

THE RISE OF INDUSTRY AND TRANSPORTATION

By the end of the 19th century, the population of Montana was changing. Gold mining and ranching were not as important, and new industries were developing.

Locate the following on the map on page 71 before reading the chapter:

Gold Creek	Billings	Kalispell
Fort Benton	Columbia Falls	Great Falls
Helena	Bozeman	Butte
Marias Pass	Miles City	Missoula
Terry	Havre	Canyon Ferry Dam

Vocabulary

industry	hydroelectric	plant (n)	promote
national	land grant	market	section
local	alternate	trestle	consolidate
tie (n)	transcontinental		

Early Industries

Toward the end of the 19th century, as the population of Montana slowly grew, more and more of Montana's raw materials were used to produce finished products, beginning Montana's early industry. The earliest manufacturing was the milling of wheat into flour to make bread and pastries. Raising and selling beef, meat packing, fruit and vegetable canning, and raising sugar beets to produce sugar were other early industries. Manufacturing in Montana remained limited, however, because of the difficulty of getting the products over the long distances to markets, the high cost of transportation, and the difficulty of competing against large national corporations. Most of Montana's manufacturing existed only for local markets, providing miners and ranchers with the products they needed.

Logging also became an important early industry in Montana. First the miners needed rough-cut lumber to build houses, sluice boxes, and stores. Later, the railroads needed wood for ties, trestles, and tunnels. When hardrock mining began, lumber was needed for supports in the shafts.

The tourism industry also began in a very limited way in the late 1900's as people came to Montana for the natural beauty, hunting, and fishing.

Early Electricity

The first electricity in Montana came to Helena and Butte from coal-fired plants in 1882. In 1887 the first hydroelectric power plant was built using a dam in Billings. In 1890 the Black Eagle Dam in Great Falls was built, generating a new source of electricity. The Canyon Ferry Dam built in 1898 brought hydroelectric power to Butte. The Montana Power Company was formed in 1912, consolidating forty-four different power companies, and controlling 85% of the hydroelectric output in Montana. It is still the largest electric company in Montana.

Early Transportation

Because Montana was so far from the markets of the East and West Coasts, it was difficult to sell products. It was essential for Montana to have good transportation to these markets for its industries to prosper.

Rivers were the earliest source of transportation in Montana. The Missouri River to Fort Benton was the most important route for the shipment of goods from the earliest trapping days. The earlier trappers and fur companies used canoes and keelboats to carry furs and supplies up and down the Missouri River. Steamboat travel up the Missouri River made river transportation much easier. The steamboat "Chippewa," owned by the American Fur Company, made it as far as Fort McKenzie near the mouth of the Marias River in 1859. In 1860 the "Chippewa" navigated all the way up the Missouri to Fort Benton. After that, steamships were the most important way to carry supplies and raw materials in and out of Montana until the arrival of the railroad.

Early roads were also built into Montana. The Mullan Road was finished in 1862, connecting Fort Benton on the Missouri River and Fort Walla Walla on the Columbia River in Washington Territory. The Bozeman Road and the Bridger Road took settlers and miners from the Oregon Trail to Montana in the 1860's. The Corinne-Virginia City Road went from the Union Pacific Railroad in Corinne, Utah Territory north to the gold fields of Montana, starting in 1869. Stagecoaches, mule and oxen teams, and horses

were used to travel on these roads. Travel was very slow and difficult, especially in the winter.

Arrival of the Railroad

The arrival of the railroad had the most impact on Montana transportation. Railroads meant a cheaper and faster way to travel, to get products from the East, and to send raw materials and manufactured goods to Eastern markets. During the 1860's and 1870's, the people of Montana promised many things to encourage the railroads to come into the state, such as free land and no taxes. Four railroads finally came into Montana - the Utah and Northern, the Northern Pacific, the Great Northern, and the Milwaukee.

The **Utah and Northern Railroad** was the first railroad to enter Montana Territory. It was built from the Union Pacific Railroad in Corinne, Utah and entered Montana in 1880 at Monida Pass. In December of 1881, it reached the mining community of Butte.

The **Northern Pacific Railroad** entered Montana from the west and the east in the early 1880's. The two lines were joined at Gold Creek in September of 1883, and Montana now was entirely crossed by a railroad. The Northern Pacific was a land grant railroad. This meant that for every mile of track it laid, it received a free section of land alternately along the route of the railroad. This land could then be sold to pay for construction costs.

The next major railroad to enter Montana was the **Great Northern Railway**. It was owned by a man named James J. Hill. He brought his railroad from St. Paul, Minnesota, across northern Montana to the new town of Great Falls in 1887, without any land grants or help from the government. To do this, he had to convince Congress to give him permission to cross the Indian lands of northern Montana. He controlled another railroad, the Montana Central, that went on to Helena and then to Butte.

Hill then consolidated his railroads into one company, the Great Northern Railway. He also decided that he wanted his railroad to be transcontinental, extending all the way to the Pacific Coast. However, he did not know how the railroad would get across the Rocky Mountains. In a bad snow storm in December of 1889, Hill's Chief

Engineer, John Stevens, located a pass through the mountains that had long been used by the Blackfeet Indians, which he called Marias Pass. The railroad was then built west from Havre, over Marias Pass, down the Middle Fork of the Flathead River to the new towns of Columbia Falls and Kalispell, down the Kootenai River through Idaho to Spokane, finally reaching the Pacific Coast in 1893. The Great Northern now served all of northern Montana, and began to promote settlement of the area by homesteaders.

The **Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Company** was the third transcontinental railroad to cross Montana. The Milwaukee's tracks entered southeastern Montana in 1906 and crossed the Northern Pacific tracks at Terry. It crossed through the Musselshell Valley, over the Belt Mountains, north of Butte, and along the route of the Mullan Road into Idaho. It completed its tracks through Montana in 1909.

Soon, many branch railroads spread out through the state from the three main lines. Over thirty years, the railroad had changed Montana forever. It was responsible for the building of many towns, such as Great Falls, Billings and Havre, and helped towns like Butte, Miles City, Bozeman, and Missoula to grow. It helped the development of the mining, ranching, and lumber industries. Probably most important was the role of the railroads in promoting homesteading in the state. The settlers who homesteaded Montana needed the railroad to get to their new homes, and the railroads needed the settlers to give them business.

Early Communication in Montana

Montana got its first telegraph line in 1866 between Virginia City and Salt Lake City. The first telephone exchange was in 1882 in Butte. The first radio station was in Great Falls in 1922. The first TV station was in Billings in 1953.

Locate the routes of the following railroads on the map:

Northern Pacific

Milwaukee

Great Northern

Union & Northern

