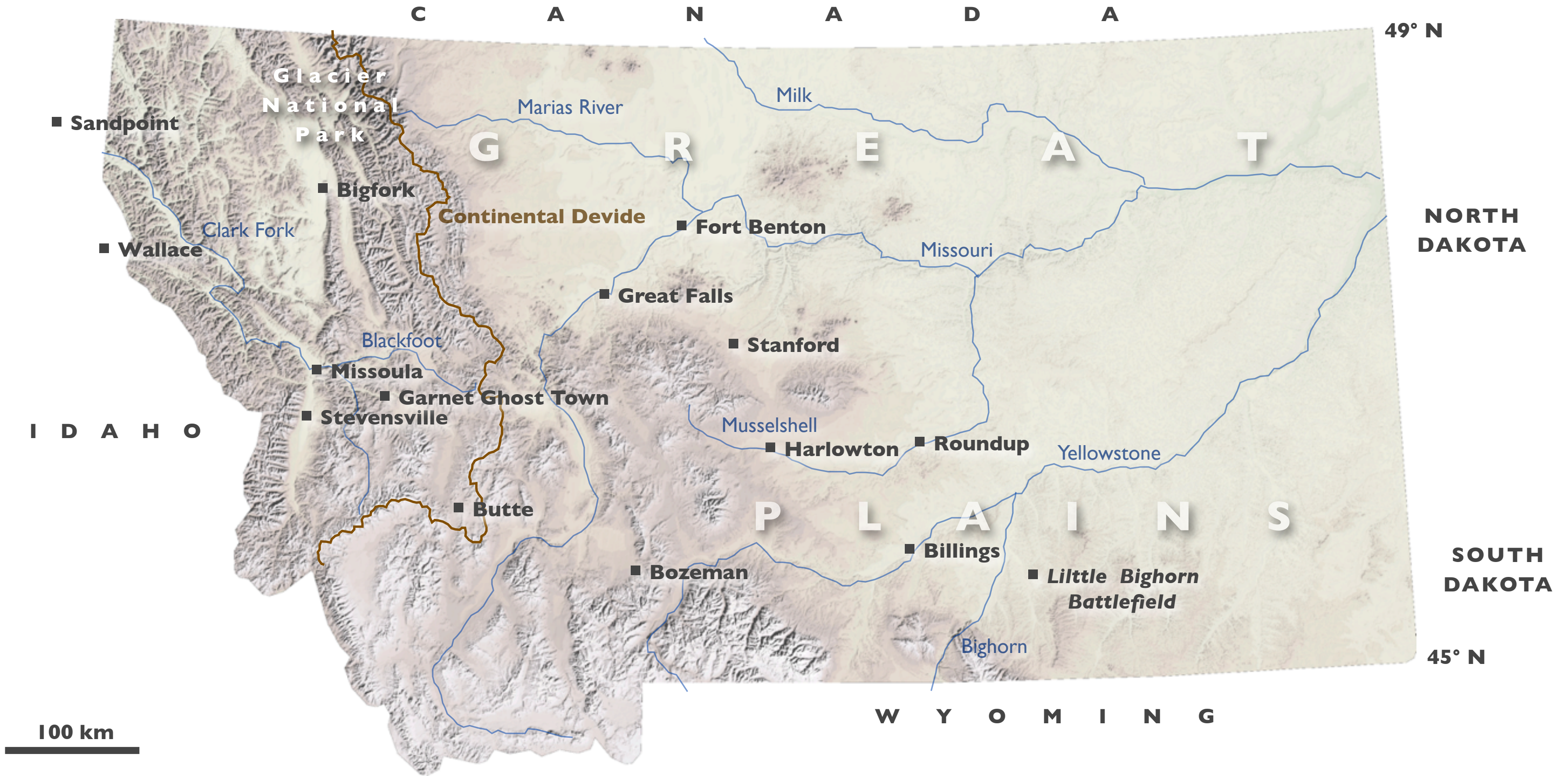




# the Great Plains







## un petit bout des *Great Plains*

En préparant mon voyage au Montana, j'ai longtemps hésité si j'allais visiter les *Great Plains* — *la Prairie* — la partie orientale de l'état, moins accidentée, et peu habitée, dont mes guides de voyage me parlaient si peu.

Est-ce que j'allais visiter le *Yellowstone National Park* — situé au Wyoming, mais débordant au Montana ? [Non, pas de files de voitures pour moi, quand un ours ou élan se montre sur les bas-côtés. Pas de tribunes non plus, remplies de touristes attendant l'éruption d'un geyser, dans ce *Disneyland* de la géographie américaine.] Prendrais-je plus de temps pour l'Ouest du Montana — et l'Idaho — où il y a d'avantage d'arbres et de montagnes *Rocheuses* ? [Il y a tellement d'arbres qu'on y voit à peine les montagnes.] Ou la *Bitterroot Valley*, décrite par Jared Diamond ? Avec une poussée vers le Sud, vers les *Craters of the Moon* (dans l'Idaho) ?

Non, je n'ai pas fait tout ça. J'ai préféré les *Great Plains*.

Peut-être est-ce *Little Bighorn* — bien plus à l'Est — qui m'a aidé à me décider, ainsi que le temps réservé avant de rentrer au Canada, à travers ces *Great Plains*. Ce n'est qu'un petit bout de ces immenses prairies que j'ai vu, mais ce fut le morceau le plus beau et le plus passionnant du voyage. Et je sais qu'il me reste beaucoup à voir, au Montana.

## een klein beetje *Great Plains*

Toen ik mijn Montana-reis voorbereidde, aarzelde ik of ik ook de *Great Plains* zou bezoeken, dat is het oostelijke, dunbevolkte, vlakke deel van Montana, waarover mijn reisgidsen me zo weinig vertelden.

Zou ik het *Yellowstone National Park* bezoeken — dat een beetje in Montana, en vooral in Wyoming ligt ? [Nee, voor mij geen files van auto's om beren of elanden te zien, langs de kant van de weg. Geen tribunes vol toeristen die een geiser verwachten, in het *Disneyland* van de Amerikaanse geografie.] Zou ik misschien méér tijd nemen voor westelijk Montana — en Idaho — waar er meer *Rotsbergen* en ook meer bomen zijn ? [Er zijn zoveel bomen dat je de bergen niet ziet.] Of *Bitterroot Valley*, waarover Jared Diamond schrijft ? En doorstoten naar het zuiden, naar de *Craters of the Moon* (in Idaho) ?

Nee, dat alles heb ik niet gedaan. Ik ben naar de *Great Plains* gegaan. Misschien heeft *Little Bighorn* me geholpen, dat een stuk naar het oosten ligt, en de tijd die ik van daaruit nam om noordwaarts naar Canada te reizen, door de — lege ? — *Great Plains*. In feite maar een klein stukje ervan. Het was het mooiste en het boeiendste deel van de reis. En nu weet ik dat er nog veel meer te zien is, in Montana.



**Les *Great Plains* s'étendent du Canada jusqu'à la frontière mexicaine. Du nord au sud, elles mesurent environ 3200 km, d'est en ouest 800. Les hauts plateaux se couvrent de prairies, de steppes et de savannes.**



**De *Great Plains* strekken zich uit van Canada tot aan de Mexicaanse grens. Van noord naar zuid meten ze ongeveer 3200 km, van oost naar west 800. De hooggelegen gebieden bestaan uit prairies, steppen en grasland.**



## BUFFALO COUNTRY

The Great Plains of eastern Montana was home to thousands of buffalo before Euro-American hunters nearly wiped them out in the early 1880's. The animals were central to the Indian lifeway. In the dog days, hunters herded buffalo into corrals where they were killed. They also stampeded the shaggy beast over cliffs, called pishkuns. With the arrival of the horse in the 1700s, hunting methods changed. As much a sport as a necessity, hunting buffalo with bows and arrows on horseback was dangerous and exciting.

A fat cow buffalo was the choice for meat. Women preserved the meat by making jerky and pemmican. Pemmican was dried and pulverized meat mixed with bone marrow and fat. Wild berries gave it flavor; the ascorbic acid in the fruit acted as a preservative. Pemmican, packed away in skin bags, kept indefinitely.

Indians used tanned buffalo robes and rawhide for clothes, tepees, bedding, tools and utensils. Buffalo figured prominently in religious practices, and disputes over prime hunting grounds frequently caused intertribal conflicts.



Ce reportage concerne les Grandes Plaines (*Great Plains*) — ou plutôt un petit bout de celles-ci — au Montana. Mais il n'est complet qu'avec ceux qui parlent des petites villes, telles Harlowton, ou Stanford.

Le mémoire écrit par l'étudiant Harold Joseph Stearns en 1966, en vue d'un *Master of Arts* à l'Université du Montana — *History of the upper Musselshell Valley to 1920* —, est passionnant. [*Upper Musselshell Valley* est surtout le comté du Wheatland, autour d' Harlowton.] J'aimerais tout citer. Peut-être finirai-je par le faire.

Avant que n'arrivent les photos des paysages infinis des *Great Plains*, je donne trois brefs extraits de l'étude réalisée par H.J. Stearns :

1. au sujet des *roundups*, quand les cowboys réunissaient les troupeaux deux fois par an, au printemps pour marquer au feu les veaux, et à l'automne pour vendre les bovins prêts pour l'abattoir,
2. au sujet de la façon dont les petites villes organisaient l'accueil des migrants (souvent intérieurs aux É-U) — les *homesteaders* qui recevaient 65 ha pour démarrer une exploitation agricole, voire en achetaient plus,
3. au sujet d'un curé, originaire du Brabant Septentrional (Pays-Bas), qui avait des paroisses au Montana au Dakota du Nord, qui s'est fait payer un voyage vers son pays natal par deux hommes d'affaires roublards, pour qu'il y recrute des colons *hollandais* pour la petite ville de Hedgesville (Wheatland).

Mais d'abord deux textes sur les *Nez Percés*, par Steinbeck et Wood.

Deze reportage gaat over de uitgestrekte vlakten van de *Great Plains* — in feite een klein stukje ervan, in Montana. Maar ze is slechts volledig als je er de reportages over de stadjes (Harlowton, Stanford...) bij leest.

Het eindwerk dat student Harold Joseph Stearns in 1966 geschreven heeft, voor zijn *Master of Arts* aan de Universiteit van Montana — *History of the upper Musselshell Valley to 1920* —, is heel boeiende lectuur. [*Upper Musselshell Valley* is vooral het *county* Wheatland, rond Harlowton.] Ik zou alles willen citeren. En misschien doe ik dat nog.

Vóór de foto's van de eindeloze landschappen van de *Great Plains* geef ik drie korte uittreksels uit Stearns' werk :

1. over de *roundups*, waarbij de cowboys tweemaal per jaar de kudden samendreven, in de lente om de kalveren te brandmerken, en in de herfst om de slachtrijpe exemplaren te verkopen,
2. over de manier waarop de stadjes gebrand waren op de komst van nieuwe (vaak binnenlandse) migranten — de *homesteaders* die op de uigestrekte prairie een boerderij (of *hofstede*) begonnen, met 65 ha gratis, en een deel aangekocht land,
3. over de Noord-Brabantse pastoor Van Heuvel, die in Montana en Noord-Dakota parochies had, en door gewiekste zakenlui werd betaald om naar zijn geboortestreek te reizen, en daar *Hollandse* kolonisten voor Hedgesville (Wheatland) te ronselen.

Maar eerst twee teksten over de *Nez Percés*, van Steinbeck en Wood.



# CHIEF JOSEPH

THE NEZ PERCE PEOPLE, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THEIR GREAT CHIEF, JOSEPH, CROSSED THE MUSSELSHELL RIVER NEAR HERE ON SEPTEMBER 17, 1877. THEY HAD LEFT THEIR IDAHO HOMELAND IN A VALIANT BUT FUTILE EFFORT TO REACH CANADA. THEIR MARCH, MARKED BY SEVERAL SKIRMISHES WITH THE U. S. ARMY, ENDED AT THE FATEFUL BATTLE OF THE BEARS PAW WITH THEIR SURRENDER TO COLONEL NELSON A. MILES OCTOBER 5, 1877.



GOLDEN VALLEY BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION



***Travels with Charley (excerpt)***

***John Steinbeck, 1962***

**about Chief Joseph and the Nez Percés — 1877**

gallant = dapper

gallant = vaillant, brave

The whole of eastern Montana and the western Dakotas is memory-marked as Injun country, and the memories are not very old either. Some years ago my neighbor was Charles Erskine Scott Wood, who wrote *Heavenly Discourse*. He was a very old man when I knew him, but as young lieutenant just out of military academy he had been assigned to General Miles and he served in the Chief Joseph campaign. His memory of it was very clear and very sad. He said it was one of the most gallant retreats in all history. Chief Joseph and the Nez Percés with squaws and children, dogs, and all their possessions, retreated under heavy fire for over a thousand miles, trying to escape to Canada. Wood said they fought every step of the way against odds until finally they were surrounded by the cavalry under General Miles and the large part of them wiped out. It was the saddest duty he had ever performed, Wood said, and he never lost his respect for the fighting qualities of the Nez Percés. *"If they hadn't had their families with them we could never have caught them,"* he said. *"And if we had been evenly matched in men and weapons, we couldn't have beaten them. They were men,"* he said, *"Real men."*



*The Pursuit and Capture of Chief Joseph (excerpt)*  
*Charles Erskine Scott Wood (1852-1944), 1936*

**[the surrender of Chief Joseph and the Nez Percés,  
written by an eyewitness]**

Without digressing further, let me say that on that same day, the 5th of October, the ground covered with a light fall of snow, the surrender was agreed on. About an hour or so before sunset there came from the ravine below, up to the knoll on which we were standing, a picturesque and pathetic little group. Joseph was the only one mounted, and he sat, his rifle across his knees at each side of his horse talking earnestly. Slowly they mounted to where we stood at the top. General Howard and Colonel Miles were grouped together, and a little retired, myself, Lieutenant Howard, Lieutenant Long, and further back an orderly and Arthur Chapman, the interpreter. Still further away, at some little distance, a courier stood at the head of his horse, holding loosely the bridle while the horse pawed the snowy ground. When the Indians reached the summit those on foot stopped and went back a little, as if all was over.

Then, nothing but silence. Joseph threw himself off his horse, draped his blanket about him, and carrying his rifle in the hollow of one arm, changed from the stooped attitude in which he had been listening, held himself very erect, and with a quiet pride, not exactly defiance, advanced toward General Howard and held out his rifle in token of submission. General Howard smiled at him, but waved him over to Colonel Miles, who was standing beside him. Joseph quickly made a slight turn and offered the rifle to Miles, who took it. Then Joseph stepped back a little, and Arthur Chapman stepped forward so as to be between Joseph and the group of two — Howard and Miles. I was standing very close to Howard, with a pencil and a paper pad which I always carried at such times, ready for any dictation that might be given. Joseph again addressed himself to General Howard, as was natural, for he had had several councils with Howard, including the last one which led to the war. He said (Chapman interpreting) :

***"Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before — I have it in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Too-hul-hul-sit is dead. Looking Glass is dead. He-who-led-the-young-men-in-battle [my brother Alikut] is dead. The chiefs are all dead. It is the young men now who say 'yes' or 'no'. My little daughter has run away upon the prairie. I do not know where to find her — perhaps I shall find her too among the dead. It is cold and we have no fire ; no blankets. Our little children are crying for food but we have none to give. Hear me, my chiefs. From where the sun now stands, Joseph will fight no more forever."***



**Mais, avant de se rendre,** les Nez Percés avaient erré sur quelque 1500 km, à travers l'Oregon, l'Idaho, le Wyoming et le Montana, et ils avaient su tenir à distance la 7ème cavalerie.

Les garçons de mon âge ont lu des histoires d'indiens, admiré les indiens, et joué aux indiens. Je ne veux pas les priver de cet extrait du récit de Charles Erskine Scott Wood, quand il décrit comment les Nez Percés ont su tromper leurs ennemis.

**Maar, eer het zover was,** en de Nez Percés zich gewonnen gaven, hadden ze een tocht van 1500 km afgelegd, door Oregon, Idaho, Wyoming en Montana, en de 7de cavalerie op afstand weten te houden. Jongens van mijn generatie hebben indianenboeken verslonden, indianen bewonderd, en *indiaantje* gepeeld. Hen onthou ik niet graag dit korte uittreksel, waarin Charles Erskine Scott Wood beschrijft hoe de snuggere Nez Percés hun belagers verschalkten.

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*(Charles Erskine Scott Wood, 1936) — Hart Mountain (Wyoming), 1877*

[General] Howard had wired [colonel] Sturgis to have his six or seven troops of the Seventh Cavalry watching for Joseph's debouchment from the mountains somewhere in the neighborhood of Hart Mountain, for we judged by his line of trail and the trend of the water-courses and passes that he would have to descend from the mountains at that point. We tried to send messengers ahead of the Nez Percé to give Sturgis definite information of our coming, but not one of our couriers got through, all being killed by the Indians. Nevertheless it did not seem possible for Joseph to make the maneuver in this country which he had done at the eastern end of the Lolo Trail — that is, go over the hills and around the waiting enemy. I shall never forget the actual pass through which he made his exit into Clark Basin near Hart Mountain.

It was the spout of a funnel — the dry bed of a mountain torrent, with such precipitous walls on either side that it was like going through a gigantic rough railroad tunnel. Had Sturgis remained at Hart Mountain in accordance with instructions, ready and watching, Joseph's escape would certainly have been blocked. But in the night Joseph had sent a few of his young men quietly around Sturgis' force toward Hart Mountain. There, at daybreak, they stirred up a great dust by tying sagebrush to their lariats and riding around furiously, dragging the bundles of brush along the ground. Sturgis thought Joseph's whole body had got past him, and started in pursuit of the long dust trail, abandoning the mouth of the pass. When he saw it clear Joseph went through safely. The young men who had acted as decoys made a long circuit and joined Joseph out on the easy plains of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers.



## COW COUNTRY

In the 1880s, days of the open range, many a roundup outfit worked this country. The spring roundup gathered the cattle in order to brand and tally the calf crop. The fall roundup gathered beef critters for shipping.

An outfit consisted of the captain, the riders, the 'reps' from neighboring ranges, the cavvy or horse herd in charge of the day herder and night hawk, the four horse chuck wagon piloted by the cook and the bed wagon driven by his flunky. Camp moved each day.

The cowboys rode circle in the morning, combing the breaks and coulees for cattle and heading them toward the central point to form a herd. In the afternoons of spring roundup the guards kept the herd together, the cutters split out the cows with calves, the ropers dabbled their loops on the calves, took a couple of dally welts around the saddle horn and dragged 'em to the fire. There the calf wrestlers flanked and flopped them and the brander decorated them with ear notches, or dew laps, and a hot iron. It wasn't all sunshine and roses.

Marker Erected by Montana Department of Transportation



***History of the upper Musselshell Valley to 1920 (excerpts)***  
***Harold Joseph Stearns, 1966***

**about roundups — 1878, 1880, 1884**

**1**

**The roundups were conducted in the spring for branding and in the fall for shipment. The Musselshell Association took in the entire valley, the upper Musselshell, and to the east, the Flatwillow country.**

**Roundups conducted by the association were usually subdivided into two groups covering these two regions. Additional riders were sent to the neighboring roundups, the Judith, the Moccasin and those conducted on the Yellowstone. J.H. Freeser was the captain of the early Musselshell roundups. He was in charge of the overall operation and designated the workings of the gathered cowboys. In 1878, the first large roundup in the Musselshell, Freeser had sixty men and about 300 head of horses.**

**Cattle were allowed to graze throughout the Musselshell Valley. Thus, to handle the roundups, the cattlemen had to follow a pattern of fanning out in all directions from one area, gather cattle, move them to a designated location and corrals, then start the same process the following day until the entire range was covered. The area covered and problems which characterized by the roundup in 1880 was indicative of the Musselshell roundup and its work. →**



(\*) *the Rocky Mountain Husbandman* = un journal local à White Sulphur Springs (Meagher County, Montana, quelque 90 km à l'ouest de Harlowton).

*husbandman* = (littéralement) qui s'occupe de la maison ; concrètement un laboureur, parfois un éleveur, un jardinier, un vigneron...

(\*) *the Rocky Mountain Husbandman* = een lokale krant in White Sulphur Springs (Meagher County, Montana, ongeveer 90 km ten westen van Harlowton).

*husbandman* = (letterlijk) huishouder ; *in concreto* een landbouwer, soms een veehouder, een tuinier, een wijnbouwer...

« *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.* » (John 15:1)

**1880** — "*The Musselshell roundup reorganized last week, J. H. Freeser, the ruling spirit, who has so long governed the boys, was prevailed upon to accept the position again. Mr. Miller was selected as his assistant. The party at the time our informant left numbered about 75 men and 400 horses. They crossed to the south side of the river [Musselshell] and united with the round-up from the Yellowstone a few days since in the vicinity of American Fork, and started down the river to pay their respects to camp of fifty lodges of Bloods and Piegan Indians somewhere in that region, and demand the return of the horse stolen from the Yellowstone this spring, which had been seen in their camp, and to also ask them to desist from killing cattle.*"

(the Rocky Mountain Husbandman, May 27, 1880)

(...)

**1884** — "*Now it has grown to a mammoth concern composed of about 100 men, 85 riders, 1,000 saddle horses and nearly a dozen tents, and represented over 100,000 head of cattle. Yet this did not embrace it all as they had sent twenty-five men to the Yellowstone, some to the Judith, and some to the Flat Willow round-ups. The range traversed is over 150 miles in length [250 km], extending from the head of the valley to the big bend of the Musselshell, and is from 40 to 70 miles in width [65 to 110 km].*"

(the Rocky Mountain Husbandman, June 19, 1884)



***History of the upper Musselshell Valley to 1920 (excerpts)***  
***Harold Joseph Stearns, 1966***

**about homesteaders and landlocators — 1908-1910**

**2**

**Homesteaders came to eastern Meagher County to build homes of the free or cheap, unbroken, virgin prairie land. These people had been swayed by their own dreams, the influencing propaganda of the railroads, land syndicates and local businessmen. Newspaper editors, land experts, real estate men, and ordinary people just like themselves promised a land of wealth and opportunity.**

**Thanks to the excursionist and immigration car rates of the Milwaukee and Great Northern railroads, the homeseeker came to the Musselshell in great numbers and at a minimum of expense. At the depot at Harlowton or Judith Gap or Hedgesville, the homeseeker stepped off the train into the bright sunshine. He saw a small town and prairie lands stretching for miles to the mountains in the distance. He bought a newspaper at the station and read part of a large front page story of the recent visit of soil expert Professor Thomas Shaw. The article proclaimed this land the finest in the world, so valuable in potash, humus and phosphorous that it could even be sold for fertilizer. *[Judith Gap Journal, November 20, 1908]* Interrupted midway through this "scientific" soil analysis, the homeseeker was approached by a man introducing himself as a land locator. For a fee of twenty dollars, he promised to locate the homeseeker on the best piece of land in the Musselshell Valley. →**



➔ The homeseeker, alone or with his friends from the same town in a midwestern state, would climb into the car or buggy of the locator and drive through the main, and often only, street of the town and follow a long, straight dirt road into the country.

The landman took the unknowing homeseeker out to view the agricultural lands in the vicinity which had yielded dry land crops a year before of twenty or thirty bushels to the acre. They continued their ride over the flat benchland, stopping again at a small shack in the middle of a large, open field. This was the home of another recent arrival. The men watched the horse-drawn plow unearth the grassland for the first time and the locator stopped the farmer, whom he had also located, and introduced the men. They spoke of the area, the soil, the climate, and last year's harvest on a neighboring quarter-section, and they likely found they were from the same area of Iowa. If the homeseeker had been unimpressed before, he was eager to settle in the Musselshell now.

Hastily departing, the locator and his homeseeker went to view the free land on the public domain. As the buggies of Model-T's bumped along over the prairie, the locator and the homesteader chose a location. They marked the spot on the map provided by the locator and started back to town. Now or later, the locator, who was also a real estate man, pointed to another tract of grassland nearby. This was the grazing land of the former ranchers. As the locator-realtor hastened to point out, this land was owned by the company he happened to represent, but was for sale at a moderate price. The homeseeker was encouraged to buy a tract, as prices would go up with more settlers arriving to settle up the free government land. The Easterner, impressed with the unbroken soil, the mountains in the distance, the talk with another homesteader and the realtor, decided to buy the additional tract to insure a rich return on his free-land investment. The realtor returned with the new homesteader to town. For his own part, he was satisfied with another day's service to his community, his firm and himself.



***History of the upper Musselshell Valley to 1920 (excerpts)***  
***Harold Joseph Stearns, 1966***

**about the Montana-Holland Colonization Company — 1909,1910**

**(Interview with John Willems, Harlowton, November 27, 1965.**

**Mr. Willems said Father Heuval spoke of Hedgesville in most glowing terms and *"whatever a priest said must be true."* The experiences of these few families fits the example of many others, in Eastern Meagher County and elsewhere.)**

**Marion Small, brother of Sam J. Small, editor and publisher of the Judith Gap Journal, helped to establish the town of Hedgesville and was sincere enough in his belief in the community's potential to build his own homestead newspaper plant. He called his paper *The Hedges Herald*. His first issue came off the press in time to proudly proclaim that *"no less than two hundred families of Holland Dutch"* were to move in the Hedgesville area during the fall of 1909.**

**(...)**

**The Dutch colonists were expected to raise sugar beets as one of their chief industries. The editor predicted the community would soon have a sugar beet factory and become a strong rival to the irrigated beet farms near Billings.**

**In actuality, however, the Dutch who did come to the Hedgesville community were much different additions than had been forecast. Their experience was typical of many misled homesteaders.**

**(...)**

**A colonization group with the auspicious title of Montana-Holland Colonization Company was organized. Harry Giltinan of White Sulphur Springs and a Mr. McCann of Lewistown handled the company workings. →**



➔ **Their first step was to enlist the help of a Catholic priest, Father Van Heuval, a Dutchman by origin who had come to America and had parishes in North Dakota and Montana, most recently in the Judith Basin. Giltinan and McCann paid the expenses to return Father Heuval to his native North Brabant, Holland, near the Belgium border.**

**Father Heuval visited many of his old friends, encouraging them to make the move to Hedgesville. He gave glowing reports on the recent dry land farming successes in Montana and told of the great areas of land being offered for sale to interested farmers. Five families and three bachelors answered Father Heuval's call and decided to move to Hedgesville.**

**The families came in two groups, the first arriving in Hedgesville in the fall of 1909, the second in the spring of 1910. They traveled by ship, landed in New York and crossed the rest of the continent by train. The families arrived with little money and nothing more than their immediate personal possessions. Two families, the VanderVorts and the Willemses contracted to pay \$40 per acre for 160 acres apiece, with about half the land irrigable. The Montana-Holland Colonization Company agreed to finance the families, providing four horses and a minimum of farming equipment. The two families stayed on this land for two years when they made the decision to follow the example of the others.**

**The VanderSloots, Joseph Schriks, Andrew Collen, Koos, Kees VerMeer, John Spithoven and the one Belgian, Louis Reypens, had filed on homestead land (\*). The two families who had purchased land for \$40 an acre, like the others, did not know of the Homestead Law when they first arrived. The others learned of it after the two families bought land and before they had decided which land to take from the company. In the ensuing ten years, the small Dutch community worked their lands together and farmed as best they could. These were the only Dutch coming to the United States under the auspices of the Montana-Holland Colonization Company. The two hundred families expected by Editor Marion Small never materialized.**

**(\*) Door de Homestead Law kon een huishouden tot 65 ha land (160 acres) aan een zeer lage prijs, zelfs gratis krijgen, onder de voorwaarden het zelf te bewerken.**

**(\*) La Homestead Law permettait à un ménage d'acquérir à bas prix, voire gratis, quelque 65 ha de terres (160 acres), à condition de travailler soi-même cette terre.**



















































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## THE ARROW CREEK HILL

In 1880, Granville Stuart, one of Montana's earliest pioneers, wrote "We started at 6 A.M. but it took us an hour and a half to climb the fearful bad land hill on the east side of Arrow Creek." The steep and rugged Arrow Creek hill has been a challenge to transportation since the late nineteenth century. T.C. Power, a prominent Montana businessman, developed the route over this hill to serve the gold camps north of Lewistown and as a freight line from Fort Benton to Billings. For several years, the Montana Stage Company carried mostly mail and express over the road.

In June 1894, Oscar Johnston, an old time stage driver, started his Benton and Lewistown Stage Company with two Concord stages named "Mabel" and "Georgy" after his children. These Concord stages were built in Concord, New Hampshire and had a unique suspension system of heavy leather straps designed to roll and stay level rather than jerk or bounce. Pulled by four to six horses, the stages carried passengers, mail, freight and even dynamite. Although only a ten to thirteen hour "fine daylight drive" from Lewistown to Fort Benton, the introduction of railroads and automobiles into Central Montana eventually doomed the old stagelines.

















U.S.  
MAIL  
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POSTWOMAN  
182





































Square Butte









**Marias River, Toole County, Interstate Highway 15**









Marias  
River









Roundup, Musselshell County

















































SCENIC  
TURNOUT  
←



SCENIC  
TURNOUT










### NATURE'S OPEN BOOK

**G**lacial Lake Great Falls was formed when the Missouri was blocked by ice near the beginning of the Wisconsin Ice Age, about 15,000 years ago. As the ice melted, water spilled over the north side of the Highwoods, thundering over a tremendous horseshoe cataract. When the water receded, the granite cliffs and Lost Lake remained. The gigantic flow of the Missouri River's new channel carved out the half-mile wide "Big Sag" before joining the Arrow Creek drainage and flowing on east. Part of the Big Sag is visible when traveling south on Highway 80 from Square Butte to Arrow Creek.







## PRAIRIE MOUNTAINS

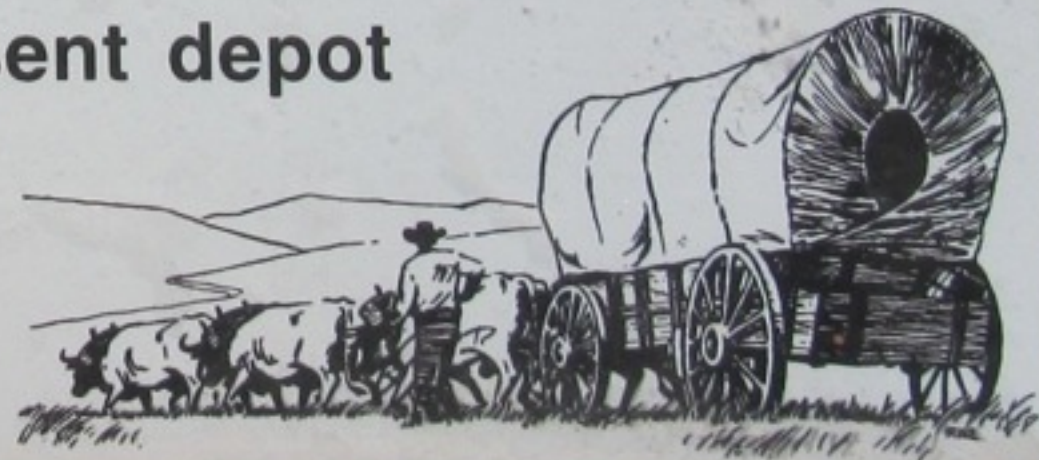
**F**ifty million years ago volcanic activity created the scene before you. Most of the molten rock magma erupted to the surface through volcanic vents, forming the Highwood Mountains. Some magma injected into layers of sedimentary rock forming a large blister which cooled into a "laccolith." Molten magma was also forced into vertical cracks in the sedimentary layer of sandstone laid down by an ancient sea and formed dikes. Dikes are usually ten to fifteen feet thick and several miles long. They radiate from volcanic centers like spokes on a giant wheel. They form an extraordinarily large proportion of all



## SETTLERS ARRIVE

**O**pen range cattle ranchers settled amid the lush grasses of the Big Sag in 1876. The 1909 Homestead Act ended that period and brought the "honyockers" with their plows to turn the grass. Life was hard, but eventually the land became one of the richest grain-producing areas in the United States. The homestead towns of Square Butte and Geraldine grew up around the Milwaukee Railroad that arrived in 1913. Square Butte was the water and coal stop for steam locomotives into the 1950's. Geraldine was named for the wife of William Rockefeller, a stockholder in the

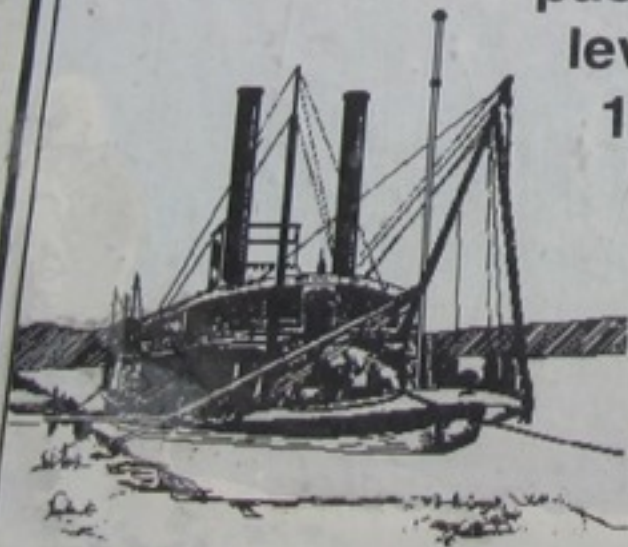
Milwaukee Road. The present depot was visited by Geraldine Rockefeller, who also assisted in its maintenance.





## STEAMBOAT NAVIGATION

**J**ust over the brow of this hill, nestled against the banks of the Missouri, is Fort Benton. It was the head of steamboat navigation on the Missouri, the world's innermost port. Below this point is a shelf in the river that prevented further passage. Along Front Street is a mile-and-a-half levee. From 1860 until the railroad arrived in 1887, most of the freight for the northwestern U.S. and Canada was unloaded on the levee. Come down the hill and walk along the Missouri, where those who came off the decks of steamboats began their lives in Montana.







**Missouri River, Chouteau County (near Fort Benton)**





**Yellowstone River (and view on snowy Gallatin Mountains)**





Yellowstone River





**Hier wachtte ik bijna drie kwartier om een foto van een trein te nemen. Er kwam geen trein.  
Maar ik zag hoe de wind met het gras en de wolken speelde.  
Ici, j'ai attendu presque trois quarts d'heure pour photographier un train, mais aucun n'est venu.  
J'ai donc regardé le vent jouer avec l'herbe et les nuages.**





**Je zou foto's moeten kunnen nemen, waarin gras wiegt in de wind, bladeren beven, en water lichtjes golft.  
Zoals het werk van David Claerbout, dat ik ooit in Straatsburg zag. Een foto van een klas, kinderen dromen, kijken naar de bomen, de bladeren trillen.  
Il faudrait pouvoir prendre des photos, dans lesquelles le vent berce les herbes, tremble les feuilles et ride la surface de l'eau.  
Comme l'œuvre de David Claerbout, que je vis à Strasbourg. La photo d'une classe, les enfants rêvassent, fixent les arbres, les feuilles tremblent.**





**Rocky Mountains, view from the Blackfeet Indian Reservation**





## SQUARE BUTTE AND SHONKIN SAG



Between the communities of Square Butte and Geraldine, two prominent geologic features dominate the skyline. About 50 million years ago, the Highwood Mountains had a sizeable volcano that erupted a rare rock called shonkinite, a dark rock similar to basalt. About 65 million years ago, magma injected eastward between layers of sandstone laid down along the shores of a broad inland sea extending to the southeast. Locally, that magma bulged up to form a huge blister or "laccolith" that solidified to form the immense flat-topped Square Butte to the south. The vertical cracks that fed magma to the laccolith radiated out from the center of the volcano and are called dikes. Square Butte is one of many laccoliths scattered from the Adel Mountains south of Great Falls to the Bears Paw Mountains near Havre.

During the Bull Lake Ice Age between 70,000 and 130,000 years ago, the continental ice sheet spreading south from Canada blocked the Missouri River, backing up its water to form Glacial Lake Great Falls. The glacial meltwater poured eastward through the Highwoods to erode Shonkin Sag, the large valley extending west, north of Square Butte. Shonkin Sag is one of the most famous abandoned meltwater channels in the world.

**Maintenant que je relis ce panneau,  
et cherche des images de Shonkin Sag,  
je comprends que  
je retournerai au Montana.  
Mes guides et mes cartes  
ne m'ont rien dit de Shonkin Sag.**

**Nu ik dit bord pas echt herlees,  
en beelden van Shonkin Sag opzoek,  
weet ik dat ik terugga naar Montana.  
Mijn gidsen en kaarten hadden  
me niets verteld over Shonkin Sag.**