BAS 169 Mayflower Mine Welcome to Butte, America’s Story. I’m your host, Dick Gibson.

We know, of course, that W.A. Clark had his fingers in many mineral pies beyond Butte, in Arizona and Nevada among others. But he was also involved in mining outside the Butte District, and not too far away, as indicated by an 1898 letter to him (in New York) from the Superintendent of the Mayflower Mine south of Whitehall.

The letter head is for the Mayflower Mining Company, W.A. Clark, President; J. R. Clark, Vice Pres.; A.J. Johnson, Treasurer; C.W. Clark, Secretary; B.C. Leyson, Superintendent of Mines

Butte Office: Over W.A. Clark & Bros. bank, cor. Main and Broadway

The letter was Dated Gaylord, Montana, July 14, 1898

To: William A. Clark, Esq., #43 Cedar St., New York

Dear Sir:

The North drift at the 120 foot level is looking much better again this morning.

There is 4½ feet of ore in the bottom and 6½ feet in the top. This drift is in 28 feet. Comensing [sic] with today the N.P. R. Ry will only run trains into Parrot on Tuesdays and Fridays of each week. The two ore trains are hauling every day. I expect the third to commence tomorrow.

Yours Respectfully,

Bassett C. Leyson, Supt. Of mines

Clark led the Mayflower Mining Company from 1896 to 1901, during which time production totaled about $1,250,000 worth of gold in 1900 dollars. The high-grade ore from the main mine averaged $150 per ton. The mine began from a 700-foot tunnel, with a 925-foot winze (a sub-vertical shaft) that found ore at several different elevations. The ore was mostly native gold in carbonate, but also included commercially valuable tellurides and sulfides.

The reference in this letter to Parrot is to a railroad siding on Parrot Bench south of Whitehall, where the Parrot Smelter was located. The nearby company town of Gaylord (named for original superintendent Jared Gaylord) came to be referred to as Parrot, and when the Amalgamated (Anaconda) took over operations about 1902, the smelter was abandoned.

43 Cedar Street in New York City today is in the heart of lower Manhattan’s Financial District, two blocks from Broadway and two blocks from Wall Street. So far as I can tell, the building contained several law offices and at least one publishing company, and I think it is gone today; the space seems to hold a small plaza and fountain.

The Clark & Bros. Bank in Butte at 49 N. Main (southwest corner with Broadway) was a two-story building that included a barber shop and bath house in the basement as recently as 1900. The bank continued in a new reinforced concrete building erected in 1916, which was ultimately replaced by the present building in the 1960s. Butte’s first two-story building, the Hotel de Mineral, had occupied this corner in 1875.

Bassett Leyson also worked on mines in Walkerville for Clark. Born in Wisconsin in 1858, he traveled by schooner in 1871 to Panama, across the isthmus by wagon train, and by boat to California. He died in Bozeman in 1942, with a front-page Montana Standard article covering his death February 6.

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.