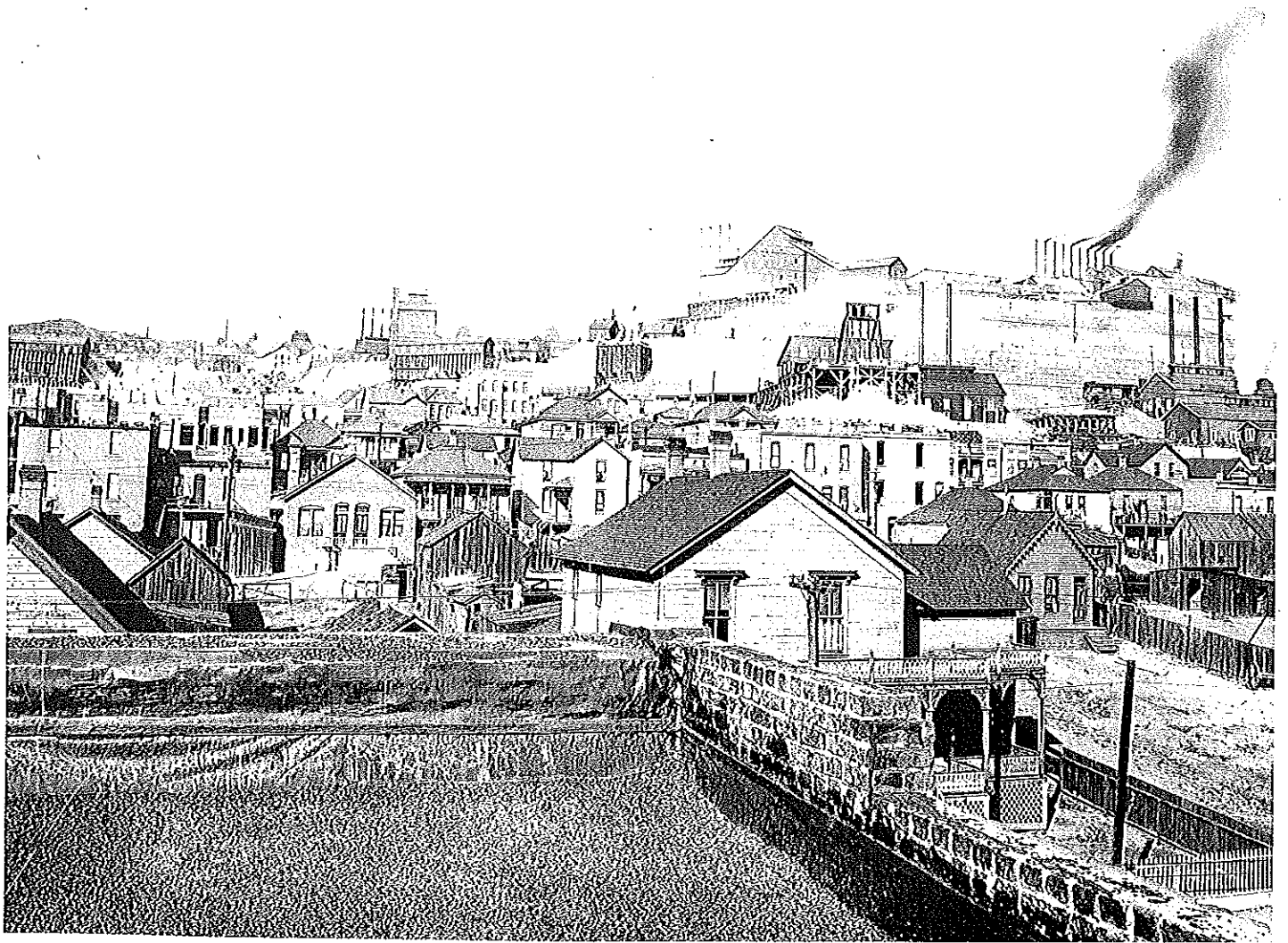


Looking Back From the Hill:

Recollections of Butte People



FIRST
EDITION

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Then I was driving a six-horse ore wagon there, hauling ore on the Hill there there, hauling ore on the Hill there behind the Gardens. We hauled seven ton with a six. Hauled five with a four. The Receiver is up from the Receiver. That was on the turn there, going over the mountain. Behind the Pit there, now. We hauled seven ton with a six. Hauled five with a four. The Receiver is up behind the Gardens. We hauled to the Washoe sampler.

The wintertime, you had a roughlock* on one wheel and a shoe on the other. The shoe was a piece of iron like an I-beam. You run the wheel up in it and chained it so the wagon would stay in the track, 'cause the roughlock would swing you over and pull you off the road altogether. So you had to have a shoe on to keep the wagon straight. If you'd break a roughlock, you had your hands full then. You had to either out-run it or... you know...

The wheelers (wheel horses) weighed over a ton apiece. They went around twenty-one, twenty-two hundred apiece, the wheel horses. Then you'd get up to the pointers. They'd run around eighteen, maybe, and then the leaders run around sixteen, seventeen. A lot of people think the pointers was out on the lead, the lead team, you know. Why they called them the pointers, the pointers was hooked on the end of the tongue. They were the ones that swung your wagon where you wanted it to go.

A lot of them skimmers, they'd try to keep them right in line to make a tough pull if they got stuck. I didn't do that. I let the pointers swing, and the leaders might pull the chain over on the other side of the pointers so they could get footing where they wanted to, and they'd probably take you out every time. Just let them swing the way they wanted to, to get it moving.

I remember all the teams lined up there at Lutey's barn. Lutey's on Galena Street there. Loading out. They had horses there then. Fifteen or twenty teams there loading groceries. Right there on Galena Street. Used to run them half a day, those teams, and then change horses at noon on them. They couldn't stand it all day.

We used to haul ore out of the Salvadore. McGlone Heights is in there now. Some old prospectors, two of them. I went in there loaded one day, and they had a little blacksmith shop with a forge. Tied the nose bags on the horses and went in there to eat. I was sitting there eating and I looked over at the forge and they had four or five sticks of powder sitting by the forge. One of them was burning on the end. I really unloaded out of there. I told them. "Oh," he said, "that's all right. It's thawing out." He rubbed it in the ashes there and put it down again. Boy! I thought that was really something. A stick of dynamite with the end of it burning. I suppose it takes a bang to set it off.

You never knew where you were going to haul ore until you got to the barn in the morning, ready to leave. There must have been, oh, I'd say, a hundred and thirty head of horses in two barns down there. This was where the Pit's got their garage now. Yeah, they had a lot of horses there. You'd unhook them off the wagon. The water trough was in the barn there, and they'd drink in the barn. With all them stalls, none of them horses would ever go in the wrong stall. People say they're stupid, well, they knew where to go. 'Seemed funny. They never got in the wrong ones.

I had a wheel team. One weighed 2150 and the other weighed a little better. King and Colonel, them wheelers' names were. That big Colonel, he never laid down in the barn.

* A roughlock was usually a chain wrapped around the wheel to keep it from slipping with the brake on.

No, he never laid down. At noontimes, when you tied an oat bag on him, you know, a gunny sack—you made your oat bags out of gunny sacks—he'd go to sleep and fall down. The sun and heat on him. You think that wasn't something trying to get him up! He didn't know how to get up, because he never laid down in the barn. Have to take the harness off of him. If he was crooked a little ways, you'd have to take the other horse and try to turn him over. Gee, you'd put in two hours lost time right there trying to get him on his feet. But he'd lean against the stall at nighttime. He never laid down, just leaned. Then he'd go to sleep at noon and lean on the stall, and it wasn't there and he'd fall down. He'd always fall out. If he had fell in, the other horse would have caught him, but he always fell out.

Yeah, they were great days. Go to Walkerville in the morning to haul ore up there. Take two six-horse teams and four men. You loaded: you mucked it on and you mucked it off. You loaded a fifty-ton car. Each man had to handle twenty-five ton that day. Put it in the car. You had to have a good swamper (helper), or you had the biggest part of it to do. I had an old swamper with me by the name of Mose. What he was, I don't know. All I knew was he was a worker. God, that guy could work.

Behind the old post office, that was the B and B Livery Barn. Cooney's Livery Barn was down where the Winter Garden was. The Butte Ice, they had a lot of horses. They were on the corner of Platinum and Main where the gas station is now. And across the street was old Quinn's blacksmith shop. Freeman Quinn used to shoe horses. One thing about them livery barns, they never had to worry about hauling the manure away. The Chinamen from the Nine Mile come and got it all. The Chinamen kept them barns clean as a whistle. Right down in the bottom, before you get to the Nine Mile, that was all Chinese gardens, and they had gardens in there! They hauled all the time, keeping them barns clean.

Old Doctor Burgman. He's been dead for seventy years, I guess. He was a veterinarian here. He used to take care of the Express horses. The Express barn was on the corner of Washington and Aluminum. American Express. Montana Dairy, they kept their horses right there next to the Montana Hardware. Crystal Creamery, they kept theirs over to that barn. The Crystal Livery Stable was the name of that. That's on Wyoming Street where Butte High was.

There were days. Overtime was out. Never got paid overtime. Usually you'd leave home about five o'clock to go to work. To get your horses cuffed off (curry combed) and get the harness put on them and hooked up and try to get up to Walkerville by eight o'clock to start work. When you got the car loaded, you'd have to come home again. Then take the harness off. 'Course you didn't cuff them off at night; you cuffed them off in the morning. But you had to feed. In later years, they had a barnman down there. We didn't have to feed, just put the halters on them and drive them in the stalls. It's funny, like I tell you about those horses going in their stalls. You'd turn your six out in the morning and they'd come out of the barn. They'd go right over and get where they belonged on the wagon. They never got on the wrong way. The wheelers got on the point or the leaders on the wheel. They always got where they belonged.

Did I see W.A. Clark? When I lived down there on Iron Street, he come down Washington Street there. I don't know what year it was, maybe 1910 or '09, and he was walking behind the hack. Fat Jack was driving the hack and W.A. Clark was walking