a new experience in the history of the West in 1862. Many lands had been "invaded" by the swarms of people who were always attracted by the thought of obtaining easy riches. California, Nevada, and Colorado had recently had such stampedes, and up in the northern Idaho region, very recently, had been found considerable quantities of the yellow metal. The area around what is known today as Lewiston became a California gold rush in miniature. In the years 1860-61 men were washing gold from the tributaries of the Clearwater River. These same men were soon to hear of gold being discovered to the east and would pour over the mountains to stake their claims. When this time came many found the choice claims already taken and left in disgust. Others remained to build substantial fortunes. Some lost both fortune and life to the ruthless road agents, while many joined in with this notorious band and ended their life dangling from the end of a Vigilante rope.

Montana, in the year 1862, was still a fairly virgin country. The Mormons had traveled northward and established the Salmon River Mission a few years previous but had been compelled to withdraw in 1858, due to Indian depredations.
induced by the approach of Johnston's Army. This left major Owen's establishment in the Bitter Root Valley as the major center of human habitation. Had the inhabitants of this valley broadcast to the world their initial discoveries of gold, the stream of thousands of emigrants would have begun a decade sooner.

Lewis and Clark, fifty years previous, had been instructed to study the geology of the country through which they traveled, and to be constantly alert to any indications of precious metals. They passed within a few miles of such major gold finds as Confederate, Last Chance, and Alder Gulches, and Grasshopper Creek. No mention is made of any indications of gold anywhere in their diaries. After Lewis and Clark, came the fur-trappers and the traders. Their eyes were dimmed by the large piles of expensive furs that they acquired and in their desire to obtain furs they didn't notice the gleaming metal that lay on the bottom of the pond below the beaver, nor at their feet on the shores of the bank. Millions of dollars was here, waiting for a discoverer. When that discoverer came he approached softly and quietly and without fanfare.

It was early in the 1850's that men started to notice gold in the creek-beds in western and southwestern Montana. The excitement and subsequent stories of gold in such places as California had reached the ears of everyone. People soon
because "gold" conscious. As the gold fields of California "petered" out, the adventurous prospectors moved into other areas. One of these, a Red River halfbreed named Benetsee, is credited with the first discovery of gold in what later became Montana. This happened in 1852. Burlingame, a lead-Montana historian, gives credit to Benetsee for the initial discovery, while noting that others had also become aware of its presence. "The first recorded notice of gold in Montana seems to have been made by John Owen, when he penned the laconic note in his diary for February, 1852: 'Sunday, 15---
Old Hunting--found some.' It was left for Benetsee, however, to initiate the general chain of events that culminated in the great stampede.

It isn't any wonder that his discovery was kept secret. He was a fur-trapper and when his report of gold reached the Hudson Bay agent at Fort Connah, near Flathead lake, he was cautioned to keep the matter secret lest the fur trade in Montana meet the same end as it had in California. Other rumors of gold passed around during the next few years.

Earlier in this thesis was noted Granville Stuarts arrival in the late fall of 1857. Early in the spring of 1858 Stuart and his companions moved from the Beaverhead over

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1Burlingame, op. cit., p. 79.
2Ibid., p. 80.
into the Deer Lodge Valley to hunt for game and to prospect for gold while awaiting favorable weather conditions with which to travel back south to the Emigrant Road. On May 2, 1858, they discovered gold in considerable quantities. Of this Stuart later said: "This prospect hole dug by us was the first prospecting for gold done in what is now Montana and this is the account of the first real discovery of gold within the state." Despite the controversy which emerges, no one can deny the fact that the Stuart brothers' findings on Gold Creek, and later on the Yellowstone, were a great factor in the course of subsequent events. Running out of food and lacking in miner's supplies the Stuarts and their party decided to go to Fort Bridger and restock.

June 16, 1858, the little party packed up and left for Fort Bridger where they arrived June 26, having traveled 600 miles in twelve days. Being disappointed in getting an outfit of tools, they began to trade with the emigrants along the "road." Working their way west, they were in the Salt Lake Valley in the summer of 1860 and had accumulated a wagon, three yoke of oxen and a herd of horses and cattle. They decided to return to Gold Creek....

3 Ibid., p. 81. (Burlingame is quoting from the diary of Major Owen).

Returning to Gold Creek the Stuarts actively engaged in mining for gold. Gold Creek became quite a camp in the next few years, and, in 1862 "...was a lively mining camp with about fifty men at work...as much as three dollars from a hundred pans of dirt. Early in May the Stuarts completed their sluice boxes, the first ever made in the Rocky Mountains north of Colorado, and began to mine in earnest...June 24 a party of sixteen arrived from Colorado, among them John M. Bozeman...By July forty-five men were working in the Gold Creek placers...Soon a saloon with a gambling outfit was doing a flourishing business".  

The discovery of gold on Grasshopper Creek, July 28, 1862, by John White and party doomed the Gold Creek diggings. "The news of the stampede on Grasshopper Creek spread like a prairie fire and soon a stampede set in to the new placers." As fast as news could travel men heard of the new "find" and immediately hundreds converged on the area.

There was a limited amount of food in the new camp and unless a new supply could be brought in before the winter snows began to fall, there would be a bread famine and the miners would be compelled to live on a diet of wild meat. The nearest place where groceries could be obtained was Salt Lake City, 400 miles south. All avail-

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5Ibid., p. 215.
6Ibid., p. 219.
Fig. 5.—Early Emigrant Wagon
able wagons and teams were dispatched to the mormon capital, and fortunately winter did not set in until late, and the train of freighters with some additions from Utah returned safely with their precious loads of flour, sugar, and coffee. About 500 persons, a few of them women and children, passed the winter in Bannock and the nearby canyons.  

The city of Bannock grew up on the banks of Grasshopper Creek. In May of 1863, Bill Fairweather and party discovered gold at Alder Gulch, 70 miles east of Bannock and the stampede began in earnest. "The extent of the rush to Montana never equaled that to California, Nevada or Colorado. In the early years the population increased rapidly but was not of the wild boom type. In the spring of 1862, there were very few people in the region." However, by October of the same year, over four hundred people were in or near Bannock City. During that first year somewhere in the neighborhood of five millions of dollars in gold dust was recovered. Though Bannock was the initial settlement, it was left for Alder Gulch and the subsequent Virginia City to absorb the great influx of miners. By the end of 1863 there were 6,000 miners in the vicinity, and in 1864 the area was estimated

7Ibid.

8Bur1ingame, op. cit., p. 66.
to have 10,000 people. "In the first five years of mining operations the gulch produced a fabulous sum estimated at between $30,000,000 and $40,000,000." 

These thousands of people, producing millions of dollars annually, needed to be fed, clothed, and have their other wants supplied. Travel, communication, luxuries, machinery, and mail facilities had to be provided. Many of the local inhabitants saw the advantage to be had and engaged in these side activities to a good profit, but by and large this new field was cultivated by sources far removed from the center of mining interest.

Into Montana streamed the emigrants. Those who came from Salt Lake City and Fort Hall scattered widely from the beginning. Bannock furnished an early destination, and the rapid growth of Virginia City soon attracted the majority of emigrants."10 Utah furnished her share of those who sought gold. However, not all were carried away with the quest for metal, for many became attached to the land and remained as businessmen or ranchers. For example, there was one Morgan Evans. He "was born June 30, 1833, in Wales. He emigrated to America in 1856, coming directly to Utah, where he resided until 1864. He then moved to Deer Lodge Valley and in 1867 he

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9 Ibid., p. 88.
10 Ibid., p. 138.
homesteaded on his present ranch. Mr. Evans married in 1854 and later owned one of the most impressive homes in Deer Lodge Valley. 11

Thousands, who were not from Utah directly, used her facilities to reach their destination. This was especially true of those who came from Colorado. Alexander Topance has left a good record of his trip from this area. 12 From the few who have left records can be gleaned part of the story. One such man, Cyrus Monroe Curtis, told the story of his trip to Montana in his reminiscences and recalled many events that transpired during his stay there from 1863 to 1865. He says the principle preparation was obtaining a seat on Ben Holladay's stage line from Denver to Salt Lake, the fare being $100.00 per passenger. He left Denver on September 14, 1863, travelled through the Greeley country, over the Laramie plains, and thence followed the old Government route to Salt Lake City. It took six days and nights of steady travel to complete the trip.

Salt Lake was a welcome stop-over to such men as Curtis.

11 Fisher, op. cit., p. 316.

The city at this time had about 4,000 people in it according to Curtis' estimate. (The population was much more than this). The stop here gave them opportunity not only for a rest but to satisfy their curiosity about the mormon people.

"After remaining in Salt Lake for some five days, I took the stage for Bannock, the fare being $50.00...we had to carry our own provisions with us, as there were no eating houses in those days, which made the trip a hard and trying one. We reached Bannock in about six days. I remained there over night and went on to Virginia City and from there up the gulch about seven miles."

Curtis took up quarters with three other men. One of these was Wilbur F. Sanders, a man later destined to become a leading citizen of Montana. "...for he afterwards received the highest honor from his state, being sent to Washington as U. S. Senator." Sanders had no monopoly on future recognition. Early to appear at the mining camp was William A. Clark, who was later to become one of the most colorful and controversial men of the latter half of the 19th century.

"The fame of the richness of this part of the country


\[14\] Ibid.
had spread all over the western part of the United States and people were flocking in from every quarter. Most of these people were good, law-abiding folks, but there also came in some of the worst kind of characters..." Curtis had reference to such notorious outlaws as Jack Slade and Henry Plummer.

While all the excitement was going on during the earlier stages of the Montana gold rush, the Territory of Utah, to the south, was preparing to send her surplus of materials into the new area. The great immediate demand in western Montana, coupled with the fact that there was no local supply of necessary provisions, gave an opening to "foreign" enterprise. "In ninety days ten thousand men, and a sprinkling of women for their entertainment, flocked in. The whole area of what is now Montana could not supply so many." There existed only one area that was in a position to immediately profit by the situation, and this was the agricultural territory to the south, in northern Utah.

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16 Ibid.

Utah had constructed her foundation very well. Given another set of circumstances there may not have been any northern Utah "hub" for the developing inland Empire to turn to for its subsistence. Brigham Young decided to stop in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake he did so with considerable hindsight, and considerable more foresight. He had under his control a numerous people who were strongly dedicated to their religious beliefs, among which was a total acceptance of the dictates of their leaders. In looking back now it is hard to imagine how they could have survived had it been otherwise. Their gospel taught them the worth of the individual, the blessing of hard work, and of the life in the hereafter which must be sought after by adherence to certain principles. There was little place for temporal aggrandizement or anything that would hinder them in their avowed purpose of establishing the kingdom of God. "For the main seat of the Saints the forbidding desert of the Basin best fitted Young's grim purpose... In the Basin, of all places, the Mormons would be unmolested and would have elbow room in
which to expand."

It seemed at first to be a hopeless attempt to colonize the Great Basin. Water was scarce, supply points hundreds of miles away, and insects and Indians were locally in great abundance. Slowly the obstacles began to melt away. Irrigation became the savior of the Mormon people. "The surrounding mountains and the great lake in the distance were beautiful, while the immediate plain, which was chosen as the future site of the future city, was dry, barren, and uninviting. But the pioneers set to work. Water was diverted from a creek, and the ground flooded to facilitate plowing. This was the beginning of extensive irrigation by Anglo-Saxons in the West." By wisely using their water supply the sagebrush in the valleys gave way to crops capable of sustaining life. However, there were still lean years when the mountains received little snow, and the valley streams became only small trickles of water. It was here again that Brigham's policy prepared his people. Like the biblical Joseph in Egypt, they were advised to store up their surplus in the good years to tide them through the harder, lean ones. "Violent seasonal

1Herber E. Bolton, "The Mormons in The opening of the Great West," The Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine, XLIV (Salt Lake City, 1926), p. 64.

fluctuations were to be leveled down by wise storage of grain surpluses in times of plenty to tide over the scarcity in lean years." As some summers were less fruitful than others, so it was with the winter time. "If we wish to keep our cattle from perishing, it is necessary to lay up fodder. The winter may be severe or it may be mild but in taking the precaution of laying up fodder, we are preparing for either a mild or a severe winter." Basically then, the new Mormon colonization venture was to have agriculture as its foundation.

There existed one major threat to this avowed purpose. Men, be they Mormon or not, are easily enticed by the lure of physical riches, and Brigham Young's colonization venture was being attempted in the center of what was to become a veritable gold rush area. The subsequent danger was forever present in the minds and actions of Mormon leaders. The plan was to put Mormonism on an agricultural basis—and then to keep it there regardless of what happened in adjoining areas. As early as September, 1847, Brigham Young was admonishing the Saints: "We feel that it is necessary to urge upon you the importance of planting and sowing in their

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4 Ibid., p. 765.
appropriate time and season, every kind of grain, fruit and vegetable, that will yield sustenance to man and beast...not forgetting the flax, cotton, or any kind of seed at your command, from which you may raise those commodities that are absolutely indispensable for your future clothing:"5

The whole world was a storehouse from which Brigham was to draw. He encouraged new converts from all over the world to bring with them the tools of their trade, and all manner of seeds."..."While it is your duty to devote the coming year to the raising of such articles as are most necessary for food and clothing, we wish you to bear in mind continually that the valley in which you are located promises in prospect to be fruitful in many things and that it is your duty at every opportunity that presents to stretch forth your hands to the four corners of the earth and gather choice seeds of every kind of grain, of vegetables, of fruits, or flowers or shrubbery, even everything which will tend to nourish or cloth the body, gratify the appetite, gladden the heart, or please the eye of man; so that your city can be adorned and beautified."5 Further:

5Brigham Young, "First General Epistle...to the Saints." Latter-Day Saint Journal History, Sept. 8, 1847. M 8.
6Ibid.
And to all the Saints in any country bordering upon the Atlantic, we would say, come immediately and prepare to go west bringing with you all kinds of choice seeds, of grains, vegetables, fruits, shrubbery, trees, and vines; also, the best stock of beasts, bird and fowl of every kind; also, the best tools of every description, and machinery for spinning, or weaving, dressing cotton, wool, and flax, and silk, etc., or models and descriptions of the same, by which they can construct them, and the same in relation to all kinds of farming utensils and husbandry, and every implement and article within their knowledge that shall tend to promote the comfort, health, happiness or prosperity of the people. 7

The men in the Montana gold fields were later to be thankful for the words of advice that "Brother Brigham" gave to the early settlers of the Great Basin.

The California gold rush proved a real test for the new settlers and their policies. Some left their plows in the fields to rust and joined the throngs headed West. The faithful remained. "But an event occurred in 1848 which rather upset the equilibrium of the world--the discovery of gold in California. Naturally some of the Mormons 'caught the gold fever.' In fact, nine of the twelve white men who were working on James Sutter's mill when gold was discovered on January 24, 1848, were discharged members of the Mormon Battalion. Other Battalion members joined them later, but when

7 Brigham Young, "Second General Epistle...To The Saints," Manuscript no. 080-8 no. 7394, December 23, 1847, MS.
Brother Brigham advised them to return to the Basin, they willingly obeyed. In December of 1848 Brigham counseled: "Some few have caught the gold fever. I counseled such, and all the Saints to remain in these valleys of the mountains and make improvements, build comfortable houses and raise grain." According to the same source Brigham said further:

You will do better right here than you will by going to the gold mines. Some have thought they would go there and get fitted out and come back, but I told them to stop here and get fitted out. Those who stop here and are faithful to God and his people will make more money and get richer than you that run after the gold of the world; and I promise you in the name of the Lord that many of you that go thinking you will get rich and come back, but will not be able to do so. Some of you will come back, but your friends who remain here will have to help you; and the rest of you who are spared to return will not make as much money as your brethren do who stay here and help build up the church and kingdom of God; they will prosper and be able to buy you twice over. Here is the place God has appointed for his people.

To stress his point he made the statement that he could stand in the door of his home and see untold millions of rich treasurers of the earth. But he was determined that the time

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9Brigham Young, "Third General Epistle... To The Saints," Millennial Star, XII, 246.

10Millennial Star, XIII, 17, 18.
had not yet come for the Saints to dig gold. "It is our duty first to develop the agricultural resources of this country... for if the mines are opened first, we are a thousand miles away from the base of supplies, and the people would rush in here in such great numbers that they would breed a famine...

The emphasis remained on agriculture and home industry. The "valley tan" products of the Salt Lake Valley became known throughout the whole inland Empire. The phrase "valley tan" was originally applied to leather made in the valley but finally became associated with any manufactured item produced in the territory, and had special reference to the home-brewed drinks of a spirituous nature. The phrase became an indispensable part of the Utah vernacular. Kirk Anderson chose it as the title of his new anti-Mormon paper in 1858. From the pages of this paper can be gleaned some idea of Utah's preparedness to enter into the freighting trade. "...And our mercantile houses would do credit to Main, or Second streets in St. Louis."  

Utah, besides carrying on a lucrative trade with the Missouri-Kansas-Nebraska towns, also was freighting from Los Angeles by way of the Mormon Corridor. One example will be cited to illustrate the strategic location of the Utah towns.

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11 Ibid.

12 The Valley Tan, Salt Lake City, Nov. 15, 1858.
The following is a reprint in the Valley Tan of an article that appeared in a Los Angeles paper.

The trade from and through Los Angeles, to Utah, is rapidly on the increase. This is caused partially by the growing ability of the people of Utah to purchase a greater amount of goods from different points. The principle cause, however, of the great increase of trade through our city, is owing to the fact that it is becoming known by men engaged in introducing goods into Utah, that goods can be taken over this route with less expense, and with less risk, and in less time, than over any other route. Since the first of January there have left this city about 60 wagons loaded with goods for that market. The value of these goods is from $60,000 to $70,000. Each wagon load weighing about 2,000 pounds, of a train of 25 wagons, which left last month, five wagons with their loads, belonged to the firm of Buchanan and Co., of this city.

There is now in this place, or on the way here, not less than one hundred tons of goods in transit to Utah. The transportation of these goods will employ not far from one hundred six-mule teams and wagons, the parties engaged in this trade are numerous;...

Many external factors influenced the growth of agricultural enterprise in Utah. "Great Basin agriculture owed much of its good fortune from 1858 to 1870 to the Utah war, the Civil war, and fresh demands from the adjoining mining camps. Whereas the anxiety up to 1858 had been to produce in sufficient quantity to supply domestic demand, in the sixties..."
Fig. 6.-Freighting Routes to Montana

Railroad and Wagon Freight Routes Between Cache Valley and Montana in 1874

Legend
- Union Pacific R.R.
- Central Pacific R.R.
- Utah Northern R.R.
- Utah & Northern R.R. Ext.
- Wagon Freight Route
- Alt. Wagon Freight Route

Scale in miles

0 10 20 30 40 50
the problem was principally that of the advantageous marketing of its surplus. Utah rose to the peak of crop prosperity during the first half of this decade...Crop returns were determined by outside factors...Timely development of 'foreign' trade alone relieved the Territory of an embarrassing surplus and its attendant critical unemployment.¹⁴ The same source further declares: "Great Basin cross-currents were numerous in the hectic sixties, the capriciousness of the times being attributable to the abnormalities of the Civil War; the magic rise of mining camps bordering the Territory, dependent on Utah for foodstuffs; the proximity of a military garrison,...The new economic era began with the entrance of Johnston's Army."¹⁵

The great door of economic opportunity was swinging open. Samuel Bowles, an editor from Massachusetts informed his readers in a letter in June of 1865 that "In Utah, agriculture is the chief business...the inhabitants live by it, prosper by it, have built a State upon it...the large crops and high prices obtained for them make it pay. Over all this country, that is forced to have an irrigated farming, there is no business that now pays so well, not even mining, and

¹⁴See, op. cit., p. 753.
¹⁵Ibid., p. 773.
nowhere else in the whole nation is agriculture so profitable."16 The vicissitudes of the Fifties were many. The pioneers of the Great Basin had had their share of trouble in the form of famines, drought, and early frosts. "It remains to pass in review the field happenings of the Sixties. Successes predominated over failures in this decade. A cycle of change was inaugurated."17

It was under these circumstances that the propitious gold rush to Montana began. "All factors being equal, Salt Lake City boomed larger in the picture of intermountain commerce in the Sixties than even today. It was, at that time, the principal converging point for far-western trade caravans, a main distributing point for Idaho and Montana, and in minor degree for Nevada and Colorado. Mining camps, suddenly on the map of the West, looked hungrily to Utah for subsistence. The endeavor to supply the necessities of the outskirt miners powerfully stimulated production and otherwise tremendously affected economic conditions in Utah; the business of freighting expanded proportionately, the characteristic ox and mule trains cutting deeper into the mud or sending

16Samuel Bowles, Across the Continent. A Summer Journey to the Rocky Mountains, the Mormons, and the Pacific States (Springfield, Massachusetts: 1865). p. 136.

17Neff, op. cit., p. 761.
dust clouds into the sky."\textsuperscript{18} The staple of the miner's diet was flour and grain. The traders and trappers were used to eating meat sometimes exclusively, but the miner was a "foreigner" who needed large amounts of flour to subsist on. Also, the demand for meat and dairy products, eggs and fruit, was strong. Besides having a heavy need for all kinds of produce and manufactured items the miner was in a position to pay well for these things. He would rather buy them than raise them himself. "So long as the mania for metal constituted an obsession and the would-be-rich elements neglected the cultivation of the local soil, agricultural pursuits in Utah were kept at peak production. Otherwise dangerously imminent, over production in agriculture was in this wise postponed for ten years. Thus the paramount economic need of the Territory had been supplied with the opportune appearance of this 'foreign' market."\textsuperscript{19}

This new field was soon filled with enterprising men who wanted to get in on the bounteous harvest. Freighting concerns came into being, both individual and larger corporate outfits, who bought directly from the farmers, then moved the merchandise into the mining camp area and handsomely renumerated themselves for their trouble.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 785.  
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 785.
Earliest to affect Utah were the discoveries of western Nevada, followed by those of Idaho and Montana, latterly those of Colorado, and finally the bonanzas of southeastern Nevada.

Exclusively concerned for a decade with the domestic situation, in which output meagerly balanced consumption, Utah Mormondom had little occasion to interest itself in outside markets. However, the sixties ushered in an era in which "Foreign" trade was imperative to future growth and development, as production was outrunning consumption. Fortunate it was that the merchant-princes could dispose of the surplus of the Territory in the new consuming centers. 20

The Montana Trail had long been the course of the traffic that moved in a north-south direction. It was, in the sixties, to reach status as a major artery of commerce. Over the Trail during this decade was to flow thousands of tons of produce. To accomplish this was needed thousands of head of stock and hundreds of men. It developed into real "big business." Speaking of this in an article in the Pacific Northwest Quarterly, Alton B. Oviatt says: "...and "big business" it was after 1865, for freights during the decade of the sixties were enormous, reaching a value of between $1,500,000 and $2 million annually. 21 Of the competition created by

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20 ibid.
this new freighting market more will be said in a later chapter.

It is certain that many Mormons were in on the gold rush to the new northern mining camps. The restrictions that had kept them from going to California were now relaxed somewhat. The agricultural basis of the Great Basin seemed secure, and men now had the opportunity to think of engaging in pursuits other than agriculture.

They went to Montana as merchant men, freigheters, gold-seekers, or perhaps more commonly as "bull-whackers" on someone else's freight train. "The first Mormon families moved into Montana soon after the Montana trail was broken, which trail started at Salt Lake, passed Fort Wall in Idaho, and then went northeast into Montana. Men who had chosen freighting as a means of livelihood outfitted themselves with mule teams and large freight wagons and hauled supplies into the mining towns of Montana. Some of these men became attracted to the land because of its great natural resources and remained to build their homes, while others stayed only a short time then returned to their former homes." 22

As the beginning of the future state of Montana was transpiring on the banks of Grasshopper Creek and Alder Gulch, the future state of Utah, to the south, was growing

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22 Fisher, op. cit., p. 316.
out of her adolescence and was preparing to show the nation that she was able to use some initiative to maintain herself. As the year 1862 presented the nation with new opportunities and challenges, Utah, as well as other centers, began to meet the new situations. By a chain of circumstances, both accidental and predetermined, Utah was ready to play a dominate role in the development of what some call our inland Frontier.
CHAPTER 9

FREIGHTING NORTH ON THE MONTANA TRAIL

As the thousands of emigrants poured into the new area, supplies poured in behind them. The supplies came from several directions. By pack train from Portland and Walla Walla came mining supplies, boots and shoes, rubber, and tea. This source of supply could offer the mining camps items that they could not get from the south or the east. This was due to the trade carried on between the coastal port cities and such places as the Far East and the islands of the Pacific.

From Fort Benton, via the Missouri River, came supplies of many kinds from St. Louis and other river towns of the midwest. Many long trains of ox- or mule-drawn wagons would leave the midwest frontier towns such as Omaha, Ft. Leavenworth, or St. Joseph and would laboriously plod for months across plain and mountain.

Many of these trains passed through, or stopped at, Utah towns. Others turned off the southern road and went northward over the Oregon Trail by way of Soda Springs, Fort Hall and thence to Eagle Rock. Still others cut off earlier on the trail by turning northward in Wyoming and traveling the Bozeman Trail. This was a popular route until the troops
were withdrawn and the road closed because of trouble with the Indians.

Colorado also contributed many freighting outfits and ventures. Even far-away Los Angeles shipped wines, liquors, and other items to the north. San Francisco was very early to get a hand in the new market, as were several of the northern California towns.

Despite the competition from so many directions, there remained two major supply points. These were northern Utah and St. Louis. It is fairly well accepted that the Missouri River traffic was supreme from 1864 until 1869. Second to this route, in volume, was the Montana Trail, and it was second to none in importance. There were many supply items which passed over the trail that came from no other source.

A fairly well-developed mail system kept homesick miners informed about loved ones in far-away places. During the summer months some news leaked in from the Missouri River Fort Benton connection, but the great overland mail was what the miners were blessed with to maintain connections with those in the "states." The center, also, of stagecoach traffic was Salt Lake City. Later, the telegraph moved northward from Salt Lake to Virginia City, followed shortly by the railroad.

During cold winter days when streams and ground were frozen, Virginia City citizens looked forward for days to
the arrival of the "express" from Salt Lake. When it finally came in, through snow, blizzards, road agents, and all sorts of other obstacles, those who were lucky had precious letters from loved ones, and, failing this, they would content themselves with the latest edition of the Deseret Weekly News or the Union Vedette.

It is the intention here to deal with many of the above subjects. It seems wise to begin with that subject which came first—the freighting venture. Without the food, clothing, machinery, tools and stock that were shipped in, there could have been no gold rush, no Virginia City, and no Montana.

In the last preceding mention was made of the supply wagons from Grasshopper Creek making their important trip to Salt Lake to get enough provisions for the winter. Granville Stuarts diary, in speaking of this particular year, 1862, says: "...a number of the men of the Fisk train who had wagons and mules or oxen turned their attention to freighting, going to Salt Lake and returning with supplies. There was little snow on the divides, and these freighters crossed all winter without difficulty. This was most fortunate, for there were so many people in the country, and no supplies whatever, that had the winter been severe, with deep snow, many must have perished from starvation. It would have been utterly impossible to have furnished game
for so many people...."¹

Sometimes the weather stayed good and there was an excess of products on hand in the mining camps. When this happened, prices went down, and freighters were lucky to break even. "Louis Maillet and DeMars arrived from Salt Lake with loads of flour. Flour is now selling for $28.00 cwt. It has been as high as $40.00, but a quantity from Salt Lake made it fall to $28.00. Fresh beef sells at 15, 20 and 25 cents a pound according to cuts...."² Generally, however, there was a profit involved. Sometimes this profit was of stupendous proportions. Major Owens' journal records for October 20th, 1862:

News from the Beaverhead mines favorable. Clothing, elkts, tobacco and groceries in great demand and bring enormous prices. Mail in from Salt Lake bringing me quite a number of telegraphic dispatches. The last 22nd ultimo. nothing of much interest in them. We had report by Capt. De Lacy of another large battle in Tenn. The federal loss ten thousand. The Confederate not reported.³

As most freight arrived in the spring and summer months, it stood to reason that the first trains into the camps containing desperately needed items could nearly ask their

¹Stuart, op. cit., p. 221-232.
²Ibid., p. 262.
³Owens, op. cit., p. 192.
own price and get it. As the months wore on the price would come down.

...Lucky was he who would be the first in at a season with a well-assorted stock.

In the year 1863 freighting was carried on with Colorado and Utah, by ox and mule team, consisting of quite a train to each, as it was indeed most dangerous. From 90 days to 4 months was occupied in making the trip up. The price paid for that year averaged 15¢ a lb; at the same time, and indeed in 1865 large trains would arrive from St. Joe, Mo., and from Jeavenson, Kansas, occupying 7 months on the trip, the merchants paying 20¢ a lb. Pack trains also arrived from Walla Walla, charging the large figure of 60¢ a lb, they bringing such articles as clothing, teas and gum boots. These animals would average 300 lbs. each. This state of affairs continued until 1867 when almost all goods came up the Missouri to Fort Benton...4

Men with business ability made considerable fortunes at freighting. It would be hard to determine, and not much easier to even speculate upon, how many men got their initial "start" from the trade carried on between Utah and the northern gold-fields. Engaged in the trade were future industrial tycoons, congressmen, cattlemen, governors, wealthy ranchers, and numerous others. Of course they didn't all fare so well.

A good example of the former would be that of William A. Clark. "...a driving, grasping, ambitious youth of truly

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astonishing energy, and business ability near to genius,... From the level of a laborer at two dollars and fifty cents a day in one of the early mines of Colorado, Clark was on the way to becoming, according to the late Senator Robert M. LaFollette, 'one of a hundred men to own America.' Clark was born in Pennsylvania January 6, 1839. As a youth he was a school teacher in Iowa. "When the mineral riches of Colorado were discovered he was eager to go, and in 1862 he moved to Colorado." Clark was one of hundreds of miners who left the Colorado diggings when news reached them of a new strike in Montana. Toponce says that 600 men came in from Pike's Peak in 1863. "With a group of his pick-and-shovel associates he journeyed to Denver, purchased a wagon and two yoke of oxen, food and mining supplies, and set forth to the new diggings." His keen sense of business prompted him to make the trip with a loaded wagon. Others, in their anxiety, went horseback or on the stage, and carried only a few bare essentials. Evidence of his desire to materially better himself can be

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5 Glasscock, op.cit., p. 42.
6 Ibid., p. 45.
7 Toponce, op.cit., p. 57.
8 Glasscock, op.cit., p. 45.
seen in all that he did.

It took Clark and his 3 companions 60 days to get to their destination. Upon arriving, they hardly had gotten the oxen unyoked when news of a new strike at a day's distance was noise about. "Wearied as he was, Clark struggled on without a moment's hesititation to the new discovery, incidentally paying his way by hauling a trader's supply of liquor and tobacco." Clark bought a claim and settled down to mining operations.

We were not in very flush financial condition at that time. Upon my arrival at Bannock I found five letters from home that anticipated me and had been carried from Salt Lake City by a private express that had been established between that place and Bannock. The price of transportation of a letter at that time was $1.00 each, and I had just $5.00 value in Bob Tail dust... I gladly dispensed with the $5.00 for the letters.

At the close of the season we closed mining operations and put everything in order to leave the camp. We had paid up all our obligations and had several thousand dollars each in gold dust left... An ordinary miner would have felt that he had earned a rest, but not Clark. We had no desire to spend the idle months by lounging in the saloons of Virginia City. We first

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9 Ibid., p. 46.
hauled firewood for a local hotel and when the winter blizzards came, he gave this up and induced a few friends to invest with him in a team and a wagon each with the proposition of going to Salt Lake City to "...take a look at the Mormons, concerning whom I had heard many interesting stories, and to buy something appropriate to the mining camp, which we might bring back, and thereby make expenses and possibly something more." It took Clark and his party 12 days to make the dangerous trip. Of his stay in Utah, Clark said:

There were probably not to exceed ten thousand people in the city, but it was laid out on broad lines, as you who have visited it have undoubtedly observed. There was only one public hotel, the Salt Lake House, and it was a very poor one, consisting of a frame building with limited accommodations. They had a very commodious theater, however, and some of the local actors had remarkably good talent. They had already begun the foundations of the Temple, and great blocks of stone had been quarried and lay around it.... The favorite beverage of the inhabitants, which they called "Valley Tan," was a colorless species of whiskey, and the taste was abominable. We observed that many of the Mormon girls were very pretty. 12

Leaving Salt Lake with loaded wagons, the party returned

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., p. 49.
to Montana on what turned out to be a very arduous journey, Clark says that at one point the weather became so severe that "I witnessed what I had never dreamed of before—several cattle in the moving train freeze to death in the yoke and go right down upon the ground." They arrived back in Virginia City just in time to see "Dutch John" Wagner hanging from a rafter, the victim of Vigilante justice. "We proceeded in due course to dispose of our merchandise at very good profits. I had taken the risk of shipping quite a lot of eggs, well knowing they would freeze, yet they were admirably adapted for the making of "Tom and Jerry," which was a favorite beverage in Bannack, and I disposed of them at a price of three dollars per dozen."

Clark's pick and shovel days were over. In 1864 he returned to Salt Lake on another trading venture. This time he could afford to ride south on the stage. "Selling out his interest in his placer mines, he returned to Salt Lake City and purchased a variety of merchandise, which he had freighted to Virginia City, and there he spent the winter of 1864-65." William A. Clark's rise to fame in connection with the later

\[13\text{Ibid.}\]
\[14\text{Ibid.}, p. 50.\]
Fig. 7.-Conestoga Freight Wagon
mining activities centered at Butte need not concern this thesis. From his humble freighting ventures northward from Salt Lake City began a fortune that would build railroads, develop mines, intimidate justice, influence elections, ruin ambitious men, and leave a library as its most worthwhile gift to posterity.

One of the earlier concerns in Montana to engage in the mercantile business was the firm of Raymond Brothers. These men started freighting in connection with their retail store. This was a common practice. Freighters often went into the mercantile business, and store owners at times out their freighting costs by employing their own supply trains.

W. H. Raymond came from Ohio in 1865, bringing with him one team of horses and 2 yoke of oxen. "In August, 1868 he went to Salt Lake with a yoke of oxen, and freighted from that place to the terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad, clearing $2,000.00 in 3 months. He then carried dried fruit to Virginia City, making 30¢ a pound." Raymond introduced fine breeding horses into Montana a few years later, having them shipped from the East via Ogden.

A glance through any biographical collection of Montana pioneers will establish the fact that a large portion of the early men engaged in the freight trade at one time or another. Those who did not take it up as a livelihood, probably had

16 Ibid., p. 1277.
experience with it in a less glamorous phase. There have been speculations made as to how many of the early pioneers actually came into the mining camps as "drivers" or "bull-whackers" with the freighting outfits. In reading the biographies of Montana men it will be noted how many of these found their way here as drivers in these outfits. They did not ride, they walked. How many of our pioneers came here as drivers of ox-teams who could not have come otherwise, it is difficult to determine, but it may be safely affirmed that one in every three seized this opportunity of reaching Montana."

Many were content to use freighting as a means to an end, the end being a mining claim on some creek bank. Others found that it was just as profitable to stay in the business. King and Gillette were two of the leaders in the enterprise. In an historical address by Judge Cornelius Hodges, he says of them: "In that same year (1862), also, Messrs. King and Gillette brought up a stock of goods (from Salt Lake) and opened a store at the same point (Montana City)."

17 Mrs. M. R. Plessman. [From an unidentified newspaper clipping in "Freighting" file at Montana State Historical Society at Helena].

18 Montana Contributions, VII, p. 162.
earlier chapter was mentioned Louis Maillet, and his activity in the 1850's. In 1863 he was also located at Virginia City.

"In 1863 he ran a freight train between Milk River and Deer Lodge. In the fall he went to Salt Lake and brought a cargo of flour which he disposed of in Virginia City." 19 By the end of 1863 the freighting trade to the gold camps had grown to quite large proportions.

Virginia City, with her newly acquired thousands of citizens, was due to take on more of the aspects of civilization. A printing press was soon shipped in from Salt Lake and in 1864 a newspaper came into being. "The first newspaper published in Montana was the Montana Post, printed by John Buchanan and issued on my birthday, August 27, 1864." 20 From this point on the Montana Post became the voice of the mining camp.

The spirit of the Post can be felt from her by-line:

"My Country, May she always be Right, But my Country, Right or Wrong." The newspaper was a strong backer of the growing Territory. On September 3, 1864, she apologized for the lack of news and explained that this was due to the fact that connections east of Salt Lake City had been cut off by

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19 Ibid., p. 226.

20 Stuart, op.cit., p. 264.
Indians. In this edition was Ben Holladay's usual advertisement telling of his coaches which were now leaving daily for Salt Lake. The editor makes a statement in his editorial which is fairly typical at this time.

A friend has just shown us a rich piece of quartz taken from a lead he has recently discovered. It has not yet been assayed, but we predict will be one of the richest yet discovered. Pitch in, boys, our mountains are full of gold and silver, belonging to the lucky man.21

Two weeks later this paper published a report that Governor Edgerton's census had shown that there were now 20,000 people in the Territory. On the subject of gold the following was printed: "The riches of this country becomes more and more apparent. We hear continually of new gulches and amiferous quartz. At the Yellowstone there has been discovered a new gulch, 17 miles long with indications of immense wealth."22 Even a paper which was being printed under adverse circumstances had to have its lighter side, as is shown from this article in the same edition:

A young lady in this neighborhood wishes

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21 The Montana Post, September 3, 1864.
22 Ibid., September 17, 1864.
to procure one hundred young men, of all
sizes and shapes, to form a "gaping
corps", to be in attendance at the several
corners of the town, to stare at females
as they pass, and to make delicate remarks
about their dress and person. She further
wishes to state that none will be accepted
who possess intellectual capacity above a
well-bred donkey. Rather rough on the boys.
Still, it may interest some young men in this
vicinity, who, by way of experience, might
meet with favor as applicants. 

Side by side, the humorous and the tragic, each found
space in this unusual frontier mining publication. "The
scoundrel Kelley, who was ordered to leave the Territory
with all speed, has sometime since, met the reward of his
villanies. Being caught with 2 fine horses and plenty of
money in his possession he was taken and hung on Snake
River." 

The following week there was an item dealing with
the death of a Salt Lake man.

Nine Widows—Died, in Salt Lake City,
August 17, Bishop Ephraim Kimball Blair,
in the 51st year of his age. He was a
man whose mind was richly stored with
the good things of the kingdom of God,
and was ever ready and energetic in
carrying out the measures of his super-
iors in the priesthood. He was brilli-
ant in thought and quick to perceive the
revelations and whisperings of the Holy
Spirit. He leaves nine wives and 43

\[\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
small children to mourn his untimely end. Verily, in the midst of wives we sometimes kick the bucket.  

an editorial further praises the new area. "Verily this is a marvelous country, and its riches are only guessed at...." The articles in the post, many of them, have to do with subjects with which there is some sort of Utah connection. This was quite natural as the "tie" between the two areas was a strong one. On October the 22, 1884, was reprinted a letter that the editor had recently received.

we stopped at Salt Lake for three days and enjoyed ourselves well, living mostly on the delicious fruits and vegetables which are grown to perfection in that fine and productive valley...peaches, for instance, range in price from 25¢ to $1.50 per dozen. Many of them are very large, measuring 10 or 11 inches in circumference. apples and plums of fine quality we found in abundance but of high prices...prices of produce are high, and will, no doubt, remain so, as almost all of the producers are determined to maintain the prices fixed by the convention....Great prosperity is marked on all I saw.

In the same issue mention is made of the trouble caused recently by the notorious road agents. All that is needed, says the post is "...a short piece of hemp, and a good deal
of drop." It was not long until both were amply provided. On November the 5th: "Brookie Jack, the notorious road agent is caught at last. The Sheriff of Portland, Oregon deserves credit for gobbling him but will deserve a good deal more if he hangs him." In the next few issues the following appeared:

"Biz"—Virginia City presents a lively appearance now-a-days. Miners from all parts of the territory are in town buying their winter's supply of provisions, consequently plenty of dust is in circulation. ... Coal oil has risen -- $1.20 per gallon.

We learn from a gentleman lately come in from the Salt Lake road, that over 100 head of cattle perished in a snow storm, 150 miles down the road, about 2 weeks ago, on the divide, being literally snowed in. When found the next day after the storm, 10 ft of snow covered them. This was on the mail route and its no wonder if the mails don't arrive regularly.

A good chance to go to Salt Lake. Oliver and Co. proposes to start a pack train to the City of the Saints about the 10th of Jan., or sooner, if ten passengers are ready to go. They will go through in 16 days, and not travel nights.

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28Ibid.
29Ibid., November 5, 1864.
30Ibid., November 12, 1864.
31Ibid., December 10, 1864.
32Ibid., December 21, 1864.
This thesis is not an attempt to deplete the Montana post of its references to Salt Lake City. Those above have been mentioned merely to indicate the heavy reliance which Virginia City had upon the Utah city.
Most of the miners were too busy with their picks and shovels, and their sluice boxes, to write a journal of the eventful period through which they were living. The Montana Post helped to fill this gap. From its pages can be pieced together many parts of history that would otherwise be lost. Much of the information which we have to rely on today comes from this source. This is especially true of the freighting enterprise. Freighting, for all its importance, was not very glamorous work. Books were written about the vigilantes, by contemporaries, but to piece together the story of the freighters a search would have to be launched which would cover scores of piece-meal sources. The columns of the Post provide one of the better ones.

Nearly every week there arrived from Salt Lake City several wagon trains of precious foodstuffs. Flour was the main item. Fruits and dairy products were in strong demand. In case of a food shortage the miners could do without the fruit, but they needed flour and at such times any means was resorted to in order to provide it. Flour, and the food items that it produced, was the chief staple of the miner’s diet. At one time it became so scarce that the price jumped
from $18.00 a sack to over $100.00. "During the winter of 1864-65 a number of trains from Salt Lake, loaded with flour were snowed in in Beaver Canyon and all the oxen perished in the storm. Provisions of every kind became scarce. Potatoes sold for 65¢ a pound, bacon $1.00 per pound, sugar 85¢."

The "Flour Vigilantes" took a hand and confiscated every sack of flour in town and then rationed it out at reasonable prices. This action saved the day for the hungry miners but it was not so well thought of by the merchants.

One of these merchants, Isaac Rogers, left a diary of his stay in Virginia City and it is interesting to see how he felt about the action of the "Flour Vigilantes."

Entry for April 4th:

The bread excitement continues. The mob swearing to take flour at their own prices, the merchants, vowing to defend their goods with their lives. Mob dispersed and accomplished nothing except to raise the price of flour.

Entry for April 18th:

Very pleasant morning. A great mob in town taking all the flour they can find. A great excitement prevails. It is disgraceful to see how the low-flung ragamuffins are doing.

Entry for April 19th:

1Stuart, op. cit., II, p. 28.
All of this unpleasantness about flour was caused by heavy snows which accumulated on the Divide. As early as January the town paper was warning the local inhabitants of the dangerous situation. "There is no probability of any freight teams arriving in from Salt Lake City for 2 months." Those freight trains which had left Salt Lake in the fall of 1864, with the expectation of arriving in Montana before the winter snows set in, were snow-bound on theyonida pass.

Alexander Toponce was one of the stalled freighters and left a good account of the episode. He got a late start from Utah not leaving until the 10th of November. All went well until his train arrived at Dry Creek, where Dubois, Idaho is now located. Here he was snowed in with 3 feet of snow.

Farther up the pass were many other trains in the same predicament. Nothing could be done except to wait for the snows to recede in the spring. "That winter the price of flour in Montana jumped up to $125 per hundred pound sack, paid in gold. Early in March, 1865, I hired a man named Hayden, and

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2Isaac Rogers, The Diary of Isaac Rogers, manuscript at Montana State Historical Society at Helena.

3The Montana Post, January 12, 1865.
we went down to Dry Creek and loaded up with my flour and packed it to Virginia City. I paid him $20 a hundred. We made two trips and got it all up. About that time there was so much flour available that the price dropped to $30 or $40 a hundred. I would have been just as well off if I had left the flour at Dry Creek." This was one of those times when the freighter's gamble didn't pay off. "Flour was sold during the first 6 years at twenty to fifty dollars per hundred weight, and during the winter of 1864, when all of the late trains from Utah were snowed in on Snake River, the market became depleted, the price rose to more than one dollar per pound, a riot occurred at Virginia City...."5

With the coming of spring the ox and mule trains began moving again. This continued until late in the year.

"Freight trains from Salt Lake arrived until late in the fall, bringing in supplies, and while we were not provided with luxuries there was no suffering from food shortage. Molasses was considered by us, a great delicacy and it was both scarce and dear...."6 Most of the molasses that arrived in Montana came from the Cache Valley region of Utah. "Molasses mills

4Toponce, op. cit., p. 88-89.
5Directory, op. cit., p. 74.
6Stuart, op. cit., p. 265.
were also an important aspect of the Cache Valley economy, both before and after the coming of the railroad. Until the manufacture of sugar from beets at the end of the century, molasses took the place of sugar....Molasses mills consisted of sets of rollers which squeezed the juice out of grain sorghum and sugar cane, which were raised in special plots in the valley for this purpose....An important industry was the manufacture of barrels in which to store the molasses for winter use. As much as one hundred gallons of molasses could be produced to the acre. 7

Many of the men who engaged in the freight trade had been trained well by former employment with the great government contractors. Russell, Majors and Waddell. Toponce was one of these men. Another was Jared "Jack" Taylor. Jack never got to Virginia City until 1866, but upon arriving he engaged in freighting supplies for F. A. York, a hardware store owner. The fact that he was colored did not militate against him as it is recorded that he became one of the leading mercantile and freighting men of the city, and employed scores of men. 8 This same source tells of a trip made by one


8 From an unsigned manuscript entitled "Early Day Freighting" in the files at Montana State Historical Society.
Judd Norris from Omaha to Salt Lake with 8 mules and 2 wagons. Leaving Utah, it took him 27 days to get to Virginia City.9

The warehouses in such supply centers as Omaha, Leavenworth, Atchison and St. Joseph were usually bulging by the time spring arrived. Albert V. Richardson was an observant traveler who described the cities he passed through in the 1850's and 1860's. He described St. Joseph as having "...immense piles of freight, horses, ox and mule teams receiving merchandise from steamers, scores of immigrant wagons and a busy crowd of whites, half-breeds, negroes and Mexicans..."10 As early as weather conditions would permit the trains began their long, slow haul westward. A Kansas paper reported on April 22, 1865:

freighting—
notwithstanding the bad conditions of the roads, and the changeableness and indentity of the weather, several large trains have loaded in this city, and started for the west within the week. At this time there is another large train loading for the mines, and still our warehouses are crowd­
ed with freight, awaiting transportation. The amount of all kinds of freight to be received here for shipment to the western territories this season, will greatly ex­ceed that of any former season.11

9 Ibid.


11 Atchison Press, March 15, 1865.
The price charged for this freight grew into very large figures. "The price charged for this freighting we would consider very high today when the rate is somewhat under one cent per ton-mile. It has been stated above that Mr. G. A. Wolf received 25c a lb for bringing freight from Kansas City, to Montana in 1864."\textsuperscript{12} There seems to have been no regular tariff, each freighter receiving what he could get by special contract. "On the 15th of July (1865) a train left Atchison for Colorado with 17 large steam boilers...and soon thereafter a train of 6 mule wagons started for Virginia City, Montana, carrying 150,000 lbs of machinery, the freight on which was 22 1/2% per lb. During the same year one Forbes hauled 5 wagons of merchandise from Salt Lake to Helena for $5,000.00 in 'good clean gold-dust.'\textsuperscript{13}

The trains from the midwest could not match those from the northern Utah towns either in time or cost. The Utah newspapers report continually of the departure of trains for the Montana mines.

\textsuperscript{12} A. Trexler, Missouri-Montana Highways (published by the State Historical Societies of Miss., Col., Mo., 1918), p. 24.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
of the train (86 wagons) will start on Saturday next.\textsuperscript{14}

Forbe's train of 50 or more wagons were preparing to roll out from here this morning to Montana. It is laden with flour and staples for the subsistence of Virginia and Helena folks.\textsuperscript{15}

Another October issue tells of the serenading of Governor Barney in Salt Lake, to which he responded with a short speech in which he dedicated himself to work for the good of Utah. In his company was Mr. Bruce of Virginia City, Montana, who "...expressed his amazement at the flourishing state of Utah and said it had a peculiar interest for him, as it furnished 'grub' to Montana."\textsuperscript{16} As proof of his statement the Telegraph reported in the same issue, "One or two big trains, loaded with flour for Virginia, Montana, have started within a day or two."\textsuperscript{17}

While the Utah papers were making these announcements, the Montana Post ran an interesting article on the subject of "Trade."

\textit{This Fall, a few thousand pounds of potatoes from Salt Lake City have found a ready market with us, but it is thought,}

\textsuperscript{14}Salt Lake Telegraph, October 13, 1865.

\textsuperscript{15}Union Vedette (Salt Lake City), October 17, 1865.

\textsuperscript{16}Telegraph, October 5, 1865.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid.
Fig. 8.—Heavy Freight Wagon
if all that have been raised in the country were brought into market, the Utah production would not bring a price that would justify hauling so far; and it is quite certain that next season home production will meet every demand. After this year, we will be self-sustaining in every article of provisions that the climate will admit the cultivation of, save flour and fruits...."18

This article proved to be fairly correct, except that Montana was slower to realize her agricultural capabilities than the editor had presumed. "...and not until 1869 did the production of flour reach sufficient magnitude to supply home consumption...In the meanwhile flour had been shipped by river to Benton and transported across the plains, and a considerable amount had been conveyed by pack animals across the mountains from Washington territory, but by far the larger part was hauled from the Mormon settlements in Utah."19 Montana did not achieve any large degree of agricultural independence until about 1872, when she began to produce most of the foodstuffs needed.20

The last-mentioned issue of the post said further:

John S. Rockfellow's train of sixteen wagons, from Salt Lake City, arrived in town yester-

18Montana post, November 11, 1865.
day, laden with flour, groceries, et.
The recipient of this merchandise is one
of those good fellows that everybody wishes
well, and the public wish is fully realized
so far.

On Saturday--Messrs. Hermann, Schwab and
Lees received the freight of 17 wagons,
from Salt Lake City, comprising salt,
tobacco, flour and furnishing goods.21

General Coe's train, from Salt Lake City,
brought fifteen hundred sacks of flour
into town, on last Saturday.22

In December a fast freighter arrived in town, W. H. H.
Thatcher had made the trip from Salt Lake Valley in 15
days. His cargo consisted of turkeys and chickens.23

These announcements are typical of what had been appear­
ing for months in the mining newspaper. In November:
Poultry arrived--Last Thursday, a wagon
load of chickens arrived from the land of
saintly pretensions. They came through in
good condition, but few having been lost
on the way. "Eggs-ample" will be made of
them, probably to show what good living
consists in.24

Freight coming in--Several trains arrived
during the week from Salt Lake City, bring­
ing flour and salt principally. They report
many more behind. Though the stock appeared

21Montana Post, September 29, 1865.
22Ibid., October 7, 1865.
23Ibid., December 30, 1865.
24Ibid., November 11, 1865.
thin and jaded we were told but little delay was occasioned by the late storms, and that the grass was ordinarily plentiful. Two ox teams came in last Wednesday which started on their journey on the Fourth of July.

The year 1865 ended with a promise of greater things to come. The following year, 1866, proved to be the peak year for Utah shipments. Many of the freighting men invested their money in new, local enterprises and built substantial fortunes. Others merely used their freighting enterprise as a means to acquire enough capital to return to other areas and start over in new fields of endeavor. Such a one was Dennis Sheedy. His story is typical of so many others that it will now be reviewed.

He was born in Massachusetts and then migrated, at an early age, to Iowa. Here he was engaged in the wholesale and retail grocery business. "When he left that establishment, it was to cross the plains to Denver. He went in company with a number of teams loaded with freight for the mining districts."26 He could not seem to acquire more than ordinary living expenses by his employ in Denver, and, as he

25 Ibid.
had come west to seek his fortune, he determined to go to Montana and try mining.

He arrived in Montana in 1864, after having endured snows and blizzards enroute. "Too poor and inexperienced in mining to begin on his own account, he went to work for a salary per diem. He was then but 18 years old and unaccustomed to rough outdoor labor, and not of a rugged frame."27 Slowly he built his "fortune" until he had in his possession $150100.

Then he joined an experienced miner and bought a claim, which they soon resold at a snug profit; and another claim was bought and sold. He continued mining and trading in mines for three months; then bought a small stock of groceries and began business upon his individual account, which he conducted until fall. Then selling out, he went to Utah Territory, where, meeting an opportunity, he sold his gold dust at good figures. Taking an account of his financial standing, he found he had $7,000 in greenbacks as the result of seven months' operations in the mines, which he had entered almost penniless.28

Not wishing to spend the winter idly, he embarked in a general merchandising establishment to his great profit, and the following summer he made two successful trading trips to Montana, "...taking trainloads of supplies to the mines, each

27 Ibid., p. 408.
28 Ibid., p. 409-410.
time selling train and freight at fine prices. 29

At this point in his career he felt the need of more schooling. William A. Clark, a contemporary, had felt the same need and hence had attended the School of Mines in New York. Young Sheedy went to Chicago and studied commercial subjects. After finishing his school he returned to Utah, and true to form, he made the trip pay for itself.

While trading in Utah, he had observed that the domestic labors of Mormon wives were almost universally performed with and by an old-fashioned, large fireplace. He concluded that a trainload of cookstoves would be a "hit." So upon leaving college, he purchased a cargo of stoves and necessary trimmings, also wagons sufficient to carry them; shipped the whole to Des Moines, Iowa, from whence he freighted them with ox teams to Utah. Single stoves that cost $24 each in Chicago sold readily in Utah at $125 to $175. Of course the profits were enormous. 30

Sheedy was not content with this venture. Reloading his trains with supplies, he turned it toward Montana, in which, not finding a purchaser, he stored his goods and wintered his teams; and early the following spring reloaded the supplies and started for Idaho. A late snow trapped him in the mountains. He survived the extremely cold weather, passed over the summit and made his descent into the market area of

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
the Lemhi mining district. "Returning to Montana, he sold his teams, and the following spring bid adieu to Virginia City, so long his home, his center, his base, and went to the city of Helena, where he spent a year merchandising and trading. Then he put a loaded train on the road from Utah to White Pine, Nevada, where, upon arriving, he sold out at good figures, and then took a trip to California." Using the money he had gained through his wise freighting ventures, Sheedy returned to the Colorado and Kansas area and became one of the nation's leading stockmen with interests in at least 5 states.

Of course, not all freighters were so successful as Sheedy, Tonce, or Clark. These men are examples of those who entered the trade with keen judgment and business insight, took advantage of every opportunity, gambled wisely, and won. But whether the freighter was making a fortune or merely "breaking even", he kept on the trail. The people in western Montana needed supplies continually.

Since the initial discovery of gold in 1862 many other rich strikes had been found in close proximity. The immigrants kept coming into the area. In 1864 the Deseret News commented about the Montana gold mining.

A young gentleman of our acquaintance returned from Virginia City on Sunday evening in

Ibid.
the best of spirits over the future of our northern neighbor. He informs us that the Virginia Gulch, which is about fifteen miles in extent, is yielding about 3 tons of gold per week; and he looked seriously, believing while he said so.32

When the spring of 1866 rolled around the wagon roads leading into Montana were crowded as never before with the plodding, sweating mule and ox teams in charge of the hardy muleskinners and bullwhackers. On May 5, 1866, W. H. Thatcher broke his record for a trip between Salt Lake City and the Montana capital. "...the fastest time yet made of a train from Salt Lake to this city is 13 and 1/2 days. Thatcher's Fast Freight Express performed this feat within the last few days."33

Although freighting got under way in earnest at this time it should be noted that due to the mild weather a considerable freight trade had been going on during the winter months. For instance, in January, 1866, hay was selling "...on the street at from $50 to $60 per ton," and "George Chismans train of nine wagons and fifty-four mules, which brought a general assortment of groceries to J. S. Rockfellow, last week, has left for another trip to Salt Lake City and back, on Sunday last."34

32 Deseret News, June 15, 1864.
32 Montana Post, May 5, 1866.
34 Ibid., January 10, 1866.
Trains—on Sat. last, twelve wagons belonging to Charles Leighton rolled in from Salt Lake loaded with flour and under the charge of Robert Benton, wagon master, they were consigned to Mr. Crain-ger. A train of 10 wagons belonging to Le Content and laded with 500 sacks of flour, was discharged at Geo. Hynons warehouse, in the stonewall building a few days since. A lot of fine barley formed part of the fine consignment. On wed and Thurs, Geo H. Hanna and Co, received a lot of liquors and other merchandises from California and wagon loads of flour from SLC.

In April the freighting grew to such proportions that the editor of the Montana Post grew weary of enumerating the arrivals and departures.

Spring Freighting—Philip Berliners train of wagons rolled out last week for SLC. Philip Links train followed suit. Jeffrys and Watkins train of twelve wagons headed towards the city of Waters, and Grims wagons loaded on Tuesday last for the new diggings at Bear Gulch. First on the list of spring arrivals came a train of some ten or twelve wagons from SL owned by divers and sundry proprietors and laden with produce, they arrived safe and sound at the end of last week. Were we beg respectfully to terminate our chronicle, for it would shortly take one side of the post to keep track of the motley crowd now thronging like the waves of a flood tide, by every pass and canon, to Montana, the genuine ophir of the 19th Century.

Quotes from the May issues show that the freighting

Ibid., Jan., 16, 1866.

Ibid., April 21, 1866.
activities continued unabated.

Eatables—considerable quantities of potatoes fetching from 10 to 12¢ per pound wholesale, are now being brought to town from SL, also a considerable amount of salt; this keeps down the market. Breadstuffs and fruit: On Wednesday, fifteen wagons comprising the train of Judson Stoddard, from Farmington, about 15 miles this side of SL, rolled in laden with flour, peaches, etc. The owner we are told intends opening a store.37

The summer months were peak months. During June, July, and August the trains continued to come and go. In September "...two trains of six wagons each, one belonging to Carpenter and the other to Maud and Campbell arrived in town, from SLC laden with flour consigned to the firm of McCormick and Ohle...."38 Two weeks later it is recorded that "...17 wagons under the charge of R. W. Trimble, for Penauer, Solomon and Co., that left Logan, Cache Valley Aug, 14th arrived."39 Three days later a cargo of salt, six wagons full, arrived from Salt Lake.40

The year 1866 was evidently a good freighting year for all concerned with the new market. The following three years, to 1869, was a very competitive period between the

37Ibid., May 19, 1866.
38Ibid., Sept., 1, 1866.
39Ibid., Sept 18, 1866.
40Ibid.
cities of Salt Lake and St. Louis, with St. Louis getting the best of it. All this changed with the completion of the transcontinental railway in 1869. Utah again took over a dominate role in the freighting trade northward.

Not much has been said of the freighter as a person, nor of his animals and rigging. no one can grasp the importance of the role he played during this period unless they understand him and his situation a little better.

Somehow, the men who toiled behind the stubborn haunches of jug-head mules or plodding indifferent oxen, have been left pretty much out of the picture. maybe they lacked romance. For romance never moved behind a string of long-ears. It took strong hands, and a lot of the nebulous quality called pioneer spirit. And, now and then, it took a rich flow of profanity designed to penetrate placid mule satirinity. They called it "cursedness." A man on a horse looks better than a sweating muleskinner or bullwhacker with a cud of tobacco and a heavy load. But he doesn't get any further along the trail in the long run. The old-timers respected the "bullwhacker." It was no amateur's job to "skin 20" and make them like it.41

The following chapter will be devoted to an examination of the everyday life of the freighter in the period of the 1860's.

41The Helena Independent, May 14, 1939.
CHAPTER 11

MULESKINNERS AND BULLWHACKERS: THEIR LIFE ON THE TRAIL

Long before the cowboy came north with his herds of cattle there existed on the wagonroads of the intermountain West another type of individual that made a living by his mastery and control of animals.

...everything brought into the Territory then came by freight either from Salt Lake or some further point. Aside from the products Utah could furnish, like vegetables or fruit, everything crossed the plains in the great outfits which passed back and forth from Omaha to Salt Lake. Oxen stood the journey better than horses, and an ox train was less likely to be attacked by Indians...To drive the ox teams, men were hired at comparatively small wages.

The job of the freighter was far from glamorous, and as a result he has been largely overlooked by writers of history.

...we have no trouble in picturing activities of such mining camps as Alder Gulch, Last Chance or Confederate. Thousands of men were feverishly stripping bedrock in search of fortune. We forget that these men, many hundreds of miles from civilization, needed clothing, food, tools, and

1 Plackman, op.cit.
supplies of every sort. The freighter with his ox-teams met the need, yet of all the distinctive types developed on the Rocky Mountain Frontier the bullwhacker alone has entirely disappeared.2

By their neglect of the freighter the writers have missed one of the most colorful personages molded from the environment of the early west. The freighter was more than just a cowboy. To be able to sit well on a horse was a natural attribute, as was his general knowledge of all the different breeds of western stock. Upon his animal-judging abilities might rest the success or failure of a trading venture. In one set of circumstances a team of fast mules might be the necessary type of domestic power to get a load of profitable freight through to the desired destination before the early winter snows blocked the trail. In this case the freighter had to be a keen businessman. The mules were faster but were more expensive than the slow-moving oxen.

Two other factors that had to be considered were presented by resale value at the destination and by the hazards of Indian raids. It seems that the Indians were very partial towards horses and mules. A freighter who moved his produce or equipment by ox-teams had certain advantages over the one

with mule-trains. As freighting procedures became more standardized the trains became more immune from Indian raids or attacks. The slow moving oxen could find forage much easier than could mules or horses. Perhaps the great attraction though was their price and resale value. Their simple rigging made it possible for a freighter to have numerous teams on the road without having enormous amounts of capital tied up in expensive harness rigging.

Most men engaged in this business watched carefully the opportunities for resale of their stock. Several factors prompted this. Toponce explains one of them.

In the summer of 1864 I sold out my cattle train in Virginia City, and came back to Salt Lake City and bought another which I loaded with flour. I bought the flour of Bishop Chauncey W. West in Ogden. I paid him $24 a hundred for it.3

One reason for always selling out in Montana was that you could hire plenty of men in Utah to drive oxen up to Montana, but once there they wanted to stay at the mines. Coming back we would have no loads and would be making no money.4

A distinctive feature of ox-trains was that the driver walked and worked beside his animals. The cowboy rode and the stage driver rode, but the bullwhacker was rarely able

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3 Toponce, op. cit., p. 87.
4 Ibid., p. 88.
to rest his weary feet. It is amazing to discover how many people walked to Utah, Oregon, Montana or other western destinations. "Hitching and hiking, it would appear, were two separate operations in the West. You hitched up the team to the wagon, yes. But you didn't ride in the wagon, instead you hiked, shank's mare, right alongside." Even if the driver was lucky enough to have horses or mules he didn't always ride. But when his feet absolutely wore out he would catch a ride on one of the team horses, or possibly on the "lazy board," which was a stout oak plank that pulled out from the left side of the huge Conestoga freight wagon.

These Conestoga wagons made a great contribution to the Westward movement of America. Thousands of them rolled across the prairies and mountains during the period between the 1840's and the 1860's. They proved to be too big and bulky for the rough West and they started to vanish in the 1865 era. "But from the early 1700's to the late 1850's the big wagons had carried most of both goods and immigrants heading west. There were still plenty of them operating in the Sixties, and they were a sight to behold."6

6Ibid.
The Conestoga had originated in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, in the very early 1700's. The average vehicle was 26 feet long, 11 feet high, weighed empty from 3,000 to 3,500 pounds, and required the work of four men for about two months to build. The eye-catching feature of the Conestoga was that the bed was boat-shaped, the center sagging, the ends arched upward like a gondola, so that the load would tend to shift toward the center, if it shifted en route, and not awkwardly against the endgates. "The bed was usually about 16 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 4 deep, with sturdy white-oak lumber for the frame and poplar for the sideboards. Flooring and sides were nearly an inch thick. The endgates were hinged at the bottom, so they could be dropped for loading, and held in place by heavy chains."7

On top of this mammoth structure was located some six to sixteen wagon bows which held up the wagon cover. This cover was arranged so that it could be drawn together at the front and back and laced down to the wagon sides. The wheels were "dished" out slightly and heavy iron tires, 2 inch thick, encircled the felloes and it was a real art to mount these.

"When it left the wagon works, the Conestoga was always brilliantly painted, with bright red running gear and a Prussian-blue body. The great snowy cover completed the

7 Ibid., p. 152.
national colors."

Some time is being spent describing the Conestoga wagon because it was the ancestor of the prairie Schooner and the different freight conveyances developed later. The Conestogas were responsible for many wagonroad rules and customs. "Keep to the Right" is said to have originated with them. A special Conestoga horse was developed to handle the bulky wagons but mules and oxen were also used extensively.

The "hitching up" procedures followed by the ox-trains were quite picturesque.

Then the bullwhackers, carrying the heavy pinon yokes over their left shoulders, hickory bows in their right hands and iron or wooden pins with leather strip fastened to them in their mouths would seek out their teams, yoking them together and leading them to their wagons.

When a "whacker" had his "wheelers," or pole oxen, in place, he would bring on his "pointers," and the rest, including the leaders. The wheelers were always the heavyweights, old and trained, and able to hold back the load or their unruly teammates until the whackers could throw on a brake or "rough lock," the last named a log chain fastened at one end to the wagon, thrown through the wheel spokes in such a way as to be between the ground and the wheel on the "near rear hind wheel" of the lead wagon.

New cattle just being trained to yoke were always put in the center of the team, where they were easily managed with the assistance.
of the "leaders," which were always light-weights and most always longhorns from Texas....

The principles behind the operation and handling of all types of animal power were pretty much the same. Whether horse or oxen, the teams had to be hitched in a certain manner. The wheel teams (those nearest the wagon) had to be very stout and able to hold back on steep grades. These were the only ones who could exert power to back or brake the wagon. This was due to the rigging arrangement of the many teams required to move heavy loads. "The doubletree of the wheel team connected by a swinging pivot, the double-tree hammer, to a framework just in front of the front axle. This axle, in turn, was pivoted to the wagon. The wagon tongue was rigidly attached to the axle; that is, as far as any horizontal play was concerned. So, by turning the wheel team, the driver could turn the wagon tongue, which, in turn, steered the front wheels and so the wagon. It was simple, though it sounds complicated in description." The next team in front of the wheel team was hooked on to the end of the wagon tongue by means of a doubletree, and also from the end of the tongue a chain went forward to

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10 Foster-Harris, op.cit., p. 154.
catch the doubletree of the lead team.

Additional teams could be added in front, if necessary, simply by extending the chain. In going around a turn, however, the horses would have to step over this chain and back again as the going straightened out, and sometimes there was trouble.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}

When the freighter was faced with maneuvering down a steep grade and he feared his brakes would not hold he would "deadlock" the wheels by running his chains around the rims, from one wheel to the other. On steep slopes he might also drag a log, or a whole tree, behind, as further breaking. This was called a "Mormon brake." To prevent the vehicle's pitching over sideways on steep slopes, ropes were fastened to the axles where required, passed over the top of the load, and held by men walking on the upper slope.

From the Conestoga was developed the prairie Schooner. "The first of these, made in St. Louis, were called "Murphey's", and were provided with iron axles....The lead wagon would carry an average of 6,500 pounds, while the trailer, fastened to the lead by a short tongue, had a capacity of perhaps two tons."\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}} It was smaller, but still clumsy for mountain work or badly broken country.

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}
\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 159.}
They had a bed 14 feet long, 4½ feet wide, with sides 5½ feet high. The hind wheels were 5 feet 10 inches, the front ones a foot less in diameter... The prairie schooners weighed 4,000 pounds and could carry up to 7,000 pounds of freight, for example, sixteen bales of cotton in one load. On the sides of the heavy, usually doubled wagon covers the owner's name was customarily painted, the wagon's number when the vehicles were in a train... They were drawn by mules, or oxen... 8 or 10 to the wagon.

When used with oxen these wagons usually ran in trains of from ten to fifty or sixty teams, the teams consisting usually of from five to seven yokes of oxen. However, there was no set number of oxen that had to be hitched to a load. The number was dependent completely on circumstances. Trains lined up at the Franklin, Idaho, flour mill sometimes had as many as fourteen yokes of oxen to the team. It took this number to move the heavy loads of flour headed into Montana and northern Idaho. An individual named Harrington Sr., in 1870, "...As custom dictated, took eight yoke of oxen and two freight wagons to the Missoula railhead to load with supplies for the mines and for his family..."15

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13 Ibid.
On the Montana Trail all types of "hitches" were used. In speaking of the Corrine-Virginia City wagon road, a writer, formerly quoted, states:

Because of the easy grades on the roads, and the heavy travel, the road bed soon became capable of sustaining the heavy freight trains using a large number of mules or oxen, and travel along this route became typical of that in the west generally. An "eight-mule hitch" with three loaded wagons was a common unit for freighting purposes.16

In a "hitch" of this sort the front wagon was capable of carrying about 6,500 pounds of freight. This wagon was referred to as the lead wagon and was heavier than the other two, having a 4-inch axle. The second wagon was called the "swing" wagon and had an axle of 3\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches. The load was correspondingly lighter by about 1,000 pounds. The final, or "trail" wagon was only capable of carrying 4,500 pounds on its 3-inch axle.17 These wagons were hooked together by running the tongues underneath the one in front and then securing them with a pin.

In a sandy place or on a mountain road, the bullwhacker (teamster) would slacken his team, pull a coupling pin from an iron half-circle arrangement on the axle of his lead wagon, drop his trailer to one side of the road and proceed to the top of the hill, if

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17Ibid., p. 138.
in the mountains, or to an "island" of hard ground in the desert, unhook his wheelers and go back for the trailer. Sometimes a "Bull outfit" would spend a whole day doing this. Lead wagons were parked one at a time and the trailers brought on later and hooked up. These parkings were in the shape of an oval, called a corral, a narrow opening being left only at one end.18

When using a four-team "hitch" the team of mules or oxen nearest the wagon was called the "wheelers;" the next team the "pointers;" the third, the "sixes;" and the front team the "leaders." When using oxen the "lead" team was usually the fastest and the lightest. They were the ones who set the pace for the rest to follow. Any inexperienced teams were put in the middle somewhere. A teamster came to know each animal, its weak and strong points, and it was hitched accordingly.

The teams were connected by chains called "spreaders," which it was important to keep taut in order to get the maximum power from all the teams. "When the mules or oxen were experienced and the road was well-marked, the driver was often free to wander alongside, or even to catch a nap in the wagon. When actual driving was necessary he often rode one of the 'wheelers,' and guided the entire group of animals by the 'jerkline.'"19 This "jerkline" was a system

18Hooker, op.cit., p. 30.
19Burlingame, op.cit., p. 127.
used on the long mule-trains such as were employed by the larger freighting companies. It consisted of a line running from the driver's seat, through loops or rings attached to the harness rigging, and so on to the bridle of the lead mules. A good hard jerk by the driver would turn the head of the leaders to a new direction.

This system was not used on the "bull outfits" as the harness rigging would not allow it. To turn a "bull" team was quite a different matter. The "leaders were carefully trained to respond to the low-spoken word of "haw" or "gee." Actually, the command "gee" means "turn right." "Haw" means "turn left." The only other command necessary was the universally understood "whoa." Though these were the key words through which proper direction was maintained, they were not sufficient by themselves. Always there were embellishments provided by the bullwhacker and he was restrained in this respect only by his limit of inventive ability. In speaking of this, Hooker states that it is impossible to describe the manner in which the commands were spoken because of their peculiar musical quality "which cannot be described in print, not only is it impossible to convey sound in that manner but because the language that goes with the music, the request to gee or haw, would not be pleasant reading."20

20 Hooker, op. cit., p. 31.
"The whacker always began his orders to his bulls in a low tone, increasing it as the necessity for action presented itself, and ending in a string of oaths that would make an old-time Mississippi steamboat mate ashamed of his reputation." 21

An interesting aspect of the bullwhacker's outfit was his whip. Besides being adept at animal "know-how" and having an ample degree of "cussedness," the driver had to be able to impress the oxen with something more authoritative than mere words. Working animals had long had a respect for the "whip," and different modifications of it were adapted as new needs arose.

The early stage-coach driver and those who drove the Conestogas and the schooners found a need for a fairly long whip. Proof of its repeated use can be seen from the observation that the drivers of these outfits sat on the right side of their seat. This allowed them to unleash the whip far behind them without getting it tangled in the conveyance or rigging. The driver of an ox-team found need of quite a different type of instrument.

Both muleskinners (mule-team drivers) and bullwhackers (strictly those who drove oxen, though the term was sometimes slang for any kind of freighters) used bullwhips, which in

21 Ibid., p. 33.
the Sixties and Seventies cost a dollar or two and were plentifully available in any wagon yard or harness shop, if the wagoner did not make his own, as he often did. Typically a bullwhip had a short hickory handle, 2 feet or so long, then finally a buckskin popper. An expert bullwhacker could knock a fly off the ear of an ox 20 feet away without bringing blood. He could also cut the eyes right out of a human opponent's face or slash him to ribbons; provided, of course, that the victim didn't charge right in where the whip could not be used. Duels sometimes were fought with bullwhips, and they could be cracked with the report of a pistol.22

The bullwhacker's whip was a cumbersome thing from 18 to 20 feet long. It "...not only made a tenderfoot open his eyes with wonder, but it usually shocked him. It was something he had never seen before, and if he had been told that a man of ordinary strength would be able to wield it he would have been decidedly incredulous."23

The cowboy or herder had a lash capable of being manipulated with only 1 hand. The "whacker" needed both hands firmly planted on the hickory stalk which served as his whip-butt. The braided leather was an inch thick at the butt and then it tapered in varying degrees of thickness to the tip, which was usually the size of an ordinary pencil. The number of strands in a bullwhip were also graduated.

22 Foster-Harris, op.cit., p. 162.
23 Hooker, op.cit., p. 38.
At the butt there were as many strands as the maker, usually the bullwhacker, could weave, often fourteen. At the tip the number was reduced to six. All sorts of leather went into the construction of this item. Old boot-tops, buckskin, elkskin, etc. "...on the very tip of the whip, the business end, was a 'popper' of buckskin cut in the shape of a long V, the bottom end of the V running into a strand which was braided into the tip."

The bullwhacker, when using this instrument, first threw it out before him on the ground; then by the use of all his strength he swung it over his head, to the right, often whirling it several times before he let it go upon the back of the bull he wanted to reach.

To the man who never saw this operation before, there was a shock, for as the whip landed on the bull the popper made a roar like the report of a cannon. As a matter of fact the bull was uninjured, unless the bullwhacker was careless and allowed his popper to strike a tender spot, the nose, an eye or the belly.

It was almost a crime for a bullwhacker to cut a bull and draw blood, and he seldom did it unless his popper had been wet and then dried. The spot usually aimed for was the hip, and bulls that had been in service any length of time had a spot on the rump that was hairless, resembling the head of a drum. But the spot was tough. The noise

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24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., p. 39.
of the popper, however, was what startled the team and caused it to "dig in." 26

In the matter of food on the trail the men with the "bull" outfits were not very fussy. In the morning, while yoking their oxen, the cook and his helper would brew up coffee and cook thick slabs of bacon. "Coffee and bacon are swallowed in haste, and if you are like the majority, you grab a piece of bacon and a chunk of bread, bang them together into a huge sandwich and put them in the jockey box of the wagon for a lunch at eight or nine o'clock." 27

Bacon, coffee, and "bullwhacker bread" was the main diet of the freighter. To make bread was no great art. "The recipe was simply this: Take the big dishpan, fill it two-thirds full of flour, with a handful of Dooley's baking powder mixed in, dig a hole in the center of it, take the pan to the creek, pour water in the hole, and mix it well. Then put it in the Dutch ovens, after first greasing them with a bacon rind; next put the ovens on the fire, which should be made from the very start with buffalo chips." 28

On the road to Montana there were areas where the buffalo

26 Ibid., p. 39-40.
27 Ibid., p. 56.
gnats and mosquitoes harassed the drivers and added to their discomfort. But the whacker's greatest discomfiture came about whenever he passed through hostile Indian country. He never strayed far from his Springfield rifle. Pistols and knives were part of his everyday dress.

Harrington Sr., while returning from Utah to Montana, camped at Camas Creek near present Dubois, Idaho, in the company of several other freighting outfits. Harrington soon moved on because the other teamsters were drinking and mistreating some Indians who had happened into camp. His fears were substantiated, for when he returned the next day he found them all dead and their outfits burned. This same source tells of an example of the ingenuity and hardiness of the teamster on the Montana Trail. A huge fly-wheel for some mining operations was being brought in from Salt Lake in two sections. The heavy piece of machinery caused the wagons to mire down. All attempts to extricate them failed. Finally, the men hauled timbers from the nearby mountains, erected an ingenious hoist and finally, after 5 days, they were able to continue. "It took five days to accomplish this feat, but the freighter retained pride in his patience and ingenuity, when, happily he rolled onward again."

Alexander Toponce tells of an experience he had with

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29Brimlow, op.cit.
30ibid.
Indiana on his first trip to Montana in 1863.

There were no white people at Fort Hall, just Indians and a few half-breeds. We went on up the river to a point near Blackfoot, where we crossed in a ferry boat, run by a man named Gibson, afterward a great prize fighter.

We started up the west bank and found a wagon train belonging to Livingston and Bell, surrounded by Indians. Bud Worley of Salt Lake was in charge. They were on their way from Salt Lake to Bannock City, where we were going. There were about twenty women in the train.31

The Livingston and Bell wagon train had been standing off the Indians for eight days and were getting low on powder and supplies. When Toponce and his group arrived, 180 strong, the Indians retreated with dismay while the people from the besieged train rejoiced.

That night we took the wagon covers off and stretched them over the ground and had a big dance. We danced nearly all night.32

Enough has been said in the last few pages to illustrate the hardiness and ability of the bullwhacker and muleskinner. Moving freight was a real man's job.

"Those were wild and woolly days, and the man who lived

31Toponce, op.cit., p. 54.

32Ibid.
the life of out-of-doors was a rugged, devil-may-care, hungry, healthy, happy fellow. He knew how to face a freezing blizzard, or a baking sun without flinching; he knew how to take care of himself with a minimum of discomfort under the most adverse circumstances. He was afraid of nothing. It wouldn’t do otherwise. He was there, usually beyond the arm of any law other than ordinances made and provided by himself and companions and enforced by the same law-givers. Stealing was a worse crime than life-taking. 23

This was the type of man who was responsible for supplying the life-sustaining articles to the miners of southwestern Montana. For decades they and their outfits were common sights throughout the intermountain west. They earned for themselves an important position in the chronicles of the American frontier movement.

23Hooker, The prairie Schooner, op. cit., p. 34
CHAPTER 12

THE STAGECOACH AND TELEGRAPH

Many of those who entered Montana in the eventful days of the early gold rush period were men who had left loved ones behind. Some returned to their families and friends after a season or two; others were never heard of again. The few scattered newspapers that were in circulation oftentimes carried frantic pleas for help in locating a lost brother, father, or husband. Letters would be sent to mining camps throughout the west. After these messages had not been called for at the local post office within a specified time, the local newspaper would run a list of all letters that were being held in the "uncalled-for" file. Sometimes months were consumed between the time of the original writing of the letter and its receipt by the intended receiver. Half of a continent, beset with Indians, swollen rivers, road agents, storms, and scores of other obstacles, made communication facilities very unreliable during the 1860's.

Men, parted from families, became lonely during the long winter months at Virginia City. The summers were not quite so unbearable because there was plenty of work to be done during these short months. A storekeeper had to "push" his
wares and prepare an adequate inventory for the coming winter. The miner spent most of his time at his claim and put in long hours toiling with pick, shovel, pan, and sluice-box.

Isaac Rogers kept a mercantile establishment in Virginia City for several years and his diary gives good evidence of what life was like in those times. He has previously been referred to in connection with the action of the "Flour Vigilantes." Mr. Rogers lived from day to day for the arrival of the mail from Salt Lake City. Killings, fights, hangings—these were everyday occurrences. The thing that the people looked forward to as a break in the monotony of camp life was the arrival of the "express" with letters and newspapers.

On January 12, 1865, Isaac "Dreamed a good dream of home...." On February 3, he recorded a day's sale of $270.00. One week later the mail arrived from Salt Lake and brought him his customary letter from home. That night he recorded in his diary:

The mail arrived tonite and brought me a dispatch from Natalie, saying our dear little Willie was no more. We died Jan 24. Oh, Father in heaven—have mercy on us—I feel almost a heartbroken man. Comfort my afflicted wife—and, oh God—protect her from sickness—and death.

Could not sleep at all tonite—oh my dear little

*Rogers, op.cit., pages unnumbered.
Willie, I can never see you more — But I will try to meet you in Heaven my dear, sweet little angel.  

Later, in the spring of 1865, Mr. Rogers traveled to Fort Benton and met his wife, after her voyage up the Missouri River, and returned with her to the mining camp.

Contemporary with Isaac Rogers was James H. Morley. He was engaged in mining from 1862 through 1865. Mr. Morley was in the area for the sole purpose of working his claims and this he did very devotedly. He typifies the honest, hard-working element of the conglomerate population of the area. While looking through his diary one is impressed with the preponderance of notations regarding the arrival of mail and the significant and important contribution that this occurrence made in his everyday life.

Entry for May 18, 1863:

worked all day on side shift...weather cool and windy...another arrival of wagons with supplies from Salt Lake and a pack train from Walla Walla. Another shooting scrape up town last night in which Cohart was killed...all of which causes but little if any excitement. 

| 2Ibid.  |
Entry for May 20, 1863:

By an arrival from Salt Lake we hear of a severe battle on the Rappahannock and that 60,000 were killed.\(^4\)

Entry for May 26, 1863:

Express came in from Salt Lake last nite.\(^5\)

Entry for June 12, 1863:

Express came in from Salt Lake, bringing me a letter from Virginia. All well at home.\(^6\)

Mr. Morley is only typical of thousands who depended on the facilities of the overland mail to bring them news from the "states."

Discoveries of gold in Montana and Idaho caused the usual stampedes into those sections and the demand for postal service consequently arose. Private expresses as usual preceded the regular United States mail to the mining camps. In July, 1863, a weekly pony express was established from Fort Bridger to Bannock City (Montana), and letters were carried through in seven days for fifty cents each.\(^7\)

\(^4\)Ibid.
\(^5\)Ibid.
\(^6\)Ibid.
Prior to July 1, 1864, the mail was carried north on the express wagons of A. J. Oliver and Company, operating out of Salt Lake City. The May 4, 1861, issue of the Deseret News contained the following:

**HURRYING OFF--.** The Bannock Express and United States mail stages are crowded every week with passengers for Idaho. In a short time Ben Holladay will have his coaches on the route, both to Boise and to Bannock.

"The Post Office Department contracted for a tri-weekly mail service over this route to begin July 1, 1864. Ben Holladay received this contract, and although there was some delay in getting the coaches to the line on account of the flood in the South Platte, the regular service was in operation by August. Holladay now cut the stage fare from Salt Lake City to Virginia City, Montana, down to $25 in greenbacks to run Oliver and Company off the line." Thus a great competitive battle was waged for control of the line between the two cities. The advertising side of the battle can be followed through the weekly columns of the Montana Post. For weeks Oliver and Company advertised that they had discovered a new route that had reduced the distance between the

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8 *Deseret News*, May 4, 1861.

two points nearly 70 miles. Both companies used all the
stratagems they could devise, but it soon became apparent
that Ben Holladay would rule the line.

In 1836, at the age of 16, Ben Holladay had arrived on
the Missouri frontier from Kentucky. He was young, ambitious,
and in a land that was teeming with adventure and opportun-
ities. This is the country described by Governor Thomas C.
Fletcher, of Missouri, in 1864 as:

...a central mart for the interchange of
the products of north and south, the east
and the west, through the rivers of her
great basin and the system of railways cent-
ering in her metropolis. She shall be a
hiway for the commerce of two oceans, borne
by the inland transit lines that carry the
freights between Europe and Asia.10

Those who were living in Missouri felt that their state
had the capabilities of becoming a great commercial center
as well as a place for extensive emigration for farming
purposes. "...it is now ready and invites all to come and
occupy. Evidently it is the next great focus in which
emigration will concentrate."11

In 1838 Ben Holladay was a courier with Colonel Doni-
phan's group of volunteers that was sent to far West to

10 Nathan H. Parker, The Missouri handbook (St. Louis:
P.M. Purchard, no. 78 and 80 Pine Street, 1865), p. 23.
11 Ibid., p. 12.
engage" the Mormons. "Colonel Doniphan felt genuinely sorry for these people, being driven from their hard-won homes into a strange land. He won their deep friendship, and so did the young courier Ben Holladay, who was later to find this friendship of great value in his freighting business."

Ben tried several ventures and did very well in all of them. The coming of the Mexican War in 1846 induced him to try his hand at transportation and this became his interest for the rest of his active life.

When the Mormons moved west to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake in 1847, they were followed the next year by thousands of goldseekers who were on their way to the California gold fields. Salt Lake City became an important stopping place for those who were making this journey. Ben Holladay was quick to see the advantage to be had by shipping supplies to Utah and there to establish retail outlets.

Thus it was that in the spring of 1850, Ben Holladay's arrival in Salt Lake was anticipated by the Deseret News.

Mr. Holladay--merchant of Missouri left the river last Sunday. Some of his teams were failing and he came forward to procure assistance, which he readily obtained, and sent back. We understand that he expects his dry goods in 2 or 3 days, his groceries are far-

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Mr. Holladay comes highly recommended by our old friend, Gen. Doniphan, and others.13

Brigham Young received Holladay favorably when he entered the city and spoke highly of him the following Sunday in a sermon.

Ben Holladay, in the next few years, became engaged in numerous occupations, from the cattle business to banking, and from the freighting enterprise to stage-coaching. He was in a good financial condition in 1864 when he received the contract to carry the overland mail to the people of Southwestern Montana.

Mining developments in Western Idaho made necessary means of communication to that region, and Holladay received a contract in 1864 for a tri-weekly mail service from Salt Lake City northwestward to Boise and Walla Walla. From Salt Lake City this line and the one to Virginia City ran over the same route northward eighty-three miles to Bear River Junction, passing through Ogden and Brigham City. Here the route forked, the Montana road going northward via Fort Walla, while the Idaho-Oregon route turned northwestward via Malad and Boise.14

At Fort Hall the road forked again. One went northwest to the Salmon River and was the one Bonneville's parties had used to and from his encampment near the forks of the Salmon.

13 Deseret News, June 22, 1850.
14 Hafen, The Overland Mail, op. cit., p. 260.
There was another trail which branched to the north and this is the one which was used during, and after, the days of the gold rush. This road went up the east bank of the Snake, past Cantonment for 12 miles, where a crossing was made to the west bank. From here "...it followed along the west bank of the Snake to the great bend of that river, then going northward it entered the present State of Montana. This was the route, which, with several variations, was used in the days of the gold rush in traveling to Bannock City and Virginia City, Montana;..."  

Eagle Rock, present-day Idaho Falls, became the main ferrying point for crossing the river. Several previous attempts at operating a profitable ferry across the Snake had not been very successful when, in 1865, J. Y. Taylor and Robert Anderson bought the facilities at Eagle Rock. "They built a fine bridge across the Snake River...and moved there in the winter of 1865 and 1866. The construction of this bridge by these energetic men was of great convenience to the stage company and to the traveling public generally.... The bridge did not consume, but produced revenue every day."  

15 Brown, Fort Hall on the Oregon Trail, op. cit., p. 250.  
This, then, was the general avenue of travel used by those who had any reason to move north and south between the two territories. Over this route came the stage coaches of Ben Holladay, A. J. Oliver and others.

No other similar length of road was ever fraught with more dangers than was this one. The Portneuf Canyon was a favorite spot for road agents to attack the stage, which they did without fear or reprisal until the Vigilantes were organized.

People from the East—after 1869—got off the train at Corrine, Utah, and then went by stage on to Montana. "Fortunately the road northward from Corrine to Virginia City crossed a series of high plateaus connected by narrow canyons and low divides, which made it ideal for freighting purposes, and a rather fast road for the stage coach."17

A trip was made over this road in 1867 by Samuel Peach. According to his autobiography he left Denver on April 5, 1867, on a Holladay stagecoach and traveled via the Laramie Plains and Fort Bridger to Utah. The trip, from Denver to Virginia City, cost $375.00 and this included a stopover at Salt Lake City. "We were 10 days and nights on the road and paid $1.50 to $2.50 for meals and $3.00 a night for lodging along the line of the stage stations; running through snow

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storms after snow storms throughout the journey over rough, rutted roads. Stale bread, fried bacon, and baked beans were the sum total of the meals.\textsuperscript{18}

The one change in the passengers’ diet was some candy that Mr. Leach had brought along.

In Salt Lake City the passengers met Brigham Young, who took them to luncheon and showed them around the city. The next day they were again on the road to Montana.

we left by stage, the road running along the Great Salt Lake for many miles. The road was very poor. Owing to driving rain storms and dangerous roads we were forced to spend the night at stage stations most of the way. Further north through a portion of Idaho and Montana the going became worse. It was the time of breaking up of winter and the horses sunk to their knees in the slush and we passengers had to get out and walk through the mud and muck, as the horses had all they could do to pull the stage empty. It took 12 days and nights to make the trip and we arrived at Virginia City April 30, 1867.\textsuperscript{19}

Five years later, in 1872, this stretch of road had a distinguished traveler in the form of James A. Garfield, who arrived in Salt Lake in August of 1872 and was met by George

\textsuperscript{18}Samuel Leach, The Autobiography of Samuel Leach, ms in files of Montana State Historical Society Library at Helena. Pages unnumbered.

\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.
154

Q. Cannon. In his diary Mr. Garfield noted: "After dinner he took us to the depot, where we met Brigham Young just coming in from Ogden. Mr. Young held our train for 15 minutes for a chat, and after reaching Ogden we took the train for Corinne..." 20

Leaving Corinne, the group moved up the Bear River Valley. The stage could accommodate 9 passengers inside and two outside with the driver. The travelers stopped for breakfast when 16 miles out and then "...took dinner at the head of Malad Valley 54 miles out and supper at Port Neuf. The scenery has been one of grandeur constantly varying." 21 Mr. Garfield enjoyed riding beside the driver where he could observe the driving procedures as well as the scenery.

I have greatly enjoyed my study of the drivers. Rode on top beside them nearly all day. They are a wild, rough, warmhearted, peculiar people and have a distinct place among American characters. 22

The stage finally arrived at Twin Bridges. Where it

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
was met by Governor Potts, the whole party leaving for Virginia City immediately after breakfast. "Spent the afternoon visiting the town and the gold diggings and got a good night's rest at the hotel, after taking a bath at $2.50 a-piece." Mr. Garfield was only one of several well-known visitors who made the hard trip into the mining area during this period.

As has been pointed out previously, the residents of southwestern Montana relied heavily on Utah facilities for connection with the outside world. The telegraph's arrival in Salt Lake in October of 1861 speeded up the news process. Utah became the first territory to own her own telegraph system and in 1866 a line was extended northward to the mines of Idaho and Montana.

Prior to the completion of the northern extension of the telegraph from Salt Lake City to Virginia City, the people in the Montana mining area looked to the arrival of the stages to bring them letters and newspapers, from which would be accumulated the material to be re-run in their own publications. In describing the editor's job in Virginia City an eye-witness recorded:

Real difficulties are to be surmounted; his digest of the telegraphic reports has to be finished, the mails from Salt Lake are late

\[\text{Ibid.}\]
(It takes 5 days normally to get the Salt Lake papers here), and the white paper, because of the same lateness of mails and freight, has given out.

Someone shouts into the cabin that the stage has arrived. That means the Salt Lake newspaper. The editor bolts, and you are to help the foreman choose the substitute paper for the next issue.  

Part of the Montana Post's job was to publicize and justify the actions of the Vigilantes. In an article in October of 1865, the editor complained about the sentence recently meted out to a road agent in Nevada. He had received a sentence of 15 years. "The sentence is, in fact, that the state of Nevada do pay his board and clothing for 15 years. We believe in the rope, for such men. It punishes the criminal, and does not punish the community."  

The editor was the focal point of activity and interest. In his editorials, professor Dimmack of the Montana Post carried on a correspondence with Mr. Stenhouse of the Salt Lake Telegraph. Such topics as "Vigilante justice" and "Polygamy" were discussed in a good-natured atmosphere.


25 Montana Post, October 7, 1865.
Editor Stenhouse put forth an invitation to Editor Dimsdale:

...come down and see us. We are not half as bad as we are colored, and we have excellent peaches.26

Mr. Dimsdale acknowledged and accepted the invitation and added a discourse on polygamy, ending with:

We owe the Mormons much for their pioneer labors, hardy endurance and brilliant achievements in the face of insuperable obstacles. We are of the opinion that this practice of polygamy will soon give way before the light of reason. Time will tell.27

Without the backing and support of such newspapers as the Montana Post, and, later, the Montana Democrat, the territory of Montana would not have progressed nearly as fast as it did. It is significant to note how heavily these early publications relied on northern Utah for news, supplies, and support.

Utah contributed men, materials, produce and facilities, that helped Montana in her emergence from a frontier wilderness to eventual statehood. Besides the freight trade, stage coaches, banking facilities, newspapers, mail service

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26Salt Lake Telegraph, October 14, 1865.
27Montana Post, October 28, 1865.
and telegraph, there was one more major contribution that was extended northward from Utah to her neighbor. This was the construction of the Utah Northern Railroad.
PART III

CHAPTER 13

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UTAH AND NORTHERN RAILROAD

Before the Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1869 Montana had started to supply the major amount of her needs by shipment up the Missouri River to Fort Benton and then overland by pack or wagon train on the Mullan Road. The fertile areas of the midwest had devised a system for getting their surplus products to the western market. This system revolved around the use of the Missouri River. Only at certain seasons could it be navigated far enough north to make shipping profitable. Of this "age of steamboating" on the Missouri one author says:

Its golden age may, perhaps, be stated as extending from 1845 to 1875, a period of 30 years,...The river front was one of the famous American scenes of the times, the St. Louis levees being lined with steam boats, three or four deep, receiving and discharging cargoes...The up-river trade was also tremendously profitable and enriched many St. Louis concerns....The influence of St. Louis as a great supply and distributing point, as well as the chief market for the sale of Mississippi Valley products was then fully recognized and her prestige permanently established.¹

Even as steamboating was making progress on the Mississippi River and its tributaries, the ground was being broken for the Pacific Railroad in 1851. This railroad was ultimately to "kill" most of the river traffic. By 1875 the river trade had taken a definite second place to the railroads.2

This period was a time of general "railroad building." From 1865-1873 railroads in the United States expanded from 35,000 miles of track to 71,000. In 1855 Missouri had 139 miles of railroad— in 1870 she had 2,000.3 But while these railroads were being constructed the supplies were transported in the flat-bottomed steam vessels that slowly moved north and south from St. Louis.

"In 1866 an estimated six thousand tons of freight valued at 6 million dollars reached Montana by way of St. Louis and the Missouri River, and by 1868, according to the Helena Herald, five-sixths of the mining products of Montana reached the east by way of the Missouri River."4 All this changed abruptly when the ceremonies were completed at Promontory Point, near Ogden, on May 10, 1869. Already St.

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2Ibid.
3Ibid., p. 195.
Louis had negotiated with the Union Pacific Railroad to transport goods, destined for Montana, to Corrine, Utah, there to be freighted north by ox and mule train. So it was that in 1869 Corrine, the "Burg on the Bear," became the end of the line for Montana-bound supplies from both St. Louis and San Francisco.

Corrine became a transfer point for trade destined for the north. The actual business foundation of the city was upon this basis. Few of the Corrine men actually engaged in freight-carrying. However, there are many references to Montana men coming to Corrine for specific merchants or to carry any freight that had to be delivered to the northern merchants. The businessmen of Corrine who were engaged in the freighting trade were known as forwarding agents and commission merchants. They differed from the freighter in that they seldom assumed the risks of delivering merchandise to the buyers.5

Because of the lag in railroad building north from Utah to the northern territories of Idaho and Montana, Corrine was able to grow and prosper more than any other freight transfer point on the Union Pacific Railroad.6

The freighting business really "boomed" on the Montana

6 Ibid., p. 72.
Trail for the next 10 years. Many large companies sprang up, the most famous being the "Diamond R" of Virginia City.

"freighting was highly competitive and individualistic.

Although two big firms, Creighton and the Diamond R dominated the freighting, forwarding, and commission business until 1874, there were many smaller firms and businessmen who also shared in the profits."7

The Diamond R. had long been engaged in freighting between Helena and Virginia City, and now they expanded operations southward to Corrine. The story of the wagon freight trade, over-run by the railroad is told interestingly in this quote:

railroading in the days of Montana's infancy formed no part of the industrial drama whose scenes were laid in the great northwest....Primitive Montana wheeled itself into the arena of commercial stability and mining prominence upon the "dead-axe" of a freight wagon, and, once firmly installed into the exalted position of the buxom big sister, the polished, snorting, fast-traveling, graceful, iron monster opened up a flirtation with Sister Montana and the "dead-axe" freight wagon with its white canopy of canvas bearing the emblem of the pioneer 'Fords' of commerce—"Diamond R"—is tucked away among the things that were.8

7 Ibid., p. 77.
8 Montana Standard, December 16, 1900. photostat in "Freighting" file at Helena.
The coming of the railroad ushered in a new era for Utah and nearby territories. In Utah, life became less provincial; more cosmopolitan. "Industry revived, values rose, mining was developed and became profitable." Just as Utah had organized a telegraph system, under the leadership of the Mormon church, to expedite communication, she now began to turn some efforts to connect her isolated regions with bands of steel. The Utah Central Railroad was soon organized and began moving out in several directions.

In 1871, just two years after the ceremonies of the Golden Spike, plans were begun to construct a road northward from Ogden, through Brigham City, into Cache Valley, and on farther through southeastern Idaho to Montana. The northern Utah towns, since the completion of the transcontinental railway, had imported large amounts of agricultural and industrial equipment which had previously been too expensive and heavy to transport across the plains. The potential of the agricultural area was soon being pushed to its limit. If a railroad could be built north to Montana, then trade could be expedited between the two areas, as Utah was interested in selling her products and Montana was looking for an economical means of shipping her various ores to smelting markets.

\footnote{Heff, op. cit., p. 751.}
The effect of these plans gave encouragement to John W. Young, a son of Brigham Young, to form a company and negotiate with eastern capitalists in regards to the financing of such a road. Young went to New York City and obtained a commitment from Joseph and Benjamin Richardson, railroad contractors, to furnish, in return for bonds, the rails and rolling equipment for a road from Ogden north to Soda Springs, Idaho, a distance of about 125 miles.10

When Mr. Young returned to Utah he talked to many leading Utah men who were interested in the venture, including his father. Brigham Young was interested because of the possibilities of extending church colonization, as well as providing an outlet for more Utah agricultural commodities. "The Utah Northern was built to facilitate the movement of supplies into, and the export of minerals out of, the western Montana mining fields and to open to colonization part of the Intermountain West."11 The fact that the Mormon church had a hand in its construction "...adds interest to the history of the line since, as far as is known, no other ecclesiastical organization has been associated thus with a railroad."12

10 Ricks, History of a Valley, op. cit., pp. 174-175.


12 Ibid.
On Brigham Young's advice, seventeen leading church and business men of northern Utah organized the Utah Northern Railroad Company on August 23, 1871, with John W. Young as president. "The company broke first ground at Brigham City on August 26, 1871...During the fall of 1871 the road was graded as far as the pass into Cache Valley....work was suspended during the summer of 1872 while Cache Valley farmers tended their crops...after another season's work under similar circumstances the road was completed to Mendon on December 22, 1872....From Mendon the road was built across the valley east, reaching Logan on January 31, 1873."^13

A branch road was started to connect Ogden with the Transcontinental road at Corrine, and also an extension southward from Brigham City of the Utah Northern. Meanwhile, by an act of Congress, on March 3, 1873, the company was granted a right-of-way to build north to Montana and connect with the Northern Pacific Railroad at Garrison. On May 2, 1874, the railroad reached Franklin, in Idaho, and became the first railroad to be constructed in Idaho territory.

Franklin planned a big celebration in honor of the event and was assured that even Brigham Young would be there, but the little train from Logan carrying Brigham Young and Erastus Snow jumped the track and the two

^13Ricks, op.cit., pp. 177-178.
The Utah Northern’s terminus remained at Franklin from 1874 to 1877 due to several reasons. One was the national financial "Panic of 1873," and another was the apparent disinterest of Joseph Richardson, one of the eastern capitalists.

Up north, in Montana, interest was strong in regards to a north-south railroad.

John Young, a son of Brigham Young of Utah, was constructing a narrow gauge road northward into Idaho and offered to extend the line, three hundred miles to the mouth of the Big Hole River in Montana, the same to be completed in 3 years, for a consideration of $5,000 per mile. When the ninth session of the Territorial legislature convened on January 3, 1876, a law was passed authorizing an election whereby qualified voters could pass on issuing $1,500,000 of Territorial Bonds to contribute toward the construction of a railroad from Franklin, Idaho, to Big Hole River in Montana.

The bond issue failed to carry and the terminus remained at Franklin for two more years. This Idaho community became an important trade center from 1874 to 1877. There was a good freight road running from Franklin to Butte. "Freight and supplies were taken from Franklin by pack-horse, ox teams,

14 Ibid., pp. 178-179.
15 Stuart, op. cit., Vol II, p. 36.
or by the individual carrying his own supplies. It was estimated that in 1873 there were about 1,000 freighters hauling freight from Corrine to Montana. In 1874 "The thousand freighting wagons that had hauled from Corrine now had their southern terminal at Franklin, and continued to haul to Montana."

...mines, in Montana were also aiding business in Franklin. Eggs, butter, flour, grain, or other supplies were badly needed in the mining areas.

Joseph C. Rich, an early settler in the Bear River Valley of Utah and Idaho, and a "colorful" story-teller, related in the Bear River Democrat in 1893:

I came to Bear Lake Valley over a blind Indian trail from Ogden City via Blacksmith Fork Canyon, with pack animals in October, 1863...with Bill Sterrett, I owned and ran the first resident mercantile establishment in the valley. We gave from 40 to 60 cents a pound for butter, making no reductions for the Dutch cheese, flies and bedbugs, and shipped it off in pine barrels made by Bill

17Ibid., p. 167.
18Ibid., p. 171.
Bird to the ungodly of Montana at 75 cents.

Coffee and sugar in those halcyon days retailed at from 80 to 90 cents and other things in proportion. We sold whiskey in those days—what we didn’t drink ourselves—at $1.50 per pint, Brandy $2.00, and peach brandy $2.50, all out of the same barrel but colored with burned peaches and other incidentals to suit the saints of those times.19

In 1877 Brigham Young died. In the settlement of his estate the church interests in the Utah Northern Railroad was traded to John Young for other properties. “Young, in turn, traded the securities to Union Pacific interests for railroad equipment to be used in another venture....Under Union Pacific direction a new corporation, called the Utah and Northern Railway Company, was formed on October 4, 1877.”20

In 1878 construction reached and passed Preston in January: Pocatello, Idaho, in August: thence to Blackfoot, in December 1878; to Camas, Idaho, in 1879; reaching Dillon, Montana, in 1880; and finally to Silver Bow junction and Butte in 1881. In 1884 the connection was finally made with


20 Ricks, op. cit., p. 180
the Northern Pacific at Garrison, Montana.

Just before Christmas, 1881, an old-fashioned locomotive puffed and chugged up the newly completed Utah and Northern narrow-gauge railroad to officially connect Butte with Ogden, Utah, and the outside world by rail. It was an occasion for real and ribald celebration and few of the camp's four thousand people failed to take advantage of it.

Advent of the Railroad had removed all obstacles that previously blocked every effort to handle recovery of any mineral except silver or gold.\(^\text{21}\)

The distance from Ogden, Utah, to Garrison, Montana, was 466 miles. Upon its completion this narrow-gauge line was declared the longest of its kind in the world and one of the most profitable. \(\ldots\) it is obvious that the full development of the Montana mining properties was dependant upon the coming of the railroad.\(^\text{22}\)

In 1881 an old era came to an end. \(\ldots\) with the completion of the Utah and Northern Railway, freighting by wagon between Utah and Montana was discontinued.\(^\text{23}\) The story of the long "haul" by ox or mule train from Omaha and St. Joseph, across the plains, consuming 5 or 7 months, was a real epic in the history of the west. The railroad's effort to span the con-


\(^{22}\)Wrigley, op. cit., p. 246.

\(^{23}\)Ibid., p. 231.
tinent, east and west, north and south, put an end to the
days of "bullwhacking" and "muleskinning" except on a limit-
ed basis, and slowly, the "genuine American character" de-
cribed by president Garfield, became extinct. The existence
of modern states such as Utah and Montana stand today as his
memorial.
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ABSTRACT

Only a few hardy men had ventured into America's intermountain west prior to the year 1847. Arriving in this year, the Mormons, under Brigham Young, slowly conquered parts of the Great Basin and within a few years had produced a self-sustaining agricultural economy. Production of a surplus in farm products awaited only the emergence of a "foreign" market. This market was soon forthcoming.

The developing process of Utah-Montana relations from 1847 through 1881 was a natural occurrence. From the very first, men from Utah traveled northward. The Mormon experiment at Ft. Lemhi during the late 1850's was a prime example of their interest and penetration. Many Utahns were engaged in the emigrant road "stock" trade, driving worn-out animals into the Montana valleys to recuperate and returning them south again in the spring.

With the discovery of gold in Montana a stampede resulted. Beginning in 1863, thousands of men converged on southwestern Montana. With their interest centered in mining, they had to depend for supplies upon goods freighted in from such centers as Salt Lake City, St. Louis, or Walla Walla.

Utah, because of her proximity, established agricultural foundation, and her central location, soon became
an important source of supply for the northern mining regions. This situation continued for many years, until 1869 St. Louis and the Missouri River managed to control the bulk of the market, but with the completion of the transcontinental railway, Utah became a terminal and transfer point for goods received from eastern and western sources. These goods were freighted from the railroad terminal points northward into Idaho and Montana by ox and mule trains.

The freighting trade was only one of several enterprises that grew up around the early gold-mining activities in this part of the West. The men at the mines needed more than just food. They required communication, transportation, and banking facilities. Utah again was in a position to supply these needs.

Mail service went north from Salt Lake City to the mining centers. Ben Holladay, A. J. Oliver and others maintained stage coach lines between the two points, and several banking firms of northern Utah branched out into the gold regions. During the critical days of the Civil War, the population of southwestern Montana received battle news by Salt Lake newspapers. Most other news came from the same source. The early Montana publication, the Montana Post, was largely a reprint of news received from Utah.

The "news" was speeded northward when, in 1866, the telegraph extension between Salt Lake and Virginia City
was completed.

In 1869 the Golden Spike was driven at Promontory Point near Ogden. This event ushered in a new phase of Utah-Montana relations. From Corrine over one thousand wagons were engaged in forwarding merchandise over the Montana Trail. Utah, because of importation of new machinery, stepped up production and became the real focal point of supply. In order to get these supplies to market, and with an eye towards the extension of colonization, a railroad was begun with the purpose in mind of connecting with the Northern Pacific at Garrison, Montana.

Work on the Utah Northern Railroad went forward by various stages, the freighters operating from its terminus making shorter trips each year. The project was completed in 1881 to Butte and extended to Garrison in 1884. This did not end Utah-Montana inter-relations, but only introduced another phase.

Graduate Committee:

Date: May 6, 1957

[Signatures]