BAS 076 Omar Bradley Raid Welcome to Butte, America’s Story. I’m your host, Dick Gibson.

Methodists were second only to Catholics in number in early Butte, and by 1900 there were nine Methodist (or Methodist Episcopal as they were at the time) churches in Butte. Both Mountain View at Montana and Quartz and St. Paul’s at Idaho and Galena contain stained glass that was likely manufactured by the Butte Art Stained Glass Works in the 300 block of South Main. Both are in the same style.

Noted architect William White designed St. Paul’s church. It cost $10,000 in 1899, including a steeple (since removed) above the entry. Architect White was in partnership with A. Werner Lignell in 1900. Their offices were in the Silver Bow Block (the old one, where the parking lot stands today just west of Main on Granite Street). In 1901 White’s independent office was in the Bee Hive Building on East Broadway (part of the old NorthWestern Energy buildings today) and he was living at 1035 Caledonia.

By 1918, the church was owned by mortician (and later Silver Bow Sheriff) Larry Duggan, a sympathizer with the incendiary Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The building then housed the Butte Daily Bulletin (later known as the Butte Strike Bulletin), a radical newspaper voicing policies of the anti-Anaconda Nonpartisan League and published by William F. Dunne. On September 13, 1918, local police and federal troops under Major Omar N. Bradley raided the Bulletin, arresting twenty-four men including Dunne and thwarting a miners’ strike. The Finlander Hall on North Wyoming (north of the Motel 6 today) was another IWW stronghold that was raided that night.

The raid was a consequence of one of the edicts of Montana’s Council of Defense, which had ordered that no weekly newspaper could become a daily paper – an action aimed squarely at the Butte Bulletin, essentially the only newspaper in the state that expressed any anti-Anaconda sentiment. The raid came three weeks after the Bulletin consciously violated that edict.

Omar Bradley had been posted to Butte earlier in 1918 to keep the peace in the ongoing labor unrest. It’s unlikely that Bradley was happy to be here; he wanted to be in Europe fighting the Great War. His first child was stillborn in Butte, and even when he was promoted and sent toward the war soon after the raid on the Butte Strike Bulletin, he only made it as far east as Iowa. The great influenza epidemic took hold in October 1918 and the war ended in November, so Bradley had to wait more than two decades before rising to become Eisenhower’s second in command in the European Theater of World War II.

Bill Dunne was elected to the Montana legislature in November 1918 while awaiting trial for sedition in the editorial content of the Butte Bulletin. He was convicted, but went on to become a founding member of the American Communist Party and editor of its newspaper, the Daily Worker. He was expelled from the party in 1946 for being too left-wing, even for the communists.

In later years, Larry Duggan operated his mortuary in the former St. Paul’s church, and more recently Beverly Hayes ran a bridal shop in the building.

As writer Edwin Dobb has said, "Like Concord, Gettysburg, and Wounded Knee, Butte is one of the places America came from." Join us next time for more of Butte, America’s Story.