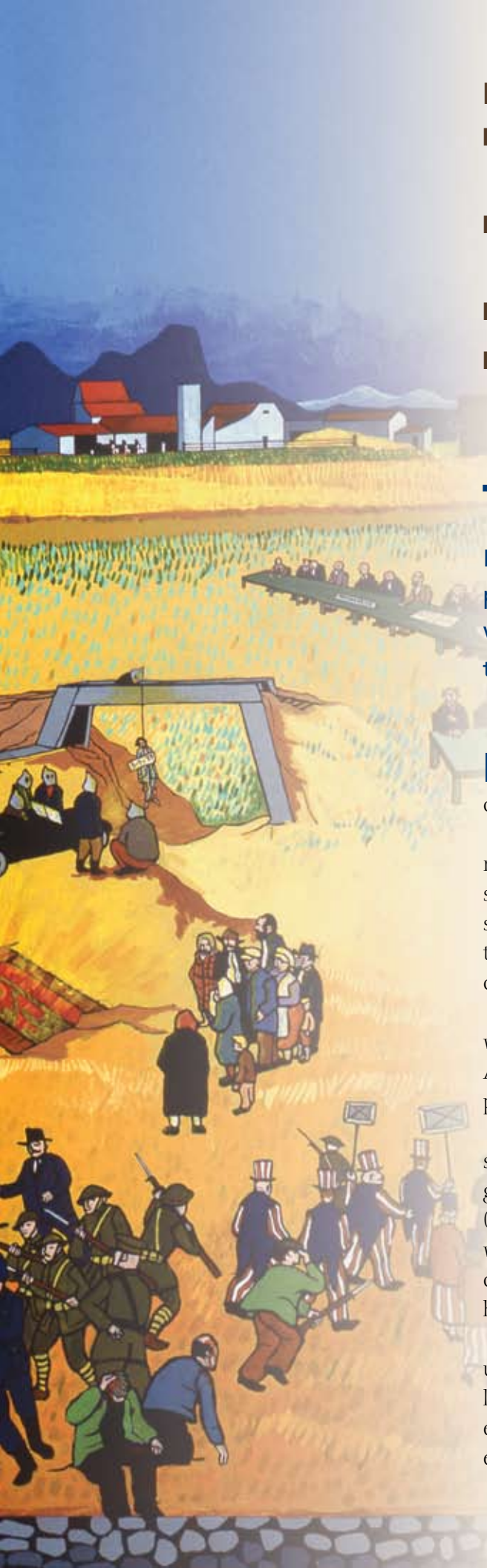
15 Progressive Montana – 1900–1924

FIGURE 15.1: Detail from *Montana: A Buried History,* by James Todd, 1976



READ TO FIND OUT:

- How industrialization affected the way people lived and worked
- What problems industrialization caused in Montana
- What made people demand change
- Which changes helped—and which did not work at all

The Big Picture

Industrialization gave big companies control over life and politics in many ways. During the Progressive Era, people worked together to limit the control corporations had and to solve problems in their society.

If you could change society for the better, what would you want to change? How would you go about working for that change?

At the dawn of the twentieth century, people across the country saw many problems in their society. They saw poverty and disease. They saw people working in unsafe conditions just to make a living. They saw families crowded in slums with bad water, rats, bugs, and other threats to public health. They also saw political and economic power concentrated in the hands of a very few wealthy men.

They realized these problems dragged all of society down. They wanted healthier cities and safer working conditions. They believed that America's democracy would work better if citizens had more political power. So they worked for political, social, and economic change.

This period became known as the Progressive Era. Progressivism started at the local level as people organized to work for change. They got involved with their church groups, civic clubs, **labor unions** (organizations of employees that bargain with employers), and women's clubs. They wrote letters, gave talks, and led marches to publicize their ideas. They raised money to build libraries and city parks. They helped pass new laws to protect worker's safety and public health.

Nationally, the Progressive Era did not last long—from about 1900 until 1917, when the United States joined World War I. In Montana, it lasted longer—until the mid-1920s—and had a **profound** (important) effect on everyday life. Though some Progressive movements failed, others became so important that it is hard to imagine life without them.

America Transformed

To many people, the dawn of the twentieth century felt like a new era. Their lives were changing fast. **Industrialization** (rapid development of industry brought about by the introduction of machinery) had swept across North America in the late 1800s. It brought new conveniences like electric lights, and labor-saving devices like washing machines and typewriters.

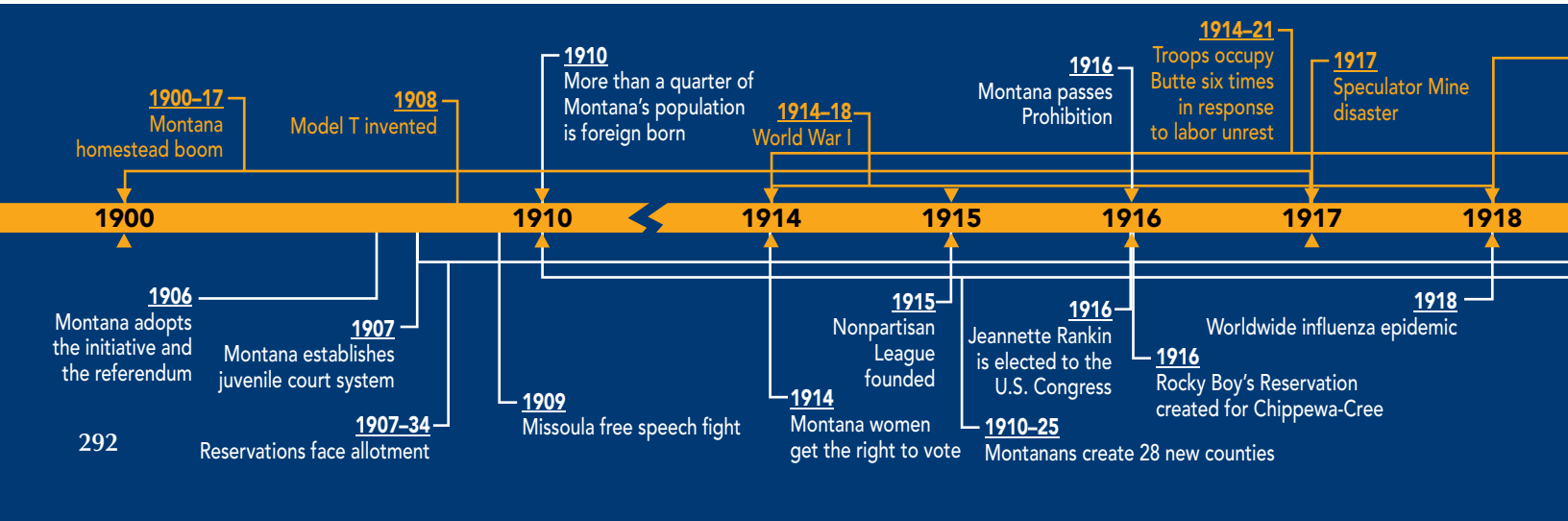
Many people felt hopeful and excited. New technologies like X-rays and electric batteries improved people's lives. New scientific discoveries like Einstein's theory of relativity and the discovery of the atom led many people to believe that the world was understandable. They also thought that experts could apply science and technology to solve social problems.

FIGURE 15.2: Smoke from the smelters darkened the skies and killed plants and wildlife near industrial sites. But it also symbolized employment to people who needed to earn a living.

Problems of the Industrial Revolution

Yet industrialization had a dark side. The factories that produced modern conveniences relied on an almost endless supply of cheap labor. In the eastern United States, men, women, and children labored 14-hour days operating dangerous machines in unheated workrooms. In Montana, workers toiled in mines, smelters, and timber camps to provide the raw materials eastern factories needed to operate. Their jobs were dangerous, too, and many people were injured or killed in industrial accidents.

Many of these workers were immigrants. Between 1900 and 1915 about 15 million immigrants arrived in the



United States—more than all of the immigrants in the previous 40 years.

Millions of these new immigrants came from non-English-speaking countries. Their customs, traditions, and religions were different from **mainstream** (majority) America's. Even though most people's families had immigrated to the United States only a few generations earlier, many Americans worried about how these newcomers would change the country.

Cities swelled with slums where the workers lived. Families crowded together in apartments; children played in streets and alleyways and were constantly exposed to health hazards. Factories **spewed** (spit out) smoke, soot, and other pollutants into the air and the rivers. In Montana, pollution from smelters killed off wildlife, livestock, trees, and crops for miles around the smelters—and made many people sick.

Meanwhile, a few men grew very rich, and the corporations they owned grew large and powerful.

> **"Anaconda ran it all—the railroads, the ranchers, the power company, the newspapers, the miners, everything. They had iron control."**
>
> —*MONTANA HISTORIAN HARRY FRITZ*

Montana: Under the Thumb of the Company

By 1900 many Montanans lived in the grip of a few large copper, lumber, and railroad corporations, all run by a handful of men (see Chapter 10). The most powerful was the Anaconda Copper Mining Company—known by everyone as simply "the Company." With interests in railroads, lumber, and electric power, Anaconda wielded almost total control over Montana. It employed a large number of people. It **manipulated** (controlled in a devious way) many of the state's businesses as well as the Montana **legislature** (the branch of government that passes laws). It also owned most of the state's newspapers, so it controlled public opinion.

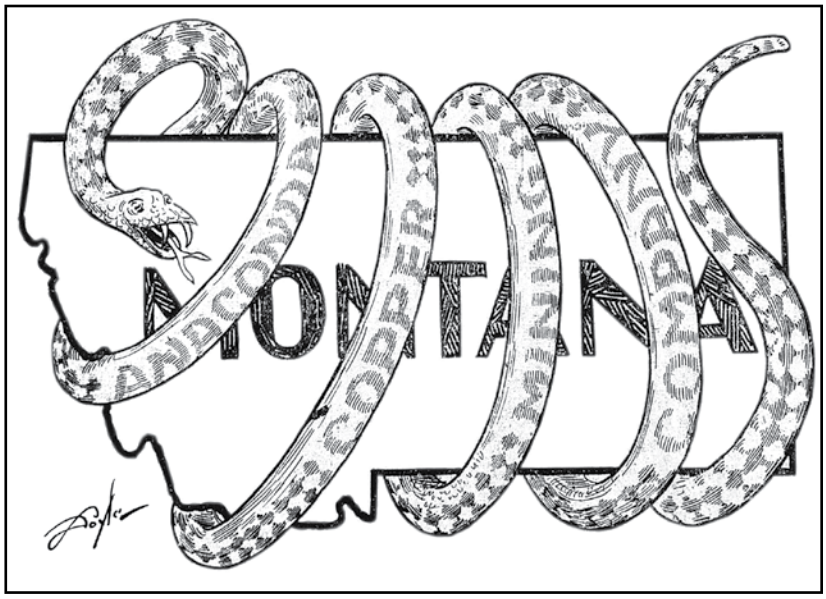
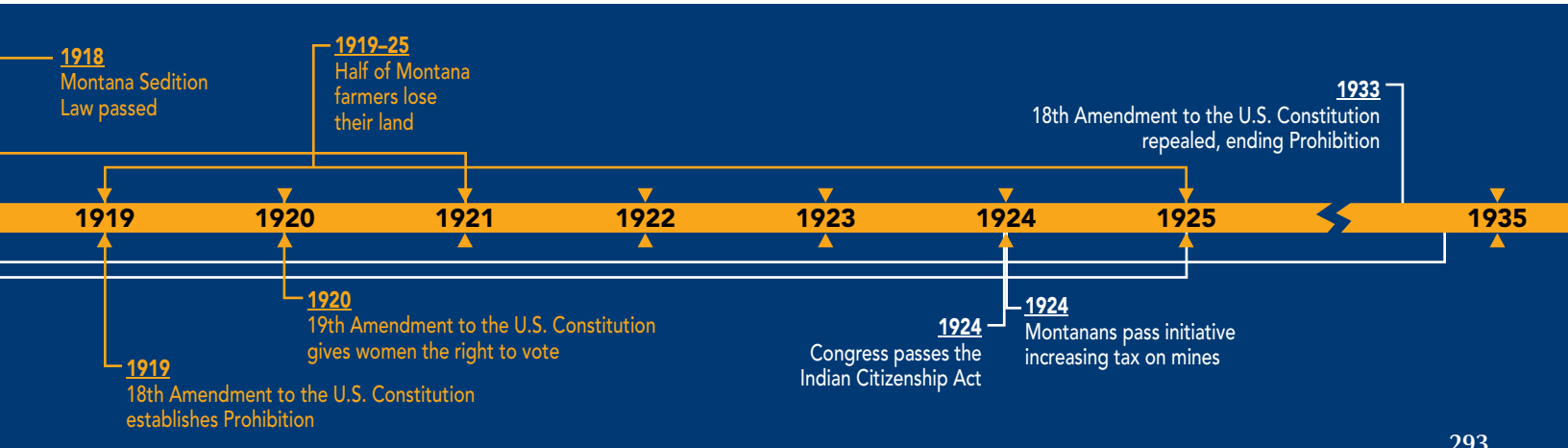


FIGURE 15.3: Political cartoons were—and still are—a popular way of expressing opinions about current events. This cartoon, published in the *Butte Daily Bulletin* in 1920, shows how some people viewed the Anaconda Copper Mining Company's role in Montana.



Political Reforms: Power to the People

Progressives believed that corporations like the Anaconda Copper Mining Company had too much control over government—and that ordinary people did not have enough. So they pushed for political reforms to give voters more political power. Because of these reforms, you will have a stronger voice in government than your ancestors had in 1900.

- **The initiative.** Passed in 1906, the initiative allows voters to establish and pass laws they want, even if the legislature refuses to pass them. If citizens collect a certain number of signatures, an initiative can be put on the general ballot for people to vote on.
- **The referendum.** The referendum (also passed in 1906) works the same way as the initiative but allows voters to **repeal** (cancel) laws passed by the legislature that the people do not want.
- **Direct election of senators.** In the nineteenth century the legislatures—not the people—elected U.S. senators. Copper king William A. Clark caused a nationwide outrage when he **bribed** (offered illegal payments to) legislators to elect him to the U.S. Senate (see Chapter 10). In 1911 the Montana legislature passed a law allowing Montanans to choose their own senators. In 1912 the U.S. Congress passed the 17th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving voters nationwide the right to elect U.S. senators.
- **Primary elections.** Powerful corporate owners often controlled political parties. In Montana, the Company decided who could run for public office. Progressives wanted to give voters more say in who the candidates would be. So they proposed an initiative in 1912 to institute primary elections. Primary elections let voters choose the candidates to run in the general election.

TRAINING FOR THE SUMMER SCRAP

FIGURE 15.4: Progressives believed that the initiative and referendum could empower ordinary Montanans. This cartoon shows a farmer strapping on two boxing gloves—labeled "initiative" and "referendum"—to learn self-defense skills, while a man labeled "Big Biz" (for big business) looks on in alarm. The cartoon was titled "Training for the Summer **Scrap** [fight]."

1914: Women Get the Vote

Many homesteaders and immigrants who came to Montana after 1900 believed that women were more **virtuous** (morally good) than men. They thought that if women could vote, they would use their moral superiority to end political corruption and improve society. That is why many Progressives supported women's **suffrage** (the right to vote).

A young Missoula woman named Jeannette Rankin led the charge for women's suffrage in Montana. Rankin traveled to almost every corner of the state, speaking at rallies, holding meetings, and talking to newspaper editors, trying to

convince them to support women's suffrage. In 1911 Rankin gave a speech to legislators in the Montana House of Representatives, where no woman had been allowed to speak before. Other Montana women who fought for suffrage sat beside her—Mary Long Alderson, Dr. Maria Dean, and Dr. Mary Moore Atwater. When she finished talking, the legislators gave her a standing ovation.

> **"Men want women in the home and they want them to make the home perfect. Yet how can women make it perfect if they have no control over the influences on the home? It is beautiful and right that a mother should nurse her child through typhoid fever. But it is also beautiful and right that she should have a voice in regulating the milk supply from which the typhoid came."**
>
> —*SUFFRAGIST JEANNETTE RANKIN, ADDRESSING THE MONTANA LEGISLATURE, FEBRUARY 1, 1911*

Finally, in 1914, Montana's male voters amended the state **constitution** (a document that sets rules for government) to give women the vote. Six years later, in 1920, U.S. voters gave all women in the country the right to vote.

1916: First Woman in Congress

In 1916 Montanans elected Jeannette Rankin to Congress—and became the first state to send a woman to Washington, D.C. People watched her closely to see whether a woman could hold her own in national politics. Rankin quickly proved that she could. In fact, she immediately made a big stir by speaking out against World War I (see Chapter 16).

The 1916 election also put two women in the Montana legislature: Maggie Smith Hathaway, a Democrat from Ravalli County, and Emma J. Ingalls, a Republican newspaper publisher from Flathead County. By 1920 Hathaway had become a powerful leader in state politics.

County-Busting for Better Citizenship

One Progressive idea changed the map of Montana by splitting big eastern counties into smaller ones. As the homesteaders peopled more of Montana, they wanted to be more involved in local politics, so they wanted their county seats closer. And eastern farmers knew that having more,

Jeannette Rankin

Jeannette Rankin was born in Missoula in 1880. She graduated from the University of Montana in 1902 with a degree in biology. On a trip to Boston in 1904, she saw people living in slums, suffering from poverty. She became a social worker and joined the campaign for women's suffrage. She believed that if women could vote, they would solve many social problems like poverty and child labor.

In 1914 Rankin returned to Montana to help lead the fight for women's suffrage. In 1916 she ran for the U.S. Congress as a Republican and became the first woman ever elected to Congress. On her fourth day in office, she voted against entering World War I. This so enraged voters that she was not reelected. For the next 20 years she worked for peace, labor reforms, and child labor laws.

In 1939 Rankin again ran for Congress. This time she hoped to help keep the United States out of World War II. Once again, she cast a controversial vote against going to war, even though she knew it would keep her from being reelected. For the rest of her life Rankin worked for peace.

FIGURE 15.5: Towns competed for county seats because county governments brought jobs, prosperity, and stability to new communities. In 1913 Ekalaka competed to become the county seat of Fallon County. It lost to Baker—but later became the seat of Carter County.

smaller counties would give them a stronger voice in the state legislature because each county had one state senator. (This changed in the 1960s.)

In 1915 the Montana legislature passed a law allowing people to redraw their county lines by submitting a petition to the state. In the next few years, Montana's 27 counties split into 56 smaller counties. Splitting up counties was called "county-busting."

Many small counties in eastern Montana struggle today with the aftereffects of the Progressive Era county-busting craze. Of the 56 counties in the state, 22 have fewer than 5,000 people. Thirteen counties have fewer than 2,000 people; Petroleum County has only 474. Nearly every legislature since 1936 has considered **consolidating** (combining several into one) some of these counties, but these measures have failed because citizens want to keep their county seats.

Labor Reform: Workers Unite for Better Conditions

Montana's mines, lumber mills, and railroads all ran on the labor of working people. Working men prided themselves on the skill they brought to dangerous, difficult work. Yet, as demand for Montana's resources intensified, the pace of production quickened. Industrial work became even more dangerous.

The mines and sawmills hired more unskilled laborers. Many of them were immigrants who spoke little English. They did not understand the instructions—or warnings—that more experienced workers gave them.

FIGURE 15.6: Miners set dynamite to loosen underground rock. They had to figure out how to blast just enough rock to keep up production without causing a cave-in—which inevitably killed people.

New mining methods using dynamite, machine drills, and steam-powered **hoists** (devices for lifting) increased productivity. But they also made accidents more frequent and more deadly. By 1908 mining had the highest fatality rate of any industry in the nation. Mining, railroad work, and logging were all more likely to kill a man than going to war.

If laborers could not work, their families went hungry. If they spoke out against their working conditions, they got fired—there were always plenty of other men looking for jobs. If they went on **strike** (an organized protest in which workers refuse to work) or protested, the Company simply had the governor call in armed troops.

In the height of the Progressive Era, labor unions and Progressive politicians worked together to improve workplace safety. They backed laws establishing the minimum wage, the eight-hour workday, and a worker's compensation program to give aid to workers injured on the job.

Farmers Organized, Too

In eastern Montana, farmers also called for reforms. Farmers paid high transportation prices to ship their products to market, while mines and lumber mills—which had close ties to the railroads—shipped their products at discount rates.

Some farmers formed local cooperatives to market **produce** (farm products) and to negotiate lower rail rates. They demanded that the state regulate railroads in Montana to make sure rates were fair and honest. In 1907 the state legislature created a Montana Railroad Commission, which in 1913 became the Montana Public Service Commission. This commission oversees all public transportation carriers and the electrical utilities to make sure consumers are treated fairly.

Social Reforms: Efforts to Improve Society

Disease, diarrhea, and infection were part of everyday life in the early 1900s. People lived and worked close together with inadequate sewers and polluted drinking water. Industries polluted the water and air, but towns caused pollution, too. Many towns dumped their garbage at the city's edge, where flies picked up germs and spread them. People emptied **spittoons** (containers for spitting tobacco), garbage, kitchen slop, and chamber pots into rivers or in a hole in the ground. Horses and mules that worked in the towns and mines created tremendous amounts of manure.

Without proper sanitation, diseases spread rapidly. Smallpox, cholera, diphtheria, typhoid, and tuberculosis killed many people.

In 1907 the Montana legislature made it illegal for cities to dump raw sewage into rivers that people used for drinking water. The law was one of the first clean-water acts passed in the country.

Progressives also helped create a state board of health.

"Life Was Pretty Cheap"

"Life was pretty cheap for the money that some of these companies were making . . . A lot of broken legs and broken backs. If they got cut on the head, the doctor used to just shave around the wound and put the stitches in and then put this cone on the wound—it would foam and turn hard. And then the miner'd go to work the next day."

—DENNIS "DINNY" MURPHY, BUTTE MINER

How Much Is a Leg Worth?

"My dad was hurt in the mine here in Red Lodge and had to have his leg amputated in 1912, which was the same year I was born. The coal fell on his foot and crushed it. He got gangrene from that . . . They paid his hospital bill, and he had an artificial limb that every now and then would wear out because they had leather tops that would split. He would have to get another limb which they [the mining company] paid about half, but that's about all. He never did get compensation for anything else."

—DAISY PEKICH LAZETICH, A RED LODGE MINER'S DAUGHTER

Where the Poor Lived

"No. 22 Corra Terrace: 4 people one bed room . . . toilet outside, sewage disposed of in Cess Pool, own cow, never disinfected, very dirty house, cow pen at back door, many flies, no screens, pipes in sink leaking and water dripping from side of house."

—SILVER BOW COUNTY HEALTH OFFICIAL'S REPORT ON LIVING CONDITIONS IN BUTTE NEIGHBORHOODS, 1912

They thought experts could apply scientific principles to reduce the spread of diseases. They established a state hospital to treat tuberculosis patients. They also got the state to set up agencies to inspect milk and meat products to make sure that the food people bought was safe.

Reducing Child Labor

Imagine waking up every morning at dawn and running down to the mine for a 12-hour workday picking coal, **mucking** (cleaning) stables, or cleaning tools. Your lungs fill with mine dust. You must constantly watch out for heavy, dangerous equipment. You work hard because your widowed mother relies on your income to survive. You earn a dollar a day.

"Tuberculosis germs . . . grow in men, and men spit them out on the streets, on the floors, on the carpets. When these men (and women and children) learn to spit only in proper places this source of the disease will be eradicated [stamped out]."

—DR. THOMAS D. TUTTLE, HEALTH OFFICER FOR THE MONTANA BOARD OF HEALTH

Industrial accidents left many women widows, and children often had to leave school to help support their families. Young boys worked as **nippers** (errand boys who fetched tools, tended mules, and did other odd jobs for the mines). They also worked as newsboys, chimneysweeps, carpenter's helpers, messengers, shoe shiners, and **peddlers** (people who sell things door-to-door). Girls often worked as servants for wealthy families.

In 1904 Montana voters passed a constitutional **amendment** (a change to the constitution) setting age 16 as the minimum age for employment in the mines—and age 14 for other jobs. Farm and ranch children worked hard, too—tending animals, operating farm equipment, chopping firewood, and fetching water. But because so many homesteaders relied on the labor of

FIGURE 15.7: Where did miners go to the bathroom? Covered toilet cars like this one provided a place on every level of the mine. When full, they had to be hauled up to ground level and emptied. These covered toilets were a big improvement over nothing at all. When mines started using covered toilet cars, fewer miners got sick from infectious diseases.

their children, the child-labor laws did not apply to farms.

A few years later the legislature passed a law requiring children to attend school until age 16. Together these two laws helped make sure that Montana's youth had an opportunity for a healthy childhood and a basic education.

FIGURE 15.8: These young boys worked with Butte's Blacksmith Union, laboring alongside the men. The union members taught the boys skills of the trade and watched out for their safety when they could.

A Special Court for Kids

In 1903 a 14-year-old boy named Harry Anderson burned down the Montana Club, a prominent Helena building. Harry liked to set fires, ring the fire alarms, and then be part of the rescue effort alongside firefighters.

Young Harry quickly confessed to setting the fire. He was accused of arson and probably would have gone to the state prison. But a progressive attorney named Thomas J. Walsh served as Harry's defense lawyer at no charge. Walsh knew Harry's father, a bartender at the Montana Club. Walsh convinced the judge to send Harry to the Pine Hills Youth Correctional Center, in Miles City, instead of to prison. Before this, anyone who committed a serious crime—no matter how young—could be sentenced to the Montana State Prison.

The idea of treating children differently than adults was a Progressive Era idea. A few years later lawmakers created a juvenile court system, guaranteeing that children who got in trouble with the law would no longer be treated the same as criminal adults.

Prohibition: A Reform That Failed

One Progressive Era reform failed dismally: **Prohibition** (a movement to outlaw alcohol). Many Progressives saw the damage that alcoholism wreaked on people, families, and society. They hoped that outlawing alcohol would make society better.

In 1916 Montanans passed a Prohibition referendum making it illegal to drink, serve, or make alcoholic beverages. In 1919 Prohibition became the law of the United States through the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

But people did not stop drinking alcohol; they just drank in secret. **Bootleg** (illegal) alcohol became a huge, profitable business. Whiskey

FIGURE 15.9: Carbon County sheriff George Boggs (left) and county attorney Rudolph Nelstead (right) bust up a homemade **still** (alcohol distillery) in 1919. Prohibition was an attempt to remove alcoholism, drunkenness, and other problems from society. It also created a cash industry—bootlegging—for some struggling Montana families.

runners smuggled liquor into the United States from Canada. Farmers set up hidden distilleries to make alcohol.

Across the country, bootleggers built an efficient transportation and communications network to funnel alcohol to the big cities. Some focused on the open country between the Hi-line and Canada, where it was easy to hide from the law. After a serious drought hit in 1917 (see Chapter 13), many families in farm towns like Havre and Plentywood helped transport liquor for the bootleggers because they paid in cash. Helping bootleggers was one way to earn money when the crops failed.

Prohibition ended in failure. Instead of improving morals, it only encouraged people to break the law. The Montana legislature repealed its Prohibition law in 1926, and Congress repealed the 18th Amendment in 1933. Even Montanans who disapproved of drinking were glad to see the law go.

Getting Radical

Most Progressives believed in America's basic system of democracy and **capitalism** (an economic system in which privately owned businesses carry on trade for profit). But others demanded more radical change. They believed that capitalism itself created poverty and misery because it made a few people very rich and kept others very poor.

FIGURE 15.10: Socialists across the United States wore political buttons like this one. Butte was one of many American cities to elect a Socialist mayor in the early 1900s.

Socialists: For a More Equal Distribution of Wealth

Some Montanans became **socialists** (people who believe that major industries and services should be owned and regulated by the state). Socialists pushed for radical change. Some wanted to create a new economic system that gave power to the working class.

The Socialist Party became popular after 1900. Socialist Party candidates ran for office in Butte, Anaconda, Red Lodge, and Livingston. Socialist Lewis J. Duncan ran for mayor of Butte in 1911. He won by a landslide. Duncan cleaned up city government and stopped corruption. He spoke out against the Anaconda Company and its unfair tactics against working citizens. Burton K. Wheeler, who was then the U.S. attorney for Montana,

called Duncan "the best mayor Butte has ever had, as far as honesty was concerned."

When Mayor Duncan was reelected in 1914, the Company decided to force him from office. Its newspapers published accusations against the socialists and warned that an armed band of socialists was about to attack Butte. Company officials urged Montana governor Samuel Stewart to send armed militiamen to protect the city. The armed soldiers rode their horses up to the brand-new Silver Bow County Courthouse, dismissed all the city employees, and filed false charges against Mayor Duncan. Three days later a Company-paid judge removed Mayor Duncan from office.

The IWW and the Free Speech Fight

In western Montana, loggers also labored under the control of big corporations. They put up with unhealthy working conditions (see Chapter 12) and unfair hiring practices. Lumber companies hired employment agencies to fill the constant need for laborers. These agencies charged workers large employment fees, which came out of the workers' first paycheck. Then the foreman often fired the workers—sometimes after a few days. Workers had to pay the fees again to get their jobs back.

By 1909 the workers had had enough. Many of them joined with the Industrial Workers of the World (or the IWW; also known as the Wobblies), a radical labor union with many socialist ideas. The union sent representatives into Montana to gain attention for the lumbermen's problems. Union members stood on platforms in downtown Missoula and gave public speeches against the unfair practices of the lumber companies.

The mayor of Missoula tried to stop the speakers. He had them arrested under a city law against making street speeches and charged them with disturbing the peace. But this was exactly what the IWW activists had expected.

Hundreds of IWW members from across the Pacific Northwest poured into Missoula by train. One by one they mounted the platform and began their speeches. Some of them simply read the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees freedom of expression. As soon as one

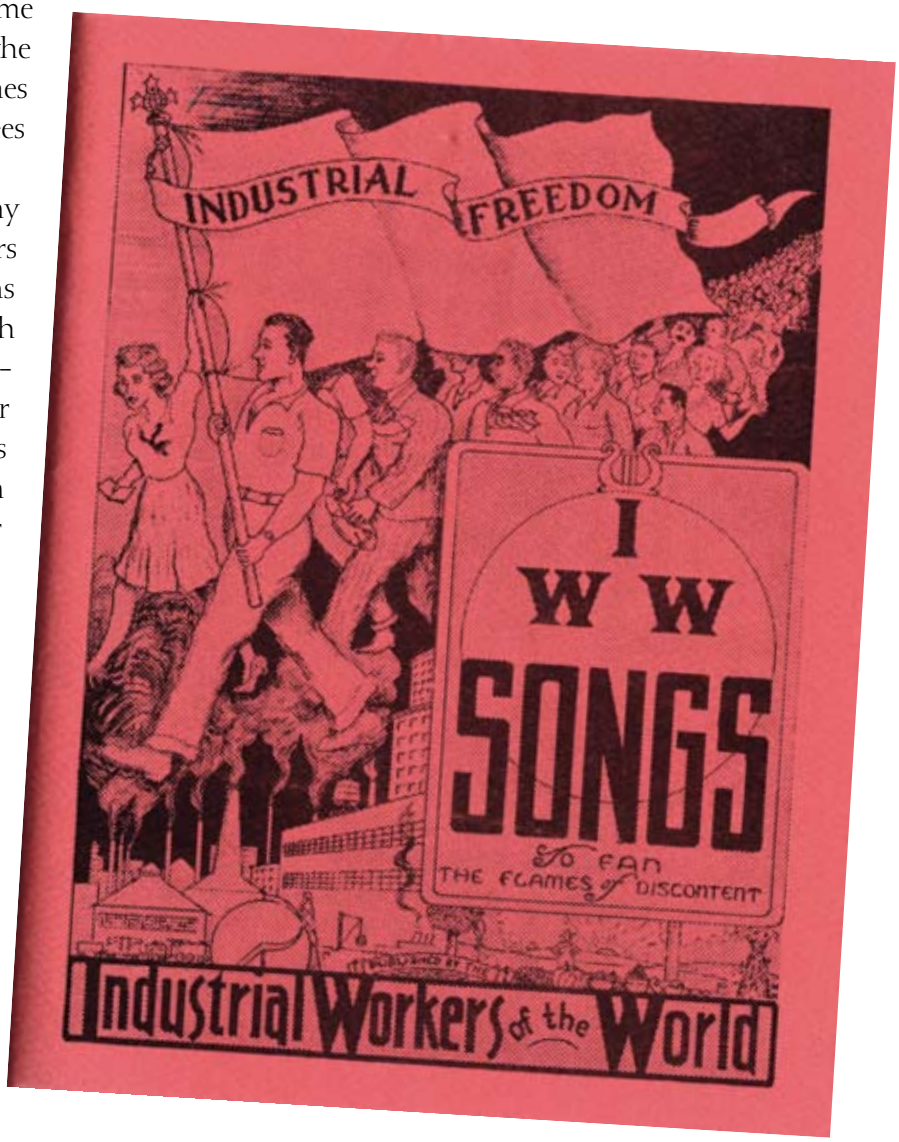


FIGURE 15.11: The IWW built morale and spread its message through protest songs with lyrics like these: "It is we who plowed the prairies; built the cities where they trade / Dug the mines and built the workshops; endless miles of railroad laid / Now we stand, outcast and starving, 'mid the wonders we have made / But the Union makes us strong."

was arrested, the next one stepped up. Within a few days the police had arrested 43 people, including two women. The city could hardly pay for feeding them all. Trials and court costs would be even more expensive.

Crowds thronged Missoula's main intersection each day to see what would happen next. When police arrested 19-year-old Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, citizens posted her $50 bond. The next day Edith Frenette, an IWW worker from Spokane, was arrested before a crowd of 1,000 Missoulians. The crowd pelted the police officers with rocks as they escorted Frenette to jail. A few days later the IWW organized a 600-person protest march through downtown Missoula.

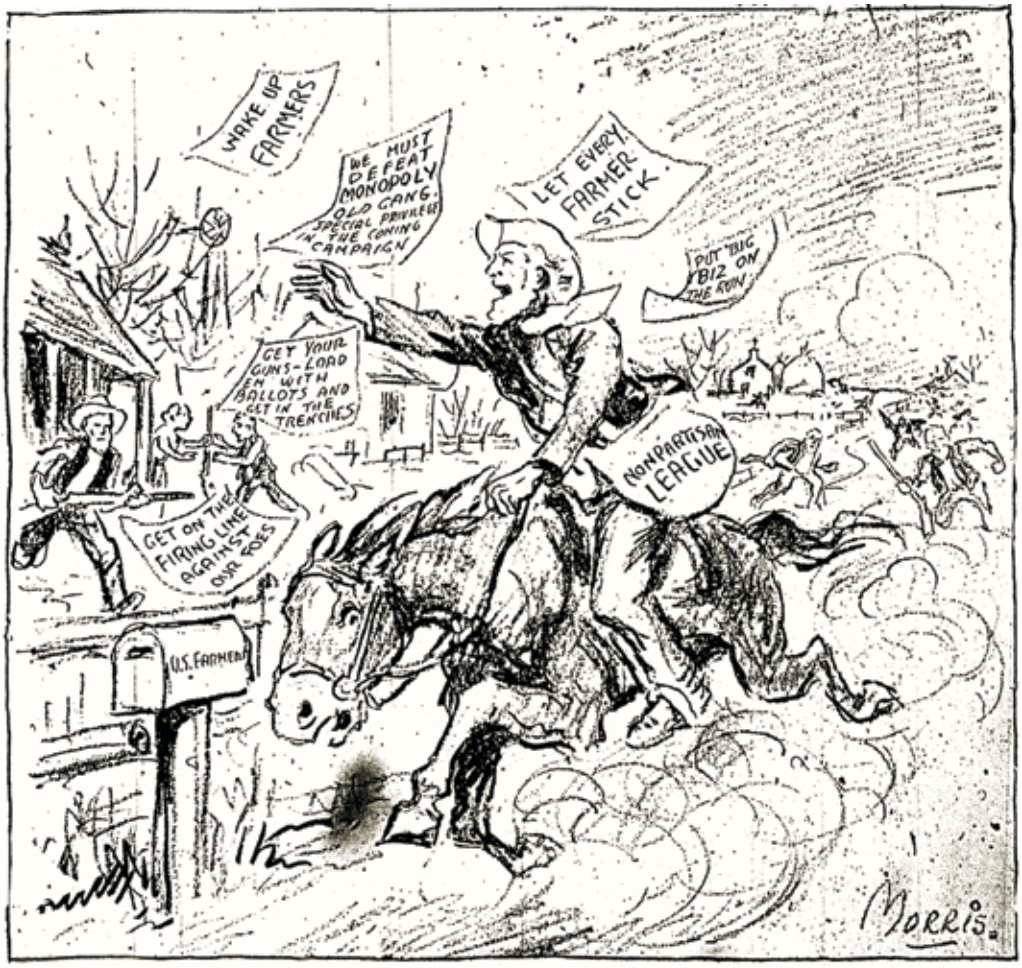
City leaders decided they could not stop the labor union from speaking out for workers' rights. The city dropped all charges, released the IWW members from jail, and told them they were free to give public speeches. The labor union had won the right to speak out against unfair labor practices.

The Nonpartisan League

The Nonpartisan League was a passionate group of reform-minded farmers. Their group was called nonpartisan because they did not support either of the two major political parties.

These farmers also had some socialist ideas. They thought the railroads, bankers, and grain elevator operators made too much money from the farmers' labor. Some thought the state should run the banks, grain elevators, packing plants, and farmer's insurance programs. Some businessmen called them the "wild men from the prairies" because league members spoke out against big business.

When drought and depression descended on the Plains after 1917, the farmers' troubles grew seriously worse. More farmers joined the Nonpartisan League. They cried out against the



Modern Paul Revere

FIGURE 15.12: Nonpartisan League members saw themselves as modern Paul Reveres, riding through their communities to alert other farmers to problems and get them to organize. This cartoon was published in 1919 in the league's newspaper, the *Montana Nonpartisan*.

railroad for its high freight rates and against the Company because it paid very little in taxes compared to what farmers had to pay (see Chapter 10).

The Progressive Era in Indian Country

The Progressive movement affected Montana Indians in two distinctly different ways. On the one hand, Progressives campaigned to have Montana's **reservations** (land that tribes had reserved for their own use through treaties) cut up and sold off under **allotment** (the practice of subdividing Indian reservations into privately owned parcels). And on the other hand, Progressives forced the U.S. government to create a new reservation. These two opposite actions, happening around the same time, show how complicated U.S. policy was toward Indian people.

Allotments: Destroy Native Cultures to Achieve Progress

Congress had passed the Allotment Act—or Dawes Act—in 1887. This act permitted the government to divide up tribal lands into individual allotments and then assign allotments to individual tribal members. The government often sold the remaining acreage to non-Indians for farms and grazing land.

Many Progressives believed that tribal societies were a thing of the past. They believed that breaking up tribes would help usher American Indians into the modern age. So Progressives supported allotment because it helped destroy tribal lifeways.

FIGURE 15.13: After the government allotted the Flathead Reservation, 40,000 settlers flooded in to buy up the "extra" land. Hundreds came in on the train on this day in 1910.

The allotment program did little to help American Indians to **assimilate** (to be absorbed into majority society). Instead, it snatched away any prosperity and success that Indian people had achieved on the reservations. And it removed from tribal ownership millions of acres of land guaranteed them forever by **treaty** (an agreement between governments) (see Chapters 11 and 13).

Montana Progressive Joseph M. Dixon, a U.S. senator, led the charge for allotments. Despite strong

Little Bear, Cree Leader

In 1913 Cree leader Little Bear heard that Franklin K. Lane, U.S. secretary of the interior, was in Helena for a visit. He marched into the lobby of the Placer Hotel, where Lane was staying, and said to Lane, "God was taking care of us all right until the white man came and took the responsibility off His hands. Last winter our wives and our children lived on dogs and the carcasses of frozen horses to keep from starving." It took nearly three more years to secure a reservation for the Chippewa and Cree people, but they finally succeeded in 1916.

protests from the tribes, Dixon joined Missoula real estate developers to campaign aggressively for the Flathead Reservation to be allotted. Later, Dixon himself bought a ranch on the Flathead Reservation.

1916: Creating Rocky Boy's Reservation

At the same time that federal policies sought to destroy Indian tribes and open up reservations to white settlement, the government created a brand-new reservation in Montana: Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation, home to Montana's Chippewa and Cree people.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, two small bands of Chippewa and Cree lived in Montana.

FIGURE 15.14: Artist Charles M. Russell created this sketch to draw attention to the Chippewa-Cree's fight for a reservation. In it, "Montana" pleads with "Uncle Sam": "I have thrown my lands open to the world. These are Americans. Have I nothing for them?" Uncle Sam replies, "Not as long as the land hog has control." Russell sent the sketch to Frank B. Linderman, with an apology to hogs for insulting them.

Rocky Boy—his real name was Stone Child—was leader of the Chippewa band. Little Bear led the Cree. These bands had relatives on reservations in the Dakotas and in Canada but no longer had a land base of their own. For 20 years they moved back and forth across Montana working seasonal jobs.

Without a land base, and with no year-round home, the Cree and Chippewa people suffered terrible poverty. Many of them starved or died of simple illnesses. Each year their situation got worse. Since they were not a federally recognized tribe, the government did nothing to help. Church groups and women's organizations gave them food, clothing, and blankets. People in Helena, Havre, and Great Falls began to demand a reservation for the Chippewa-Cree.

In 1912 Stone Child asked the government for a bit of land for his people near the Bear's Paw Mountains. He knew the government was closing an old military reserve called Fort Assinniboine. He fought an uphill battle against homesteaders, ranchers, and the townspeople of Havre, who wanted the Fort Assinniboine lands for farms and businesses.

In his travels Stone Child had made some influential friends: artist Charles M. Russell; writer and legislator Frank B. Linderman; prominent businessman and Great Falls founder Paris Gibson; and William Bole, publisher of the *Great Falls Tribune.* Together these four men campaigned hard on behalf of the Chippewa and Cree people. Soon most Montanans supported the cause, too.

Finally, the government assigned 55,040 acres on the southwest corner of the former Fort Assinniboine for the reservation. By the time President Woodrow Wilson signed the executive order creating the reservation, in November 1916, Stone Child had died. The reservation was named Rocky Boy's, after him.

Over time the tribes were able to increase Rocky Boy's Reservation to just more than 122,000 acres. Today about 3,400 Chippewa-Cree people live there.

"We Had Our Own Citizenship"

"How could these Europeans come over and tell us we were citizens in our country? We had our own citizenship. By its provisions [the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924] all Indians were automatically made United States citizens whether they wanted to be so or not. This was a violation of our sovereignty. Our citizenship was in our nations."

—CHIEF CLINTON RICKARD, A TUSCARORA INDIAN

1924: Indians Become U.S. Citizens

In 1924 Progressives at the national level initiated yet another reform to U.S.-Indian policy. They supported a federal law granting U.S. citizenship to American Indians. Before this act, American Indians could apply to become U.S. citizens several ways—by homesteading, by claiming private property under allotments, or by marrying U.S. citizens. They were not born U.S. citizens—but they were not **aliens** (people born in a foreign country) either.

Many American Indians had fought honorably in World War I. National leaders thought their service proved Indians' commitment to the United States. On June 2, 1924, Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act, granting full U.S. citizenship to all American Indians born in the United States.

Politicians assumed that American Indians wanted to become U.S. citizens. However, many American Indians saw the **irony** (humor based on something absurd) in the government granting them citizenship in a land that had been theirs for thousands of years.

Racism: The Ugly Face of Progressivism

By 1920 there were 550,000 people living in Montana. Nearly half of them were foreign-born or first-generation Americans. They came from northern, southern, and eastern Europe, from Mexico, and from Asia. Usually they clustered in communities with others from their country. Butte, for example, had 62 different Chinese-owned businesses, including four doctors' offices, in 1914.

Instead of embracing diversity, many Progressives thought that native-born whites were more intelligent and civilized than the new immigrants. They thought that people who clung to ancient ideas and traditions got in the way of progressive change. They were particularly hostile toward Asians. Not all Progressives adopted racist attitudes—but some did.

FIGURE 15.15: Dr. Huie Pock (second from the left) was a respected Butte physician who once cured William A. Clark's daughter of an ulcer. Though many whites in Butte benefited from Dr. Pock's knowledge of herbal medicines, they maintained their prejudices against Asians because they looked and spoke differently than whites.

In the 1890s the Butte Miner's Union called on residents to **boycott** (refuse to do business with) all Chinese-owned and Japanese-owned businesses. The unionists claimed that just by living and conducting business in Butte, Asians threatened the life and industry of the city.

Chinese restaurant owner Hum Fay sued the union for nearly destroying his business. His lawsuit ended the boycott—but not the **prejudice** (a pre-formed negative opinion) against Asians. In 1909 the Montana legislature made it illegal for whites to marry Asians or blacks.

The Last Years of Progressivism

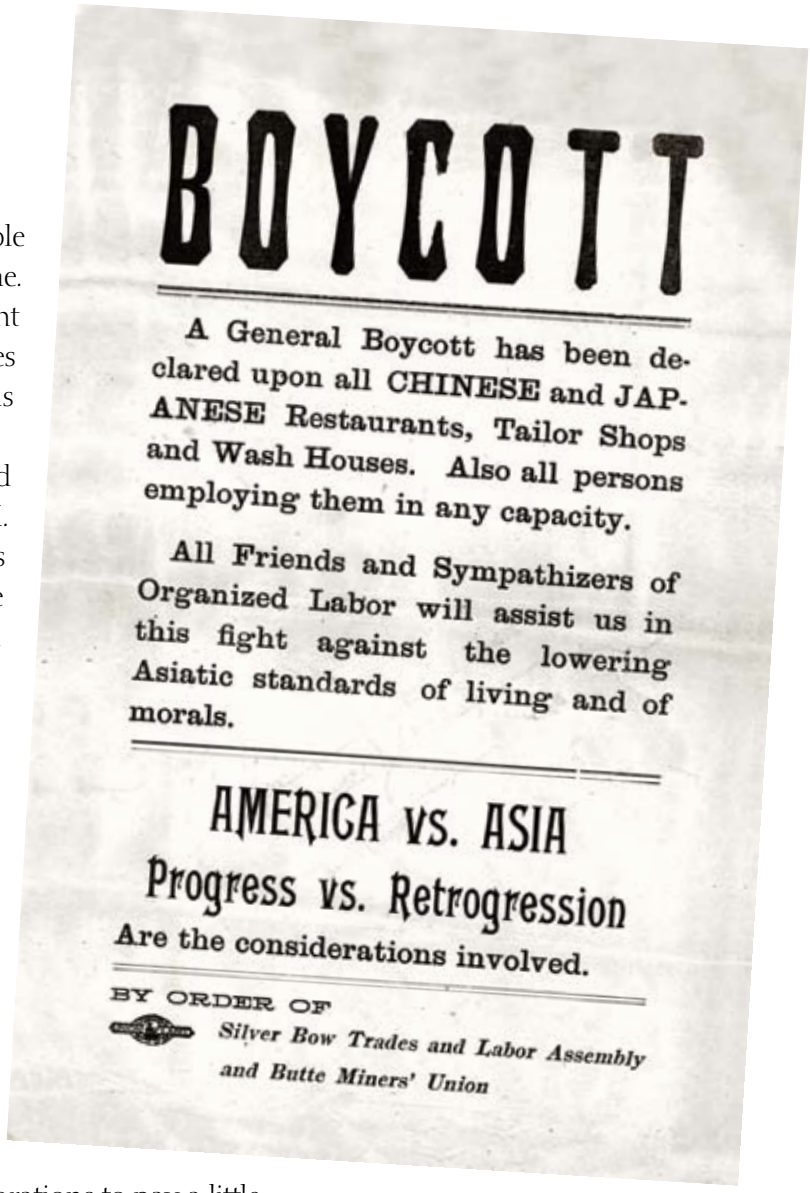
In 1917 the United States entered World War I. People forgot about issues like poverty and safety at home. The war also made any challenges to the government or to authority seem more dangerous. In most places in the United States, the Progressive movement was over by about 1918.

In Montana the Progressive movement lasted much longer—into the 1920s. In 1920 Joseph M. Dixon became governor. He worked in many ways to put government back into the hands of the people. He pushed through an old-age **pension** (retirement pay) law, making Montana one of the first states to provide support for its seniors.

One of the most important acts Dixon accomplished was to help change the tax code to make it more fair. When Montana became a state in 1889, mining interests made sure that the state constitution gave mines a special low tax rate (see Chapter 10). That meant that the farmers and small business owners paid most of the expenses of state government, while the mines—especially the Company—controlled almost everything the state did.

In 1922 the mining industry earned $20 million and paid $13,559 in state taxes—less than one-thousandth of 1 percent. Dixon called for corporations to pay a little more. This infuriated the Company.

When Dixon ran for reelection in 1924, the Company made sure he lost. However, in the same election that Dixon lost, voters approved Initiative 28. Initiative 28 created a tax of up to 1 percent on mines producing over $100,000 per year. The people used their new political tool, the initiative, to do something politicians had been unwilling, or unable, to do: make the Anaconda Copper Mining Company pay a greater share of taxes.


BOYCOTT

A General Boycott has been declared upon all CHINESE and JAPANESE Restaurants, Tailor Shops and Wash Houses. Also all persons employing them in any capacity.

All Friends and Sympathizers of Organized Labor will assist us in this fight against the lowering Asiatic standards of living and of morals.

AMERICA vs. ASIA

Progress vs. Retrogression

Are the considerations involved.

BY ORDER OF

Silver Bow Trades and Labor Assembly and Butte Miners' Union

FIGURE 15.16: This poster called laborers to boycott Chinese and Japanese businesses in Butte. It claims that Asians lowered the standard of living and morals of other Americans. It reads, "America vs. Asia: Progress vs. **Retrogression**" (moving backward).

Montana's Progressive Legacy

Even after Dixon's term, the Progressive movement did not die—it just went underground. It emerged again in the 1970s, when Montanans wrote a new constitution, which is now recognized as one of the most progressive documents of twentieth-century America (see Chapter 21).

The Progressive Era left a complicated **legacy** (something handed down from the past). Prohibition failed outright. Allotments on the reservations benefited whites but plunged many American Indians into

poverty. The law that prohibited **interracial** (between races) marriage stayed on the books until 1953.

Yet today most Americans think that clean drinking water, a safe workplace, and access to unpolluted food are basic rights. Everyone thinks that 12-year-olds belong in school. And no one questions women's role in the political system, even though 100 years ago women were not allowed to vote. These reforms did not come easily, but thanks to the Progressives, we now take them for granted.

History is full of story lines that are all tangled up together. No period of time is one simple story. Right in the middle of the Progressive Era, another powerful movement arose to silence people from speaking their minds. At the same time that Progressives worked for free speech and a stronger voice in government, some Montanans went to prison just for expressing their opinions. Chapter 16 tells another side of this complex period in Montana history.

FIGURE 15.17: During the Progressive Era, citizens organized to improve society. This cartoon is titled "Organization Wins." Published in the *Montana Nonpartisan* newspaper in 1919, it promoted "greater organization" as the tool ordinary people needed to challenge the power of big business ("Big Biz") and "Special Privilege."

Expressions of the People

The Stories of Frank B. Linderman

It is the full moon in the time of falling leaves. A wolf howls on a ridge overlooking an Indian camp. In one lodge an elder named War Eagle speaks to his grandchildren. "What I shall tell you now," he says, "happened when the world was young . . ." He talks deep into the night, telling his grandchildren the stories of their people, the animals, and the land into which they were born.

And so begins the book, *Indian Why Stories: Sparks from War Eagle's Lodge-Fire,* by Frank B. Linderman.

Frank Bird Linderman (1869–1938) was 16 years old when he came to the Flathead Valley. There he made friends with Salish, Kootenai, Blackfeet, Chippewa, and Cree Indians who traveled through the region. They told Linderman stories of their lives, beliefs, and history.

Linderman went on to be a gold **assayer** (a person who determines the value or quality of gold). He also owned the Sheridan, Montana, newspaper called the *Sheridan Chinook*. Later he became a state legislator and assistant secretary of state of Montana. While living in Helena, he helped the Chippewa-Cree obtain Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation.

But through it all, Linderman remembered the stories he had heard. He devoted the second half of his life to writing about Montana's Indian cultures and people. In 1927 he earned an honorary doctorate at the University of Montana for his studies and writings (including 12 books) about Indian traditions.

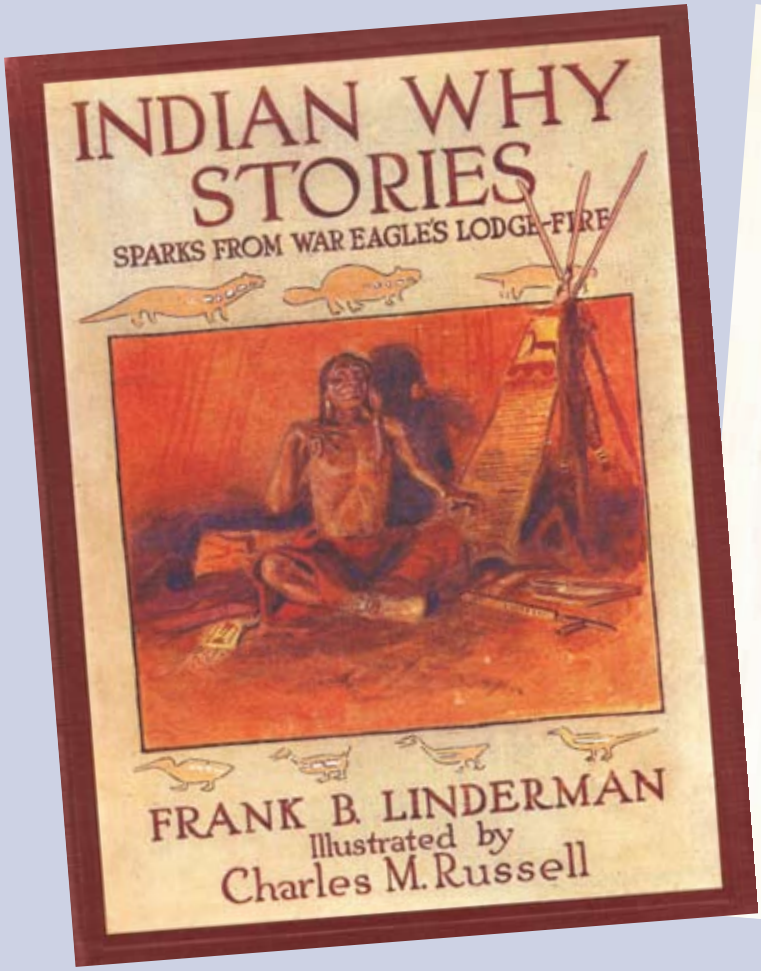
FIGURE 15.18: At a time when most Americans thought Indian tribes should disappear, Frank B. Linderman devoted much of his life to helping Indians strengthen their tribes and pass on their traditions.

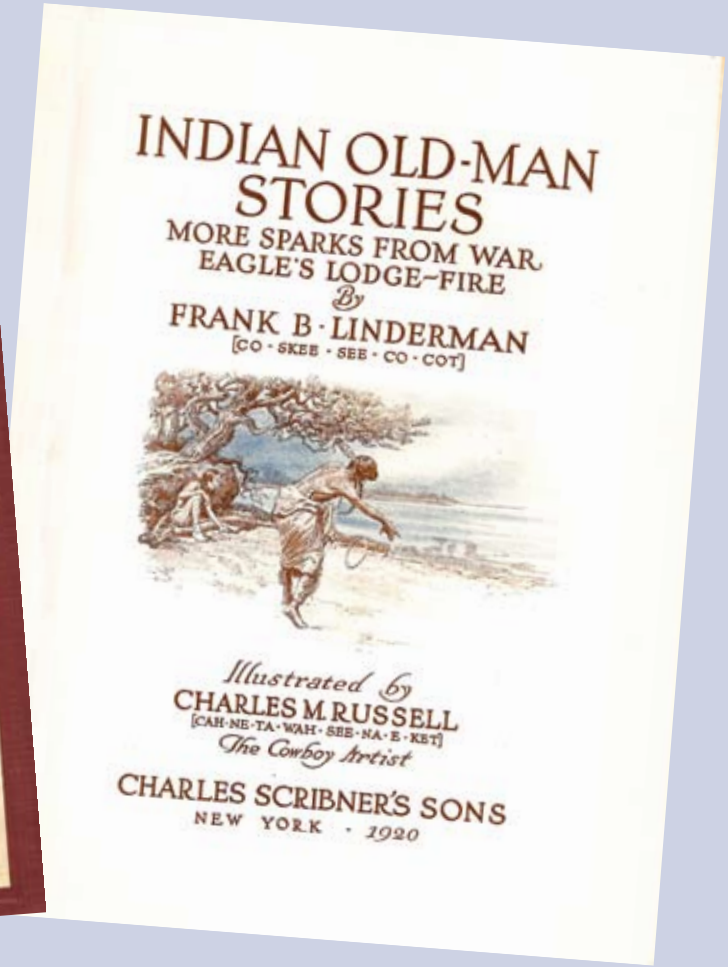
Two of Linderman's most popular books are *Indian Why Stories* (1915) and *Indian Old-Man Stories* (1920). In these two books Linderman repeats the wisdom stories given to him by Indian friends: stories about a sparrow hawk who has a conscience and about how the fox makes the bison laugh. The stories tell why children's teeth come out, why elders lose their eyesight, and why skunks have stripes. The stories show humor and reverence for life, reflecting the beliefs of the people who carried them.

Later, Linderman wrote *Plenty-Coups: Chief of the Crows* (1930) and *Pretty-Shield: A Crow Medicine Woman* (1932). These books are intimate biographies of two highly respected Crow, told through their own memories. Linderman always asked his friends to speak through Indian sign language, even when an interpreter was present. The Crow called Linderman "Sign-Talker" because he had learned sign language so well.

While many Progressives thought Indians should leave their traditions behind, Linderman celebrated Indian traditions as an important part of Montana's cultural heritage.

FIGURES 15.19 and 15.20: Every culture uses stories to pass along traditions and affirm cultural identity. Linderman based his books on stories he learned from his friends, including Two-Comes-Over-the-Hill, a Kootenai; Muskegon, a Cree; and Full-of-Dew, a Chippewa spiritual leader.





CHAPTER 15 REVIEW

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. Identify: (a) Montana Public Service Commission; (b) Industrial Workers of the World; (c) Nonpartisan League
2. Define: (a) labor union; (b) industrialization; (c) mainstream; (d) nipper; (e) Prohibition; (f) repeal; (g) capitalism; (h) socialist; (i) allotment; (j) boycott
3. Describe some of the positive and negative effects of the Industrial Revolution.
4. Identify and explain four political reforms passed by the Montana legislature during the Progressive Era.
5. Reread the quote by Jeannette Rankin on page 295. What are the two roles that Rankin thinks women should have?
6. What was "county-busting," and why would it give the people more influence in political decisions?
7. What are some of the reasons that accidents and injuries increased in mines and mills in the early 1900s?
8. What are some of the motives that farmers, miners, loggers, and communities had for developing organizations?
9. What reforms were passed in the early 1900s that benefited children?
10. How did Progressives and Socialists differ in their economic views?
11. In what ways did the Progressive movement both assist and weaken Indian tribes?
12. Why did some Indians view the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 as ironic?
13. How did the Progressive movement help change Montana's tax laws?

CRITICAL THINKING

1. Why do you think people in Montana passed women's suffrage (1914) before the rest of the nation (1920)?
2. Review the section about the free speech fight in Missoula. Why did the Wobblies choose to break the law? Do you agree or disagree with that choice? More generally, under what circumstances, if any, do you think a person should disobey the law?
3. Look at the boycott poster on page 307. Do you think this poster represents the basic goals that you have learned about the Progressive movement?

PAST TO PRESENT

1. What are some jobs that minors can have in Montana today? How old do you need to be to work? Is it the same for every kind of job? Compare the types of jobs and the reasons young people worked 100 years ago and today.
2. Even though some of the reasons for having so many counties no longer exist, many people do not want to **consolidate** (combine several into one) counties. Why do you think this is true? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

MAKE IT LOCAL

1. Many of Montana's water systems, sewer systems, city-run fire departments, libraries, and bridges date from the Progressive Era. Research the history of your community's institutions or infrastructure. When and how did these things come to your area, and who were the main supporters of these improvements?
2. How far do you live from your county seat? What reasons do you or your family have for visiting it? How often—if ever—do you go? How do you think it would affect your life if the county seat were farther away?.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Research how to get an initiative or referendum on the ballot. Then, in small groups, decide on an initiative or referendum you would like to see on the ballot and draft a petition. Use speeches, flyers, and other resources to persuade your classmates to sign your petition.
2. Choose a political cartoon that appears in the chapter. Analyze its purpose and explain why it is effective.
3. The United States banned child labor during the Progressive Era. However, in the developing world, children continue to work in factories making products that are then sold in the United States. Research issues surrounding child labor today.

Credits

The following abbreviations are used in the credits:

BBHC Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming
GNPA Glacier National Park Archives
LOC Library of Congress
MAC Montana Arts Council, Helena
MDEQ Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Helena
MDT Montana Department of Transportation, Helena
MFWP Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Helena
MHS Montana Historical Society, Helena
MHSA Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena
MHSL Montana Historical Society Library, Helena
MHS Mus. Montana Historical Society Museum, Helena
MHS PA Montana Historical Society Photograph Archives, Helena
MSU COT Montana State University College of Technology, Billings
NMAI National Museum American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
MSU Billings Special Collections, Montana State University Billings Library
NARA National Archives and Records Administration
NPS National Park Service
NRIS Natural Resource Information System, Montana State Library, Helena
SHPO State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Historical Society, Helena
TM Travel Montana, Helena
UM Missoula Archives & Special Collections, The University of Montana–Missoula
USDA United States Department of Agriculture
USFS United States Forest Service
WMM World Museum of Mining, Butte

Chapter 15

FIG. 15.1 Detail of *Montana: A Buried History,* by James Todd, MHS Mus.

FIG. 15.2 Neversweat Mine, courtesy WWM

FIG. 15.3 "In the coils of the Anaconda," The *Butte Daily Bulletin,* October 2, 1920, MHSL

FIG. 15.4 "Training for the Summer Scrap," *Montana Nonpartisan,* February 8, 1919, MHSL

SIDEBAR, PAGE 295, Jeannette Rankin, 1911, MHS PA 944-478

FIG. 15.5 Button, MHS Mus. X2003.01.11

FIG. 15.6 Ready to blast 1900 feet under the Butte Post Office, photo by N. A. Forsyth, MHS PA Stereograph Coll.

FIG. 15.7 Toilet car in the 2211 sill, Butte mine, ca. 1910, MHS PA Lot 8 Box 1/9.02

FIG. 15.8 Butte Blacksmith Union on library steps, photo by Palmer's of Butte, MHS PA PAc 89-42

FIG. 15.9 Breaking up a still in Carter County, MT, 1919, MHS PA PAc 84-40

FIG. 15.10 Button, MHS Mus. MS-K-1-67

FIG. 15.11 *IWW Songs to Fan the Flames of Discontent.* 34th ed., (Chicago, 1980), MHSL Pam 4372

FIG. 15.12 "The Modern Paul Revere," *Montana Nonpartisan,* March 1, 1919, MHSL

FIG. 15.13 Homesteaders arriving in the Flathead Valley, ca. 1912, photo by Herman Schnitzmeyer, Polson, MT, MHS PA 950-561

SIDEBAR, PAGE 304, *Little Bear,* by Joe Scheverle

FIG. 15.14 *Miss Montana,* illustration by C. M. Russell, Private Collection

FIG. 15.15 Dr. Huie Pock's office interior, Butte, MHS PA PAc 87-13

FIG. 15.16 Boycott Poster, NARA Archives Number 298113, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle

FIG. 15.17 "Organization Wins," *Montana Nonpartisan,* May 24, 1919, MHSL

FIG. 15.18 Frank Bird Linderman, MHS PA 943-497

FIG. 15.19 Cover, Frank Bird Linderman, *Indian Why Stories* (New York, 1915)

FIG. 15.20 Title page, Frank Bird Linderman, *Indian Old-Man Stories* (New York, 1920)