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AN ANALYSIS OF HOMESTEADING IN  
ROOSEVELT COUNTY, MONTANA

by

Keith B. Jensen

B.A., Montana College of Mineral Science & Technology, 1974

Professional Paper

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

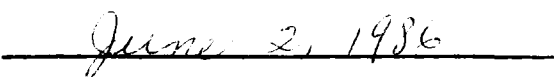
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## PREFACE

### Statement of Purpose

The homestead era is of particular interest to me. My grandfathers, Benjamin Harrison Spencer of Expanse and Oscar P. Jensen of McCabe, were two of the thousands of individuals who came to present-day Roosevelt County, Montana during the first two decades of the Twentieth Century. Their struggle, along with that of their cohorts, against seemingly insurmountable odds developed the foundations of an agricultural economy.

Several historians have written about the Homesteader Era in Montana. Such books as K. Ross Toole's Twentieth-Century Montana: A State of Extremes and Michael Malone's and Richard Roeder's Montana: A History of Two Centuries discuss the era. Two other works which merit attention are Joseph Kinsey Howard's Montana: High, Wide, and Handsome and Mary Wilma Hargreaves' Dry Farming in the Northern Great Plains, 1900-1925.

The conclusions regarding homesteading reached in the above studies are generalized and refer in most cases to all of the area between the Rockies and the Dakota line. These broad-based assertions include the following: (1) A large number of homesteaders were foreign born. (2) Railroads and settlement associations played an important role during the period. (3) Most of the homesteaders had little farming experience. (4) The failure rate was extremely high. (5) Most

of those who left moved farther west or into Canada.

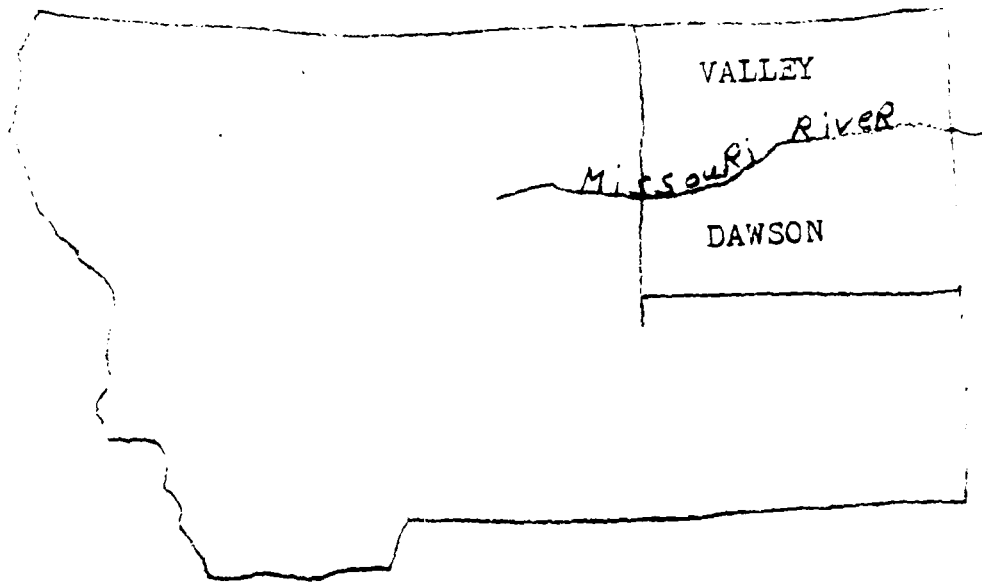
In the fall of 1978 while attending a Montana History seminar, Professor Toole suggested to me that an intensive study of homesteading in Northeastern Montana would prove to be of value. It was at that time that I began to plan a systematic study of that area. The major goal at its inception was to find out the destination of those homesteaders who left the area between 1918 and 1922.

Before I could find out who had left and where they had gone, I had to know who had been there in the first place. It was while compiling a list of all the original filers which I found in the Historical Library at Helena that a second idea occurred. I decided to analyze the outcome of each filing. This effort was directed at finding the specific success and failure rate within the county. With the help of a small computer, I was able to correlate the numerous entries recorded in the land records and to establish a failure/success ratio for Roosevelt County.

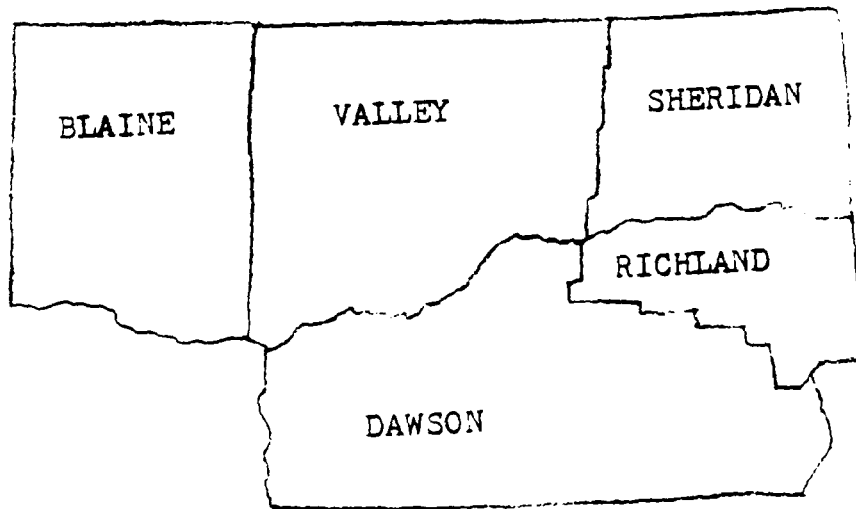
### County Origins

Prior to its formation in 1919, the area had first been a part of Valley County and then of Sheridan County. For clarity, this paper refers to the area as being that of Roosevelt County. (see Maps A-C, pages iv-v)

COUNTY DEVELOPMENT<sup>1</sup>



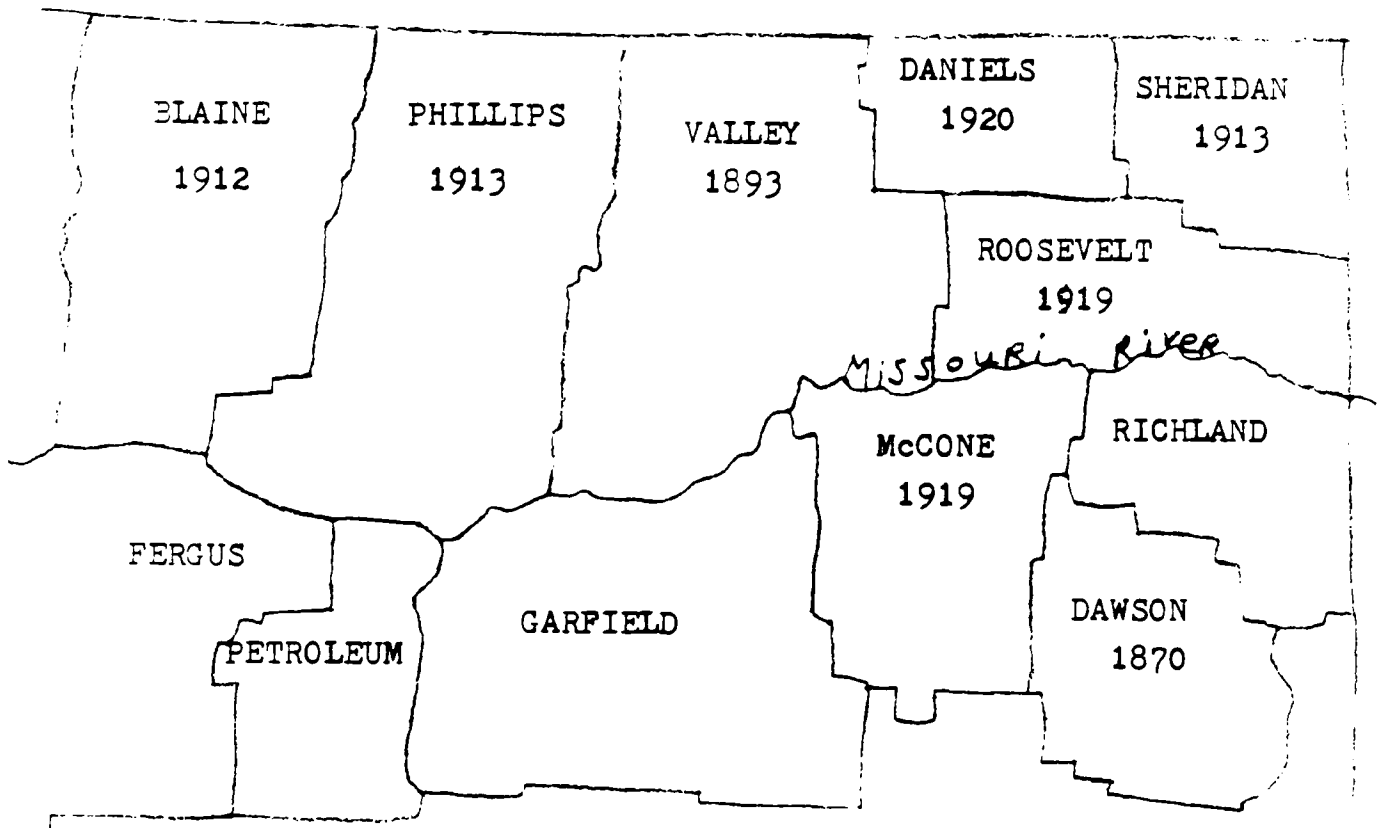
MAP A 1889



MAP B 1913



THE FINAL SPLIT



MAP C 1919

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CHAPTER ONE  
PHASES OF EXISTENCE

Introduction

The mid-1980's are a troubled time for Montana agriculture. Those who remain on the land in Roosevelt County face with other farmers across the state the ominous spectre of community disintegration. They worriedly ponder the tragic question posed so often after a hurried glance at the auction notices in Wolf Point or Poplar or Froid. Who is next?

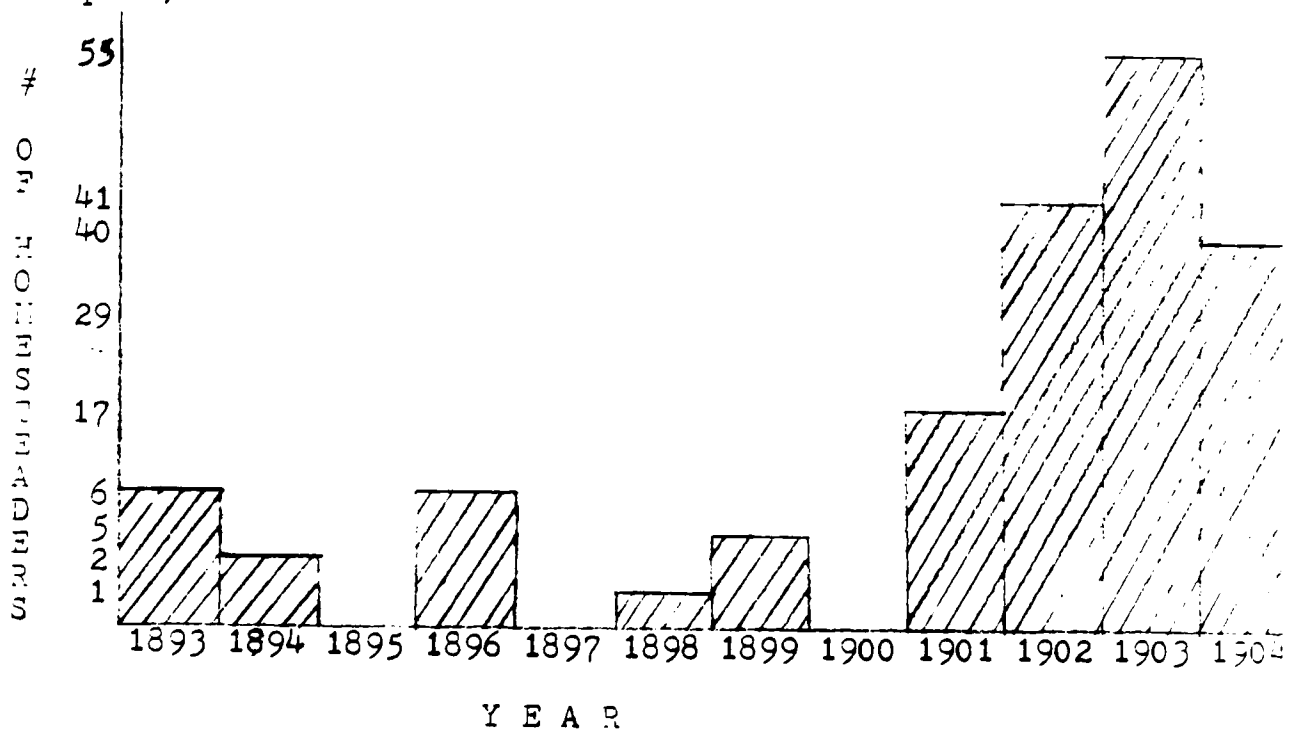
Staying on the land in Northeastern Montana has never been an easy chore. Those who are the true old timers, men who were the first to attack this land, attest that the "good years," those which combined good crops with adequate prices, have not been the rule but rather the exception over the last seventy-five years.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the period, hope has nurtured the farmer. Each April, the rejuvenation of the exuberant expectation that the coming crop year will be a good year or perhaps a great year like 1928 revitalizes the county. Now this spiritual commitment, this annual optimism, is nearly extinguished. Only a miracle can reverse economic and natural forces from completing in an awful finality the continued movement off the land.

First Land-Seekers: 1885-1905

Homesteading in Roosevelt County spanned a period of three and one-half decades and occurred in three distinct

phases. During the earliest period, the settler population of eastern Roosevelt County was small, numbering about 205 individuals.<sup>2</sup> The relatively miniscule number of homesteaders in this early period was the direct result of three specific factors. First, fertile land was available for settlement in western North Dakota and the Prairie Provinces of Canada. In addition, a lack of adequate knowledge of the region among prospective homesteaders tended to restrict settlement. To a lesser degree, the absence of reliable transportation retarded development of the area. The Great Northern Railroad traversed the region in 1887. However, the completion of the line did not bring about an immediate land rush. Until the spring of 1905, only limited settlement occurred. (see Graph A)



GRAPH A: HOMESTEADERS SETTLING BEFORE 1905<sup>3</sup>

3

The first to file homestead claims in eastern Roosevelt County were ranchers and cowboys drawn there by the prospect of excellent grass upon which cattle, horses and sheep thrived. A near-by market for horses was available because of the construction of the Great Northern Railroad. Additional horses were sold to the citizens of the emerging town of Culbertson, while the cattle were at first trailed east to the railhead at Bismarck, North Dakota. After 1887, the Great Northern provided cars for the shipment of cattle to eastern population centers.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, the lush grasslands appealed to ranchers such as Luke Sweetman, T.S. Dwyer, Tom Evans and William McBride.

These pioneering individuals, along with the contingent of cowhands whom they employed, filed on the first homesteads in present-day Roosevelt County. Although a limited number of filings were made to obtain holdings near Culbertson, most were made to secure water rights along the Missouri and Little Muddy Rivers. A large majority (90 per cent) of these claims were filed upon under the provisions of the Desert Land Act (1877) while the others were subject to the provisions of the original Homestead Act (1862).<sup>5</sup>

Although few in number, the original homesteaders often showed great determination and tenacity as evidenced by Thomas Cushing Courchene. Courchene, a former scout for General Custer, remained in the area for many years. His own story of determination and bravado concerns the building of the

Great Northern Railroad. Not once but twice Courchene reportedly refused to let the railroad coerce him into acquiescing to its demands. The first instance concerned the location of his house. When the railroad survey came through in 1887, it was evident that the residence was directly on the survey line. When requested to move his home, Courchene refused. Finally, after much argument, construction crews put a curve in the line leaving the residence intact.<sup>6</sup>

In a second instance in 1888, Jim Hill, the founder of the Great Northern Railroad, made an inspection trip. It so happened that the Great Northern failed to pay Courchene some money which it owed him. Upon hearing of the trip, he promptly blocked the track with logs and forced the train carrying Hill to stop. At this point, Courchene confronted Hill as to where his payment was. After listening to his case, Hill promised to look into the matter when he returned to the Twin Cities. The logs were removed and the train continued on its way. Evidently, Courchene's efforts were not in vain for Hill kept his word and the Great Northern Railroad paid its debt to Courchene.<sup>7</sup>

Arrival of the Turtle Mountain Indians: 1905-1913

Between 1905 and 1913, the territory east of the Little Muddy filled with settlers. During this period, the towns of Bainville, Froid, McCabe, Lanark and Mondak were founded. Of these, Froid and Bainville exist today as viable towns. The "honyonkers," as these new settlers were named, rapidly



replaced and outnumbered the original group of cowboy claimants. Several factors were instrumental in promoting this influx of homesteaders. Prompted by railroad propaganda and the chance for free land, transplanted Midwesterners along with Scandinavian and European immigrants streamed into the area. The increase in precipitation in 1906,<sup>8</sup> with corresponding high crop yields, stimulated development. In addition, world demand for American wheat increased during the latter part of the period.<sup>9</sup>

The impact of propaganda far outweighed the other factors. The promotion efforts of the Great Northern and the survey and opening of additional land by the Federal Government within the county prompted significant increases in settlement. The two years of greatest influx were 1906 and 1910. In the first case, settlers arrived by chance during a very wet year. In the second instance, over 450 homesteaders, the greatest number for any one year up to that time, filed claims during the abnormally dry year of 1910. The survey and opening of additional land prompted this influx. Ironically, during both years, wheat prices were depressed. Wheat exports which totaled 150 million bushels in 1906 fell to 71 million by 1910.<sup>10</sup>

A second group, the Turtle Mountain Indians, had significant claims in the area. These Indian lands were independent of the Fort Peck Reservation. In 1904, the Turtle Mountain Indians, who were Chippewas, were granted allotments

in severality on their own reservation in North Dakota. Because the tribe had too many members, an equitable distribution could not be made. Therefore, Congress provided that those Indians who did not get acreage from the original reservation could take homesteads upon any vacant land belonging to the United States and still continue to have full tribal rights.<sup>11</sup> When the Indians in question selected their alternative lands, many chose locations in eastern Roosevelt County. Consequently, the Turtle Mountain Indians claimed several thousand acres of land between the Little Muddy River and the North Dakota line.

The mere suggestion that the Turtle Mountain Indians were planning to settle in eastern Roosevelt County stimulated white settlement of the area. In March, 1906, The Culbertson Searchlight reported that a large group of Turtle Mountain Indians were to locate upon surveyed land near Culbertson. Initial reports suggested that nearly five hundred families were involved.<sup>12</sup> If so, the Indians would occupy a significant amount of land. The local ranchers and settlers did not relish the idea of any great increase in the rural population. However, they preferred whites to Indians if settlement became inevitable.

The impending influx of Indians prompted an immediate effort on the part of Frank Reed, editor of the Searchlight. His letter to Representative Joseph Dixon brought an immediate response. Dixon assured the citizens of Culbertson and

7

surrounding area that it was indeed an outrage that North Dakota Indians were receiving land in Montana.<sup>13</sup> He subsequently filed a protest with the Indian Commissioner. That action elicited a negative response. No legal grounds existed with which to stop the movement of Turtle Mountain Indians into Montana.<sup>14</sup> The realization that allotted Indian lands were non-taxable for a period of twenty-five years exacerbated the problem. One method of keeping the Indians out remained: they could not occupy land which was already taken up by legitimate white homesteaders.

The initial step to speed the settlement of available land occurred on March 13, 1906. At a special meeting, concerned citizens of the Culbertson area composed a request which they forwarded to James Hill, president of the Great Northern Railroad. The letter implored that Hill hustle in homesteaders by the trainload, thus insuring white settlement in the immediate vicinity.<sup>15</sup>

The following Monday, March 19, another gathering occurred. At this meeting, interested parties formed the Culbertson and Big Muddy Land Seekers and Emigration Association. The primary goal of the organization was to bring as many settlers to the Culbertson area as soon as possible. The distribution of pamphlets praising the vicinity began at once. Furthermore, representatives went to Williston and Minot, North Dakota and made personal appeals to prospective settlers to come to Culbertson.<sup>16</sup>

The end of March, 1906 brought a surge in settlement. Promotional material depicted the area as being "Fair as the Garden of the Lord."<sup>17</sup> Concurrently, a reduction in freight and settlement rates occurred. In February, 1904, the Great Northern established a twenty dollar rate for immigrant cars from Minneapolis-St. Paul to any point east of Kalispell, Montana. In addition, a ten day stopover was allowed at any destination west of Minot, North Dakota. These special rates applied between March 1 and April 30 and between September 15 and October 15 of each year.<sup>18</sup> In April, 1906, responding to a request from the Culbertson Emigration Association, the Great Northern instituted a special landseekers rate. This discount, which was available every Tuesday, offered an immigrant transportation from Minneapolis-St. Paul to Culbertson for only seven dollars.<sup>19</sup>

The exact consequences of the Association's effort are difficult to determine. Prior to the Turtle Mountain announcement, the emigration authorities of the Great Northern Railroad contacted its representatives in Culbertson concerning the arrival of five hundred homestead families in the spring.<sup>20</sup> Also, available lands in North Dakota were rapidly being taken up. Consequently, the furor raised in the Culbertson area over the impending influx of Turtle Mountain Indians may have accelerated settlement which would have occurred in spite of the envisioned Indian problem.

#### Reservation Opportunity

Opened for settlement in 1913, the reservation lands

west of the Little Muddy presented a new opportunity for homesteading. Over three thousand land seekers eventually filed on most of the remaining acreage. However, by the spring of 1925, the number of farmers in the county totaled only 1267.<sup>21</sup> In the following months and years, their numbers continued to decline.

What part did government policy play in the Homestead Era? Where did the original pioneers go when they left the land? How long did those settlers, who eventually left, remain on their land? Why did so many fail? These questions are examined in the remaining chapters.

CHAPTER TWO  
THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE

Legal Background

Several specific and often interrelated factors significantly affected the settlement process. These included federal homestead legislation, state relief programs, land form, climate, and promotional propaganda.

Three basic trends characterized the development of homestead legislation. The first established larger acreages. The second shortened the time limit for proving up, while the third continued and expanded the policy of offering settlers aid during times of economic stress.

In 1862, Congress passed and President Lincoln signed into law the Homestead Act. This legislation and subsequent laws such as the Desert Land Act (1877) and the Enlarged Homestead Act (1909) provided the legal framework for the settlement of eastern Roosevelt County. West of the Little Muddy, lands on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation remained closed until 1913. When finally opened, settlers found additional special conditions applied to this area.

In December, 1886, a three member commission arrived at Fort Peck Agency located near the present site of Poplar. Upon their arrival, they met the chiefs and headmen of the Sioux and Assiniboine tribes and immediately negotiated an agreement. As a result the Indians gave up all claim to lands in the area with the following exception:

It is hereby agreed that the separate reservation for the Indians now attached to and receiving rations at the Fort Peck Agency, Montana shall be bounded as follows, to wit:

Beginning at a point in the middle of the main channel of the Missouri River, opposite the mouth of Big Muddy Creek; thence up the Missouri River, in the middle of the main channel thereof to a point opposite the mouth of Milk River; thence up the middle of the main channel of Milk River to Porcupine Creek; thence up Porcupine Creek in the middle of the main channel thereof, to a point forty miles due north in a direct line from the middle of the main channel of the Missouri River opposite the mouth of Milk River; thence due east to the middle of the main channel of Big Muddy Creek; thence down said creek, in the middle of the main channel thereof, to the place of beginning.<sup>1</sup>

This agreement established the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. Land west of the Little Muddy was reserved for Indian use while that on the east remained part of the Public Domain (see Map F, Appendix B). Between the 1886 signing and the opening of the Fort Peck Reservation for settlement in 1913, the adjacent sections were subject to different criteria concerning settlement.

Although the Dawes Act (1887) provided a basic framework for the allotment of land in severality to individual Indians, it was not until February, 1908 that an act passed Congress authorizing the allotment and sale of surplus lands on the Fort Peck Reservation. As early as August, 1904, Major C.R. Scobey, the Fort Peck Indian Superintendent, recommended opening the reservation to settlement. He indicated that Indians and Whites alike desired the action.<sup>2</sup> In response to public demand, Congressman Dixon introduced

legislation which would open the region and reservation Indians supported the bill provided they received a double portion or 320 acres of land.<sup>3</sup> By the end of January, 1906, passage of a bill opening the Fort Peck Reservation seemed near. Little opposition to the legislation developed until it became known that the Indian Department wanted to remove the Indians from the reservation. The Sioux were to be sent to the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota and the Assiniboine to Fort Belknap near present-day Harlem, Montana.<sup>4</sup> On at least three separate occasions, bills drawn up by the Montana Congressional Delegation died in committee. Then in 1907, a letter composed by state Senator Archibald Mahon, known as Senate Joint Memorial No. 2, presented a formal proposal requesting opening of the area to the United States Congress.<sup>5</sup>

In 1908, the Committee of Indian Affairs reported legislation authorizing the opening of Fort Peck Reservation for settlement. This bill fared better than previous ones because it did not provide for the removal of any Indians. Since it was originally drawn by the Indian Bureau, it supported Indian interests to a greater degree than earlier attempts. The measure which implemented the wishes of an Indian Conference held on the reservation in September, 1907 was supported by 95 per cent of the adult Indian population.<sup>6</sup>

Two additional factors caused this twenty-year delay. The actual settlement of the surrounding territory did not



begin to accelerate appreciably until 1905. Also, prior to legislation passed by the 59th Congress, lands allotted to Indians were held in trust for a period of twenty-five years.<sup>7</sup> The elimination of this time requirement for those Indians whom the Secretary of the Interior deemed competent promoted interest in white settlement; allotted acreage could now pass quickly into the hands of whites. Each white purchaser was limited, however, to 640 acres.<sup>8</sup>

Each Indian head of family received 320 acres of grazing land, twenty acres of timber land, and up to forty acres of irrigated land.<sup>9</sup> As illustrated by Plate A, the Indian allotments tended to concentrate along the Missouri River. This band of Indian land extended north through townships 27N and 28N. It included the territory between ranges 46E and 54E. Isolated Indian claims existed throughout the remainder of the reservation.

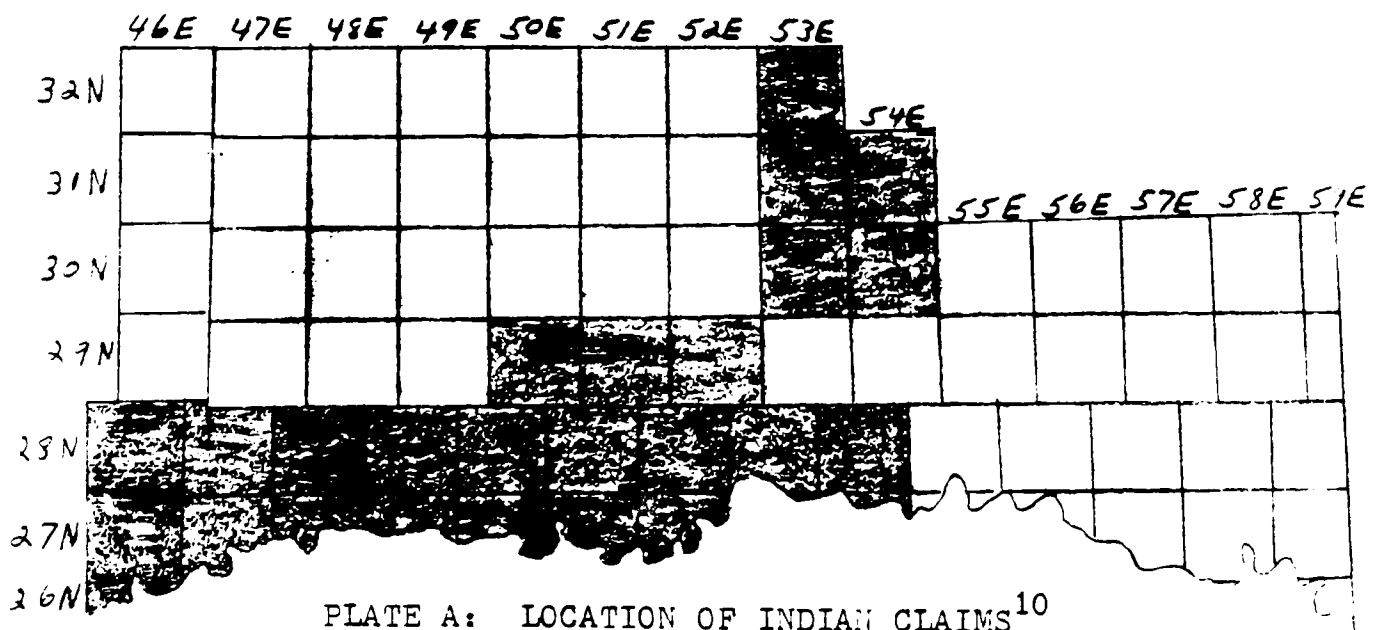


PLATE A: LOCATION OF INDIAN CLAIMS<sup>10</sup>

Once the Indian allotments were selected, a three-man commission appointed by President Roosevelt classified and appraised the remaining lands. Those which contained coal deposits were withdrawn from entry while those found suitable for agricultural purposes were appraised at values between \$2.50 and \$7.50 per acre.<sup>11</sup> Following the completion of this process, the area opened for settlement on September 13, 1913. Twelve thousand applications were drawn for eight thousand claims.<sup>12</sup> This ratio of applicants to claims would seem to guarantee immediate settlement of the area. Ironically, this proved not to be the case. Nearly two years passed before a major homestead rush occurred.

Three specific reasons existed for the time lapse. First, the method of distribution tended to limit settlement, because the earliest applicants had first choice of lands. The best lands were taken before many of the original filers' lottery numbers were drawn. In response, they withdrew their entries. Second, the appraised value of the land was high enough to dissuade many prospective homesteaders. Furthermore, the initial offerings of land on the reservation were limited to 160 acres in spite of the passage of the Enlarged Homestead Act (1909).<sup>13</sup>

By December, 1914, only 350 entries were recorded.<sup>14</sup> Seeking to promote settlement, the Secretary of the Interior directed the implementation of the Enlarged Homestead Act with regard to lands on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.

The action increased the legal homestead acreage from 160 acres to 320 acres.<sup>15</sup>

Little additional settlement occurred. Only five hundred entrymen filed on reservation land by October, 1915.<sup>16</sup> The lack of growth in an area which had fertile soil concerned the merchants in the small reservation towns as well as prospective homesteaders. As early as the spring of 1914, a plea directed to the Secretary of the Interior requested an increase in acreage. Then, in October of 1915, at a meeting held in Wolf Point and chaired by Glasgow mayor, Daniel McKay, the Fort Peck Settlers Association was formed. Those present drew up three resolutions which were addressed to the Secretary of the Interior.

The Association asked for a reappraisal of Fort Peck lands and suggested an increase in the payment period from five to ten years. Finally, the Association asked that those homesteaders who had filed on 160-acre claims be allowed to file on another 160 acres even though the second filing did not border or was noncontiguous to the first.<sup>17</sup>

An additional problem concerned the coal lands. In May, 1908, a substantial amount of fertile agricultural land located within the confines of the Fort Peck Reservation was classified as coal land. As such, it was withheld from entry under the provisions of the Homestead Act of 1910.<sup>18</sup> East of the Muddy River, claims which were in process were allowed to continue. Coal lands east of the Muddy River which had not been

filed upon were opened to entry in June, 1910. However, the Federal Government reserved all rights to any coal deposits except that extracted for personal use by the individual homesteader.<sup>19</sup>

On the reservation, prospective homesteaders and town merchants demanded that the coal lands be opened for settlement. In February, 1917, Congress passed legislation opening the acreage in question. Here, as east of the Muddy River, the Federal Government reserved the right to explore for and develop any commercial coal deposits. The lands were then appraised according to surface quality and opened for entry. This process took place throughout the summer of 1917 with the last block of 28,000 acres north and east of Poplar being opened in November, 1917. The appraised prices for these tracts ranged from \$3.50 per acre to \$10.50 per acre.<sup>20</sup>

#### Homestead Legislation

After the turn of the century, federal law promoted homesteading in eastern Montana in several ways. In April, 1904, Congress passed legislation which made it possible for those who had failed in previous homesteading attempts to file again, although those who relinquished their claims for monetary gain were ineligible. Those individuals who did not have 160 acres could enter bordering land to bring their total acreage up to that level. If an individual had already made final proof on an area which was less than 160 acres, he did not have to establish residence or cultivate the addition-

al acres in order to receive a patent on them. If the homesteader's original entry was fraudulent, then he lost his right to all land claimed. In an effort to prevent speculation, commutation was disallowed.<sup>21</sup>

Additional legal steps taken to ensure the chances of success for homesteaders included the passage of the Enlarged Homestead Act (1909). The acreage limitation was raised from 160 to 320 acres. The act also allowed those who had previously filed on 160 acres but had not made final proof the right to file on up to 160 acres of contiguous acreage making for a total of 320 acres. Of this area, eighty acres had to be cultivated by the third year of the entry.<sup>22</sup>

Further liberalization of homestead requirements occurred in February, 1913. At that time, Congress allowed the entering homesteader to combine his original and additional entries. This facilitated an earlier final proof, because the settler received credit for his time on the original. Also, any extra cultivation on his original entry applied toward meeting the tillage requirements of his additional entry. Finally, the law increased the time limit for proving up from five to seven years.<sup>23</sup>

The Enlarged Homestead Act was extended to include additional settlers in March, 1915 and again in February, 1917. In the first case, entries made by individuals who already had received final proof on a homestead entry were validated. This was a concession to some prospective settlers

because filers who had completed a final proof were ineligible for any additional claims according to the Enlarged Homestead Act (1909). It was not until February, 1917 that Congress granted additional entry rights to those who had less than 160 acres, even though final proof of the original entry had been completed.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, entry was extended to certain lands which were as yet undesignated in respect to possible irrigation potential.

In July, 1916, Congress approved legislation which provided for additional entries which were not contiguous to the original tract. If the noncontiguous entry were within twenty miles of the original, residence upon the additional entry was not required.<sup>25</sup> Finally, homesteaders who paid more than four dollars per acre for ceded Indian land could enter again as though the former entry had not been made.<sup>26</sup>

#### Homesteaders' Leaves of Absence

Leaves of absence were often granted. The terms became more liberal as time progressed. As early as March, 1889, Congress provided for up to a year's leave of absence from one's claim in case of crop failure or personal sickness.<sup>27</sup> Leave time granted under this act did not count toward residence requirements. In January, 1907, Congress allowed a leave of absence of three months and provided that the leave should not be deducted from the residency requirement mandated by law.<sup>28</sup> In July, 1912, the time limit was extended to five months.<sup>29</sup> Further modification occurred in August

of 1914. At that time, Congress provided that a leave of absence could be divided into two segments with a total leave time of five months.<sup>30</sup>

The amount of time required on the homestead was reduced once again in 1919 when settlers were allowed an extra two months absence in case of adverse climate. Total residence demanded was set at twenty-five months over a five-year period with no less than five months residence each year.<sup>31</sup> Additional legislation passed in 1919 granted constructive time, time which counted toward a final proof, for any homesteader who found it necessary to leave his claim to seek employment in order to ensure the necessities of life. The legislation applied specifically to 1919 and reflected the severe drought occurring in the Northern Plains.<sup>32</sup>

Homesteaders who were veterans of World War I also received special constructive time for the period which the individual veteran spent undergoing Vocational Training as provided by the Vocational Rehabilitation Act (1918). Under the provisions of the law, residency and cultivation were required for a period of only one year.<sup>33</sup>

In addition, the time between the homesteader's declaration of intent and the actual occupation of his claim were extended. From three months, the limit increased to six months in January, 1910. Severe climatical conditions in the Northern Plains prompted this action.<sup>34</sup>

#### Appraisal and Payment

One of the major problems faced by homesteaders on the

reservation was the high cost of land. Many prospective homesteaders agreed with Editor Linden Johnson of the Poplar Standard that prices which ranged from \$2.50 per acre to \$7.50 per acre were too high. This was especially true when claim filers had to comply with the homestead laws as well as pay the appraised value.<sup>35</sup>

The Secretary of the Interior had the authority to change the appraised value of land within the reservation (Public Bill 181).<sup>36</sup> However, he elected to implement any reappraisal on an individual basis. Each settler who thought his land was over-appraised applied for relief on his own behalf with the Secretary of the Interior. The process was slow and often without result. In response to a letter from a group of Poplar citizens, Clay Tallman, the Commissioner of the General Land Office, offered little hope of immediate action. He suggested a wait-and-see attitude promising to try and help if the problem persisted.<sup>37</sup>

In October, 1915, the Fort Peck Settlers Association specifically proposed that the appraised value be removed and that the land be reappraised. This resolution, along with one suggesting that payments be spread out over a period of ten years and another which advocated the implementation of noncontiguous homesteads, were forwarded to Senator Henry Myers.<sup>38</sup>

Subsequently, in a letter to C.F. Blaich, the president of the Fort Peck Settlers Association, Senator Myers ac-



knowledgeed the need for action. At that time, he promised to bring the problem to the attention of Secretary of Interior Franklin Lane. If this did not produce results, he proposed to introduce specific legislation in Congress to rectify the problem.<sup>39</sup> The Department of the Interior failed to take any action. In response, Senator Myers introduced three bills in April, 1916. Each strove to remedy a specific problem confronting the homesteaders.

The first bill (S5610) concerned the appraisement issue. It proposed that a three-man commission consisting of a representative of the State Department, a resident citizen of Montana, and a representative for the Indian tribe reclassify and reappraise each forty-acre parcel on the reservation.<sup>40</sup> This particular legislation found little support. The measure died in committee. Reappraisement continued to be an issue and was not settled until April, 1927. At that time, the Department of the Interior disallowed any more filing for reappraisal of individual parcels of land. All appeals of appraisement were officially eliminated.<sup>41</sup>

A second means of alleviating economic distress concerned the use of payment extensions. The problem of payment was related to the appraised value of the land. A greater appraised value appreciably increased each yearly payment. President Wilson's proclamation opening the reservation in 1913 contained specific requirements related to the method of payment: (1) One-fifth of the appraised value was due at the

time of filing; (2) The remaining four-fifths was to be paid over five equal payments at the end of each year; (3) In case the entry was commuted, immediate full payment was required; (4) If an entryman failed to make any payment when it came due, all his former payments were forfeited and his entry was cancelled.<sup>42</sup>

One of the first reactions of potential homesteaders to the proclamation concerned the length of time over which the land was to be paid off. As early as August, 1914, a proposal was presented asking for an extension from five years to a decade. In addition, payments were to be evenly distributed over ten years.<sup>43</sup>

Immediate action on the part of the Secretary of the Interior did not occur. However, interest continued to build on the part of the townspeople and settlers of Roosevelt County's reservation lands. Their claim was that high payments hindered the settlement of the area. Seeking a means to reduce the impact of the payments, the Fort Peck Settlers Association meeting in Wolf Point in October, 1915 suggested that Congress make an appropriation paying the Indians for the land and in turn that the settlers receive their lands free of charge.

In April, 1916, Senator Myers introduced legislation which provided for additional time for the payment of reservation lands. The bill asked that an extension of one year be granted on one-half of the installment due provided that

the interest (5 per cent per annum) was paid in advance. Interest was to be prepaid and no payment was to be postponed beyond ten years.<sup>44</sup> In March, 1917, legislation passed by Congress complied with Myers' bill with the exception that the ten-year limit was reduced to eight.<sup>45</sup> Opposition in Congress focused on one issue. Wisconsin representative, William Stafford, questioned the wisdom of an eight-year time limit. He considered the legislation too lenient in allowing a homesteader to control a claim for eight years with so small a down payment.<sup>46</sup>

In September, 1917, the Poplar Chamber of Commerce sent an additional set of resolutions to Montana's congressional delegation in Washington D.C. Because of the drought of the preceding summer and the depletion of manpower due to World War I, homesteaders sought further relief from payments.<sup>47</sup>

The following April, Senator Thomas Walsh introduced legislation asking for help for needy homesteaders. The proposed measure, patterned after the relief law of the previous year, differed in one important respect. Rather than receiving an extension on one-half of a due installment, the proposal called for a reprieve on the entire payment. Fervent opposition to the law developed. Massachusetts representative, Joseph Walsh, questioned whether it was the business of Congress to provide aid to settlers who resided in arid or semi-arid regions. Texas representative, Thomas Blanton, expressed concern over the apparent lack of aid at the state level, a

claim quickly rebutted by the testimony of Montana representative, Carl Riddick.

The length of the relief period was controversial as well. According to Illinois representative, James Mann, the language of the bill provided for an extension of one hundred years if necessary, adding that such an extension might indeed be proper. He then compared the settlers to dry oranges and said, "I have no doubt they will be required to pay the money if there is a possible chance to squeeze any juice out of a dry orange. That is what these men are now - practically dry oranges."<sup>48</sup> In response, Montana representative, John Evans, acknowledged that the bill was intended as a one-year extension.

The argument over the composition of the legislation continued with Wyoming representative, Frank Mondell, pointing out that if the proposed bill passed a settler could delay his payments indefinitely by paying 5 per cent per year on his deferred payments and thus avoid the payment of taxes which were directed only against patented land.<sup>49</sup> Colorado representative, Edward Taylor, and Mann provided the final impetus in pushing the bill through the House. Mann successfully pointed out that the Indians could not get any more for the land from anyone else. Taylor proclaimed to the members of the House that the homesteader was reacting "in response to the noblest instinct of the human race, that of trying to build a home for himself and his family. If there ever was a

class of people on earth that deserve the goodwill and kind consideration of Congress, it is the public-land settlers of the arid West."<sup>50</sup>

Meanwhile on the reservation, petitions circulated among the settlers which demanded the cancellation of future payments and the refunding of all previous ones. Homesteaders were encouraged to write their representatives and demand relief. Certainly the Federal Government, not the individual homesteaders, should pay the Indians. In September, 1919, a memorial was presented to Congress asking for reform. Because of Congress' preoccupation with the League of Nations debate, it took no action regarding the suggestions presented by the delegation from the Fort Peck Reservation.<sup>51</sup>

Finally in December, 1919, Congress approved additional aid by granting an extension on the entire due installment rather than only one-half of the installment as provided in the prior relief legislation of 1917.<sup>52</sup> The decision was a compromise; the assistance was not as extensive as that which the settlers desired, there would be no refunds, and future payments would not be cancelled.

The effort to reduce or cancel the payments continued. In a letter to C.F. Blaich, William Spry, the Commissioner of the Land Office, explained his objections. He pointed out that it would cost about \$1,920,000 to cancel the remaining debt. Furthermore, it would be very difficult to justify the cancellation, because numerous settlers had successfully made

their payments. Of 3350 entries on the Fort Peck Reservation, 950 completed their entries and received patents.<sup>53</sup> Of the remainder, many were near completion of their obligations as stipulated by homestead law.

Reservation homesteaders, realizing that little chance existed for getting the payments cancelled, changed the emphasis of their relief requests. In a letter to Representative Riddick, settlers requested a period of twenty years during which to complete payment for reservation lands.<sup>54</sup> The government was asked to advance the purchase price, ensuring the Indians immediate payment. Then the homesteader would have twenty years in which to pay off the loan. The interest rate suggested was 5 per cent per year. In addition, the patents were to pass immediately to the individual purchaser, thus increasing the area tax base.<sup>55</sup>

At the same time, the Secretary of the Interior, Albert Fall, recommended a supplementary extension for financially-strapped homesteaders. The fall of 1921 marked the eighth year for the earliest settlers on the Fort Peck Reservation. In spite of the relief measures of 1917 and 1919, they failed to pay for their land. Citing general drought conditions, Secretary Fall requested that those who failed to pay be given another year. In addition, he reminded the Committee of Public Lands and Surveys of the difficulty homesteaders faced in regard to completing their claims (see Chart 1, page 27). Furthermore, Fall pointed out that the additional

CHART 1<sup>56</sup>

Statement showing status of payments of principal in connection with entries made from January 1, 1915 to April 30, 1921

Years entries were made	One payment made	Two payments made	Three payments made	Four payments made	Five payments made	All payments made	Total
1915.....	182	65	23	22	7	256	555
1916.....	933	160	28	14	12	308	1453
1917.....	762	111	23	16	5	96	1013
1918.....	313	47	4	-----	-----	11	375
1919.....	148	10	1	-----	-----	4	163
1920.....	64	1	-----	-----	-----	-----	65
1921.....	7	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	7
Total..	2409	394	79	52	24	675	3633

Statement showing status of payments of interest in connection with entries made from January 1, 1915 to April 30, 1921

Years entries were made	Interest payments in default	Interest payments not in default
1915.....	264	291
1916.....	968	487
1917.....	742	271
1918.....	249	126
1919.....	122	41
1920.....	17	48
1921.....	-----	7
Total.....	2362	1271

extension would be an advantage for the Indians. Rather than getting 4 per cent per year for monies deposited in the Treasury on their behalf, they would receive 5 per cent per year from the homesteader desiring an extension.<sup>57</sup>

During the summer of 1924, Montana representative, Scott Leavitt, the Chairman of the House Indian Affairs Committee, received over three hundred letters regarding the plight of homesteaders on the Fort Peck Reservation. Because of the

conflicting nature of the suggestions contained in the correspondence, he called a special conference of concerned homesteaders and Indians. Such a group met at Poplar, November 29, 1924, and developed the structure of a new extension bill. The proposed legislation allowed settlers the time to apply their 1925 and 1926 crops toward back payments. Failure to complete the purchase of the land by mid-November of 1926 warranted immediate cancellation of the claim. Any entrymen who had abandoned their claims were required to make full payment by November 1, 1925. If they failed to comply, the claim was cancelled and reverted back to the Fort Peck Indian Reservation.<sup>58</sup> In a letter to New York representative, Homer Snyder, Secretary of Interior Hubert Work added the Department of Interior's support to the measure. He stated that this measure finally provided for an early and definite solution to the payment question.<sup>59</sup>

In October, 1925, receipts at the Great Falls Land Office reflected the effect of the bill. The monthly total of \$393,120.35 was the largest amount ever taken in by the office.<sup>60</sup> Payments for Fort Peck lands accounted for most of the total. Although most homesteaders complied with the measure, some sought additional assistance.

The majority of those seeking aid had filed for final proof and then moved away from their claims. Reportedly, some six hundred cases fell into this category on the reservation. In lieu of the fact that they had complied with the



homestead laws, Secretary of the Interior Work requested that they be given an additional year in which to make the necessary payments. If anyone failed to comply with the law within the granted extension period, the claim would be cancelled and the land returned to the Fort Peck Reservation. Congress passed the measure in June, 1926.<sup>61</sup>

Even this legislation did not end payment extension. During the 1930's, homesteaders who filed after 1925 could rely only on the original relief act of 1917. It alone among all the acts related to homestead relief had not expired. However, its requirement that the settler pay one-half of the due installment was too stringent. As in earlier years, the financially-pressed homesteader needed additional assistance. In 1933, Congress granted an extension of one year from November 1 within which homesteaders were to eradicate delinquent payments.<sup>62</sup>

Twenty-three years after the passage of the 1917 legislation concerning payment extension, the Wolf Point Herald reported, "Homesteaders May Get More Time For Paying." In the article, Senator Burton K. Wheeler related that pending legislation before Congress would give those homesteaders who had failed to make their payments an extra sixty days within which to settle their land accounts. With the implementation of this measure, formal requests for extension time ceased.<sup>63</sup>

Extensions were not the only source of assistance for homesteaders. While only reservation farmers were in need of

delayed payments, seed loans were available to all distressed homesteaders on a county wide basis. Both state and federal governments eventually provided aid.

### Seed Loans

Many homesteaders failed to recover their seed following the severe drought of 1917. In September, 1917, Senator Myers and Representative Evans proposed legislation which would establish a one million dollar fund to be used by the Secretary of Agriculture for the purchase of seed wheat.<sup>64</sup> The grain was to be sold at cost on a credit basis to needy farmers.

When passed, the federal bill failed to contain a credit provision. State law allowed individual counties to issue bonds up to a \$10,000 limit.<sup>65</sup> However, the financial resources raised by the issuance of bonds were inadequate. Those settlers who had used up their credit could not expect to get seed for spring planting. In an effort to obtain aid and influenced in part by the Montana Council of Defense, Lieutenant Governor W.W. McDowell suggested reducing the residency requirement. If title passed to the homesteader sooner, McDowell reasoned, the individual could use his land as collateral for obtaining a loan with which to buy seed.<sup>66</sup>

While McDowell lobbied in Washington D.C., the Montana State Legislature acted on its own. Additional state legislation provided for the distribution of up to 150 bushels of seed wheat to each homesteader. Each county held an election

to determine whether the purchase of seed was necessary. If the issue passed, the county delivered seed to each farmer who requested it. The recipient agreed to pay the county its cost for the grain plus a small handling charge. Payment for the seed was due from the year's crop on the 20th of October. The farmer's crop as well as his personal property were held as collateral against the loan. In order to finance the purchase of the necessary seed, each county issued bonds payable in from three to five years.<sup>67</sup>

Additional state legislation went into effect in April, 1918. The Mason Act raised \$500,000 through the issuance of bonds. The agricultural finance committee, a subdivision of the Council of Defense, was responsible for disbursing the funds. Applications were filed with the county council. If approved, the funds were forwarded to Helena where the state auditor issued a warrant payable to the individual applicant.

The counties were limited by statute as to the amount of bonds which could be issued. Only a small percentage of the assessed valuation of the county could be directed toward the purchase of seed. When consecutive dry years occurred (1917-1919), a depletion of funds soon followed.<sup>68</sup>

By January, 1920, the situation was critical. Representative Riddick introduced legislation aimed at raising \$4,000,000 for the purchase of seed. The loans characterized by a low rate of interest were available at local banks and were limited to four hundred dollars per farmer.<sup>69</sup> The lending agency

retained a lien on that fall's crop. Nearly a year later, Congress approved a watered-down version of the bill. The final appropriation was \$2,000,000 and the approved limit was reduced to \$200.<sup>70</sup> Of this total, Roosevelt County received \$39,550.<sup>71</sup>

The basic law was renewed in 1922. The bank continued to hold a lien on the applicant's crop. Although Congress appropriated only \$1,500,000, the total amount available to each farmer went up to \$300. This decrease reflected a general improvement in crop conditions and the government's desire to control costs. Only small farmers who could not purchase seed in any other way were eligible for the loans.<sup>72</sup>

Loans using land as collateral were another source of money during drought years. These were used extensively by farmers in the eastern part of the county. Many settlers on the reservation could not take advantage of this type of financing, because they had as yet not received a final patent on their claims. Some county farmers were fortunate enough to receive extensions on loans from eastern mortgage companies provided that the farmer did not abandon his land. Banking representatives stated that it was to their advantage to carry loans over; they would rather do this than take the land.<sup>73</sup>

In October, 1919, another loan program became available. The Federal Farm Loan Act provided funds at 6 per cent interest if the individual seeking aid owned an improved farmstead.

Settlers used money secured under the act for several purposes. Some improved their farms or paid off debts while others bought seed or equipment.<sup>74</sup>

The establishment of the Roosevelt National Farm Loan Association in 1922 opened an optional credit source. The association was linked directly with the Federal Land Bank of Spokane. Only bonafide farmers, those whose only source of income was from the farm, were eligible to receive funds upon the approval of the local board of directors.<sup>75</sup>

The Agricultural Credit Act (1923) strengthened the Federal Land Bank system. Each of the twelve regional banks was funded with \$5,000,000. Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace stipulated that a farmer would now be able to borrow for up to a period of three years without the danger of losing his crop or livestock. That amount that an individual could borrow increased from \$10,000 to \$25,000 and the loan could be used for the payment of any indebtedness. The law, according to Secretary Wallace, "made an earnest effort to provide the farmer with the type of credit necessary to carry on efficiently."<sup>76</sup>

### The Commodity Market

The price of wheat was an important factor. A successful crop year accompanied by low prices resulted in inadequate revenue. A poor crop, even if prices were high, produced the same result. Between 1905 and 1928, the national average price of wheat fluctuated significantly. In 1906,

the July 1 spring wheat price stood at only \$ .34 per bushel. At the other end of the spectrum, spring wheat listed for \$2.76 per bushel on the first of July in 1919.<sup>77</sup> Local prices in Roosevelt County differed slightly, but in general followed the basic national price structure. During the drought of 1917-1919, wheat prices were at their highest levels. For a brief period in the spring of 1918, spring wheat in Roosevelt County sold for three dollars per bushel. As late as May, 1919, the price was \$2.48 per bushel.<sup>78</sup>

Because of the increased demand for American wheat during World War I, and anxious to stimulate production, the federal government put a minimum price of \$2.26 per bushel on all wheat production.<sup>79</sup> When this guarantee bill was discontinued in 1920, prices plummeted. By November, 1921, spring wheat in Wolf Point listed for a mere \$ .91 per bushel.<sup>80</sup>

A modest price recovery occurred in the next few years. By 1925, the price had climbed to \$1.66 per bushel. The following two years showed a limited decline. Then in 1928, increased production coupled with an actual decrease in exports resulted in a substantial reduction in price to \$1.18 per bushel.<sup>81</sup>

The preceding discussion has identified various elements of the homesteader's world. Many of the challenges he faced came from nature. Other forces which were man-made affected the settler. Fluctuating grain prices made an unsure agricultural economy. At the same time, liberalization of federal

homestead legislation and the enactment of well-meant if inadequate relief legislation attempted to ensure the homesteader's success. The results of the lawmakers' efforts are reflected in an analysis of the Montana Land Records, which will show in detail the rate of success versus the rate of failure of Roosevelt County's homesteaders.

CHAPTER THREE  
A FILING ANALYSIS

The 1925 farm census noted 1,267 farmers in Roosevelt County. This was an increase of fifty-seven over the 1920 census. Total acreage under cultivation also increased. In 1919, farmers seeded a total of 92,406 acres of wheat in Roosevelt County. By 1924, the total wheat acreage increased to 126,153 acres. This increase was unusual. Most other areas in the state registered significant decreases during the same period.<sup>1</sup>

Approximately four thousand individuals filed for homesteads in the county between 1885 and the mid-1920's. Of the 1,267 farmers mentioned in the 1925 census, some had purchased Indian lands. Others had bought relinquishments. Therefore, the number of original homesteaders still farming was less than 1,267 individuals. Nearly 2700 were no longer on the land.

Homesteaders had several options with regard to their land. Over 5300 separate homestead filings occurred in what is now Roosevelt County. It is important to emphasize that because of the illegibility of some entries, the following **conclusions regarding the final disposition of the entries contain a factor of error of approximately 5 per cent.** Of the 5,318 entries which formed the core of this study, 615 or 11.5 per cent resulted in the homesteader withdrawing from his claim. Most of the settlers who withdrew did so very



early. In fact, records indicate that 5 per cent of the withdrawals took place within ten days of the initial filing and that 67 per cent of all withdrawals occurred during the first year.

Some withdrawals were made simply to allow the same individual to file on nearby land which he thought to be of better quality. This helps explain why the total number of filings exceeded the total number of individual homesteaders by a significant amount. In other instances, prospective homesteaders filed, went out to their claim, and finding it unsatisfactory withdrew their application. Withdrawals reached their highest levels in 1916 and 1917. Records indicate that nearly 72 per cent of all withdrawals occurred during this two-year period.

The official land records contain several designations in addition to withdrawal. One of these was relinquishment, comprising 16 per cent of the total entries. The process was similar to withdrawal in that the homesteader abandoned either the entire claim or only a portion of it. The settler often relinquished his poorer land while maintaining control of the remaining acreage of his initial claim. The first of 836 recorded relinquishments occurred in 1900. Although the greatest number of relinquishments occurred in 1916 and 1917, the option was common throughout the period. For example, as early as 1905, sixteen settlers relinquished their claims. Disregarding 1916 and 1917 when a total of 169 relinquishments

were filed, an average of twenty-five settlers relinquished each year between 1905 and 1931. Although 75 per cent of all relinquishments occurred within five years of filing, some occurred much later. Eight per cent were recorded ten or more years after the initial entry. Those who relinquished, for the most part, remained on the land longer than those who withdrew. While two-thirds of all withdrawals occurred within the first year, only 20 per cent of all relinquishments did.

Partial withdrawals and partial relinquishments were another alternative. These actions maintained the homesteader's interest in his better land while allowing him to give up acreage which had little agricultural value. The amount of land involved in these types of transactions varied from as much as 160 acres to as little as forty acres. Because of the use of the above method, the original land records contain references to Partial Final Certificates (PFCs).

These PFCs signified that the homesteader had met all the necessary requirements and was entitled to receive title to his land. However, rather than gaining a patent to 320 acres, the homesteader acquired only the acreage which he had not lost through the use of partial withdrawal or partial relinquishment. The advantages of this option were two-fold. First, the settler did not have to pay taxes on unproductive land and second, if the homesteader lived on the reservation, he avoided paying the appraised price. The issuance of PFCs was greatest during the mid-1920's and applied to 3 per cent

of all homestead entries.

The government often cancelled or rejected homestead entries. Grounds for these actions included such things as failure to make payments, taking unauthorized leaves of absence, not taking up residence on one's claim, and failure to cultivate the legally specified amount of acreage. This combination of cancellations and rejections accounted for the failure of 14 per cent of the initial entries.

Although this type of administrative action occurred throughout the homesteading era, two specific periods showed a marked increase in usage. The first was during the drought years of 1917-1919. Fifty per cent of all the cancellations and rejections processed up to that time occurred during this three-year period. In the second instance, cancellations increased dramatically during the 1920's. This increase was in the main due to the reservation settler's inability to make the required payments on his land. Three hundred and thirty-four cancellations were recorded between 1920 and 1929. This amounted to 60 per cent of all cancellations recorded between 1890 and 1941.

The government terminated or closed some entries because the land was found to be unsuitable for agricultural purposes. Ninety per cent of all closures occurred during the drought of 1917-1919. Five per cent of all entries ended in closure. Some entries were amended. An amended entry added additional acreage to the original filing or corrected the legal descrip-

tion on an original entry. Most amended entries concerned the addition of noncontiguous land to an initial filing which had been made for less than 360 acres. Approximately 1 per cent of all initial entries were amended.

The land records contain several other minor divisions and one major classification. Included in the former category are abatements, reinstatements, and suspensions. The composite total of these amounts to less than a fraction of one per cent. The latter refers to final certificate (FC).

Final certificates were issued on 48 per cent of all entries. However, immediate commutation seldom occurred. Although only 3 per cent of the final certificates were issued during the first year of a claim's existence, 66 per cent were completed by the end of the fifth year. An additional 25 per cent were finalized by the end of the tenth year. The final 9 per cent of the final certificates filtered in. Although most were certified by the end of the fifteenth year, some carried on for an even greater period of time. In one instance, the final certificate was not issued until twenty-four years after the initial filing.

During the homesteading era, a substantial number of settlers left the county. Some failed outright, while others proved up on their claims and sold out. Although a significant exodus occurred during the drought years from 1917-1922, it was not massive nor chaotic. Rather it was an accentuation of a movement which began with the first noted

cancellations in 1896 and had grown in numbers throughout the period. Between 1905 and 1916 at least 930 homesteaders gave up their claim to their holdings. The frequency of failure measured in relationship to the number of new filings in a given year never exceeded 50 per cent with an average rate of 25 per cent per year. (see Chart 2)

CHART 2: RATIO OF FAILURES TO NEW FILINGS<sup>2</sup>

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>FILINGS</u>	<u>FAILURES</u>	<u>RATIO</u>
1900	20	1	5%
1901	35	3	8%
1902	47	7	15%
1903	66	14	21%
1904	44	13	29.5%
1905	49	22	45%
1906	339	49	14.4%
1907	188	68	36%
1908	157	55	35%
1909	91	43	47%
Subtotal	<u>1036</u>	<u>275</u>	<u>26.5%</u>
1910	582	70	12%
1911	157	63	40%
1912	98	43	44%
1913	124	45	36%
1914	242	66	27%
1915	397	85	21%
1916	1318	323	24.5%
1917	829	563	68%
1918	198	217	109%
1919	114	89	78%
Subtotal	<u>4059</u>	<u>1564</u>	<u>38.5%</u>
1920	46	55	120%
1921	62	41	66%
1922	19	93	489%
1923	34	80	235%
1924	11	107	973%
1925	23	79	343%
1926	8	41	512%
1927	3	98	3266%
1928	3	17	566%
1929	3	56	1866%
Subtotal	<u>212</u>	<u>667</u>	<u>314.6%</u>
Total	<u>5307</u>	<u>2506</u>	<u>47.2%</u>

The ratio of failure to new filings increased significantly in 1917 and continued a dramatic upward trend in subsequent years with two exceptions. In 1919 and 1921, the rate decreased in relation to the previous year. Between 1922 and 1929, failures exceeded new filings by 550 per cent. The most extreme year, 1927, recorded only three new filings as compared to ninety-eight homestead failures. During this period, approximately 1300 individuals left their claims without receiving a final certificate. While the total loss in homestead population due to failure totaled over 2200 individuals, nearly another five hundred left after proving up. Over 55 per cent of the original filers left the farm because of failure, while 12.5 per cent left after gaining title to their claim. In the latter case, the owner often rented or sold his land to a neighbor.<sup>3</sup>

Approximately two-thirds of those who filed left the county by 1925. General historical works such as Toole's Twentieth-Century Montana: A State of Extremes and Malone's and Roeder's Montana: A History of Two Centuries suggest that the homesteaders came primarily from Scandinavia or from the Upper Middle West. However, little is offered as to where the honyonker went when he left his homestead. The following chapter analyzes not only the geographical origins of Roosevelt County's early settlers but also establishes the destinations of those who elected to leave.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MOVING ON

#### Origins<sup>1</sup>

Tracing within a limited time the origin and destination of over four thousand homesteaders proved to be impossible. However, the movements of nearly 1300 individuals were verified. The homesteaders of Roosevelt County proved to be a cosmopolitan group in constant flux, representing at least twelve nations and thirty states.

Nine hundred and eighteen settlers (over 70 per cent) came from the Midwest. Three hundred and eighteen individuals called Minnesota home, while an additional 188 came from North Dakota. The remaining states, including Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Ohio, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Michigan, and Oklahoma, contributed 45 per cent of the total number of homesteaders from the region.

Fifty-three homesteaders, 4 per cent of the total, came from the West into Roosevelt County. Sixty-seven per cent of this group originated in Oregon. Of the remainder, 19 per cent were from California, 13 per cent were from Washington, and 2 per cent were from Wyoming.

~~The~~ East Coast and the Old South also sent settlers. They ~~comprised~~ <sup>comprised</sup> 2 per cent of the total. The thirty-two individuals were from ten different states. The greatest number, seven, came from Arkansas, while New York contributed six. The rest supplied from one to three settlers each.

Some were relocated Montanans. Two per cent of the sample group came under this heading. The remaining 22 per cent of the settlers came from foreign countries. Eighty-one homesteaders were from Denmark and seventy-five others were from Norway, while forty-five settlers immigrated from Canada. Russia with fifteen and Sweden with twenty-three, along with several European countries which each contributed from one to three individuals, made up the remaining 30 per cent of the group.

Nearly 55 per cent of the homesteaders in the sample group did not leave the area. Some of them stayed on their claims until the late 1940's or early 1950's and then moved into nearby towns such as Poplar, Culbertson, or Froid. Others relinquished or withdrew from their homesteads in the early 1920's or before and went into town in search of employment. A third group proved up on their land only to lose it because of an inability to pay the taxes in the 1930's.

### Destinations<sup>2</sup>

Hundreds of homesteaders came to Roosevelt County and later left the area. In the sample, one group of 228 homesteaders moved west. These settlers, with a few exceptions, fell into two specific categories. Some returned to their home states, while others who came primarily from the Midwest, moved farther west. Of the 1300 traced homesteaders, approximately 7 per cent moved to western Montana and over 10 per cent (135) of those who left went to other western



states. Sixteen per cent of this latter group were simply returning home, while 46 per cent originated in the Midwest or East, moved to Roosevelt County, and then on to Washington, Oregon, or California. Settlers from foreign nations also moved west. Twenty per cent of the homesteaders involved in the westward movement were from countries such as Canada, Russia, Denmark, or Norway.

Two hundred and fifty-six left and returned to states in the Midwest and East. Over 70 per cent of this number returned to their home states. Of the 183 who went back, 60 per cent returned between 1917 and 1924. By 1930, another 22 per cent, or forty-one additional homesteaders, went back. The back to home movement continued during the 1930's and the 1940's.

Less than 1 per cent of those who left the area went to a foreign country. Only seven individuals returned to Canada. This was the highest number recorded for any country, while the three Scandinavian countries, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, averaged two returnees each.

Several factors explain the extent and the direction of the population movement. Those who decided to go home did so for two specific reasons. Some, having failed in their attempt to establish a homestead in Roosevelt County, returned home seeking employment in a familiar locality. In many instances the families of the failed homesteader could offer assistance in terms of food and shelter until they

could provide for themselves. In fact, many homesteaders, after spending the winter working at their Midwestern homes, returned in the spring to try again. This was particularly true following the severe drought of 1917-1919.<sup>3</sup>

Some homesteaders such as C.F. Funk and L. Boyd had land in the Midwest. When they successfully proved up on their claims, they returned to Kansas and Iowa. Others completed their homesteading obligations and leased their land to a neighbor. They then returned home and used their newly gained land as a supplementary source of income.

Numerous settlers left the county and went to western Montana or the West Coast. With those such as the Bains of Poplar, the pattern was similar to that of the Midwest. Settlers from the Pacific West tended to return there when they left the area. A second group elected to move west. It consisted of Midwesterners who had few ties to their original homes. After either failing at homesteading or tiring of the county, they elected to move farther west. Often the individual in search of employment ended up in Washington, Oregon, or California.

Very few homesteaders returned to or elected to move to Canada. In the sample group, forty-five homesteaders came to the county from Canada while only seven returned. In fact, a few homesteaders apparently disliked Canada. Two potential Canadian homesteaders, W.M. Young and Axel Erickson, reported on their return that the Peace River Country did not compare

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favorably with Roosevelt County.<sup>4</sup> Former homesteaders supported the contention that few homesteaders from the county emigrated to Canada. Rather they pointed out that such men as J.L. Davey of Expanse and Julius Gess of Volt were from Canada.<sup>5</sup> When asked in 1916 why many settlers were coming south from Canada, Julius replied that many were German and that due to the War, most Canadians would just as soon see them leave.<sup>6</sup> In addition, the Glasgow Courier reported that the number of settlers coming into Eastern Montana from Canada was exceedingly large. Many were Americans who, after moving to Canada, found it unsatisfactory and were in the process of moving back to the United States.<sup>7</sup>

After World War I, the agricultural outlook in the United States improved. With prices ranging from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per bushel, Canada held little attraction. This was especially true since most of the land in the southern portions of the Prairie Provinces had been taken up before the War. The intense drought which lasted from 1917 to 1919 did not respect international boundaries. Conditions in Canada were not any better than in Roosevelt County. When supports were withdrawn from United States' wheat in 1922, the price fell rapidly to the world level, which was equivalent to Canada's price. Little incentive existed to promote movement. The land which was available was located far to the North and did not present a bonafide alternative for the displaced homesteader given the depressed price of wheat.

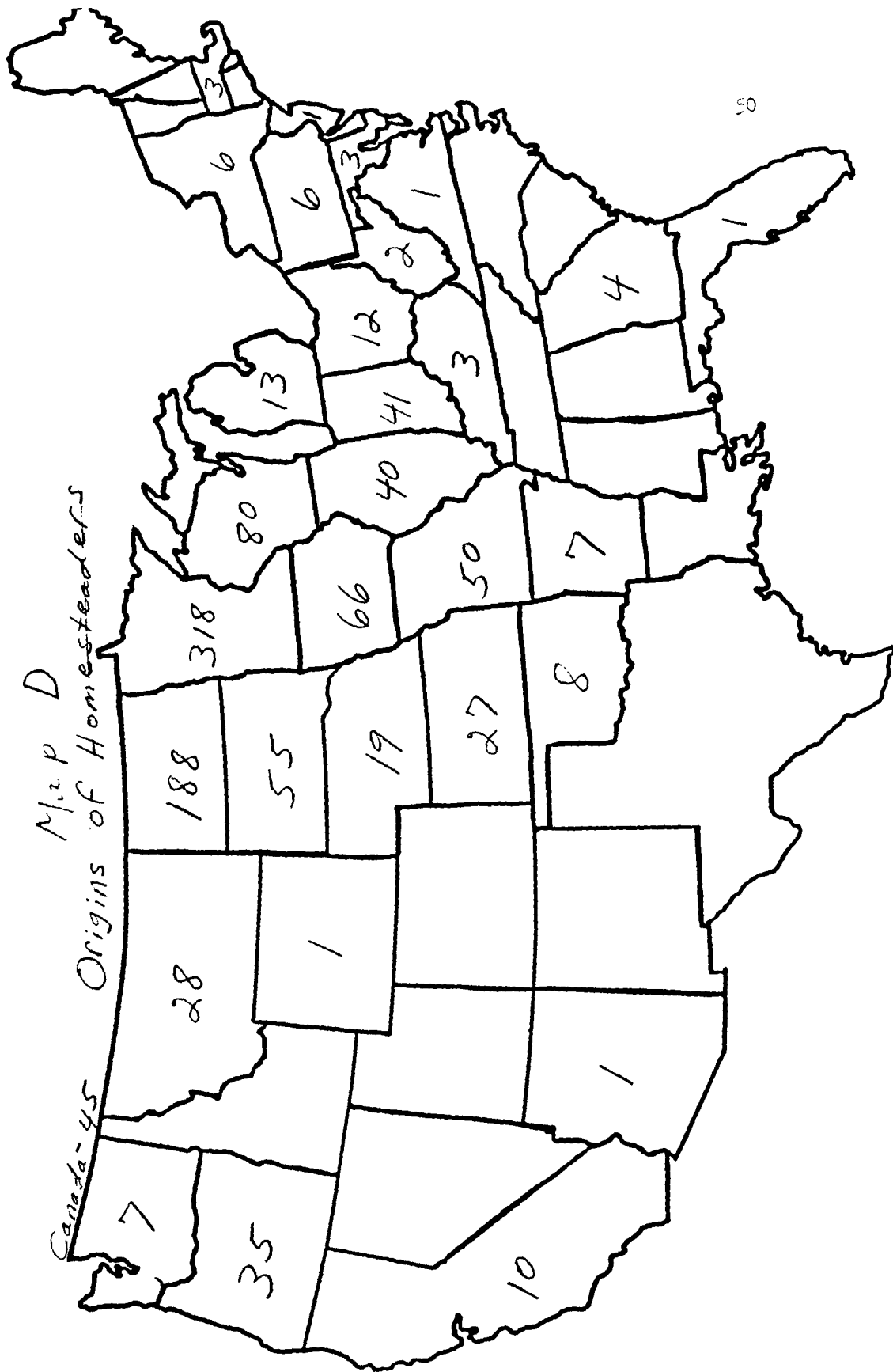
Fifty-five per cent of the sample group succeeded in their homesteading attempt. The soil which they farmed was constant in composition and fate determined the rainfall. Distant bankers and legislatures controlled relief for financial burdens. However, one control remained possible for the individual settler. Through diversification, alternative sources of income materialized. In simple terms, this meant forsaking wheat as an only crop and raising a few pigs and cows. Diversification meant changing to accommodate new agricultural circumstance. It dictated the abandonment of continuous cropping and the adaption of summer fallowing.

If a common characteristic other than stubbornness existed among the successful homesteaders, it was the trend toward diversification. Those who remained by 1922 had more than one iron in the fire. Alfred Houg of Benrud knew the secret to putting in another year on the land. In November, 1919, he reported to The Wolf Point Herald that he would stay another year; that he had cows and hogs and believed in diversification.<sup>8</sup>

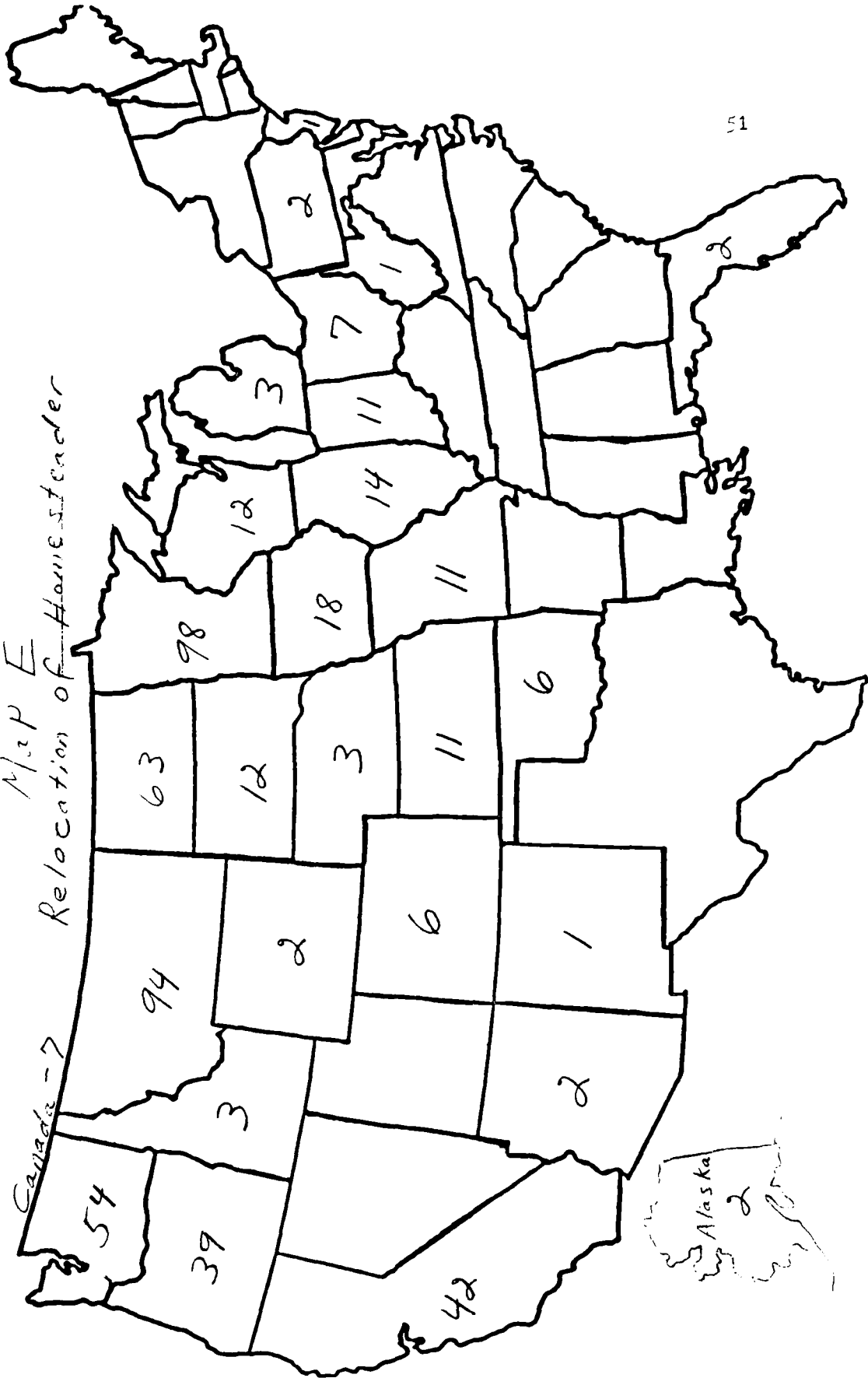
The content of the local newspaper indicated that diversification was a subject of great interest to readers. From the summer of 1919 on, numerous articles relating to its implementation virtually saturated The Herald. Not only were the benefits extolled by the Department of Agriculture, but also many references appeared in "The People's Forum."

No one can deny the vast importance of diversification

in the successful homesteading experience. However, in many instances other factors such as community spirit and personal fortitude played an important part.



Map E  
Relocation of HomeStender



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE SURVIVORS

Those homesteaders who remained in the area did so for several reasons. At least seven are readily identified:

1. Many settlers made use of seed loans, payment deferments, and local bank loans.
2. Some received aid in the form of sufficient rainfall at the right time.
3. Many who stayed diversified their farming operation.
4. Some supplemented their income with work off the farm.
5. Others stayed because of simple determination, refusal to give up.
6. A few stayed because of lack of a place to go.
7. Some remained because of the strength of community spirit.

All of these reasons applied to very few if any settlers, while more than one reason for staying influenced each surviving homesteader's decision to remain in the area.

During a personal interview, Oscar Olson, the son of an original homesteader, told of the development of the community just west of McCabe, Montana. McCabe was a small town approximately fifteen miles northeast of Culbertson. The community called itself Dane Valley. As the name implies, it was exclusively Danish, even to the extent of virtual exclusion of the English language. Settled at an earlier date (1906) than the western half of the county, it was well established by 1917. In response to the question, "Where did the people go in the exodus of 1919?" Mr. Olson maintained that few, if in fact any, had left Dane Valley at that time. He explained that there were several reasons why no one left.



First, they had been there during the good crop years, 1908-1916, when a fair economic base developed. Also, most of the farmers raised cattle or hogs as well as wheat. He concluded that the most important reason for their high survival rate was a sense of community which had as its focal point Ebenezer Lutheran Church.<sup>1</sup>

At least one parallel example occurred in western Roosevelt County. The community, Expanse, was in fact South Benrud. Settled in 1916, Expanse lacked time to develop a sound economic base as had Dane Valley, but Expanse shared several characteristics of Dane Valley. First, it was made up almost entirely of Norwegians. Second, the community was a virtual transplant of the younger generation of Elizabeth, Minnesota. Settlers were reluctant to leave the community they had established at Expanse. Although some homesteaders left during the period 1919-1922, the sense of community around Expanse held families in place that may have left otherwise.

Some homesteaders simply lacked a place to go to or the money to get there. One unidentified homesteader wrote to the "People's Forum," where could "we... be sure we could win out unless we had a farm already paid for in some eastern state.... Without money we can't see how we could do better by moving to a new place than sticking here."<sup>2</sup>

If some stayed in quiet desperation, there were counterparts who exemplified sheer intestinal fortitude. For in-

stance, Carl M. Carlson was so poor that he wrapped his feet in newspaper in the winter of 1919. He worked for Frye Cattle Company that year and made enough to save his farm. Persistence was not a unique quality. Many homesteaders simply refused to knuckle under to adversity.

Those who failed in their homesteading endeavor were the luckless, the late arrivals and the disheartened. Many of the settlers driven by a romantic vision of fifty bushel per acre grain, free land and easy money buckled under the adverse conditions. Perhaps some lacked persistence, but drought, poor land, absence of enough supplemental job opportunities and falling grain prices were not conducive to success. The numerous problems confronting the homesteader in many cases necessitated his departure.

### Conclusion

Between 1919 and 1925, half of the farmers in the state lost their land.<sup>3</sup> In Hill County three thousand homesteaders were forced off the land in 1919 alone.<sup>4</sup> A 55 per cent rate of failure in Roosevelt County was only slightly above the statewide rate.

There were four factors which determined a farmer's chances of remaining on the land. They included the character of the soil, the rate of precipitation, aid from federal and state governments, and the development of community spirit. While each was vitally important, the latter two were especially so.

Those areas of the county which opened for settlement in 1917, principally the coal lands, showed a markedly higher rate of failure than those areas which were settled earlier. For instance, in townships 30N 53E and 30N 54E twenty-three new filings were recorded on newly-opened coal land in 1917. Of these, twenty-two failed within a year.<sup>5</sup> Prior to the severe drought, homesteaders had no time in which to develop any sense of community or to accumulate any reserve resources to help them cope with adversity. Their financial position was so tenuous that government aid proved inadequate. Those settlers who were the last to arrive were for the most part also the first to leave.

Of the four thousand who attempted establishing homesteads in the county, approximately one-third remained by the mid-1920's. That number continued to decline throughout the following years. While the pace slackened during the last half of the 1920's, out-migration once again increased in the 1930's. Although the outbreak of World War II increased the demand for agricultural products, it did not stop the general movement from the farm to the city. The gradual exodus continued from the end of World War II until the mid-1970's.

By 1970, only 715 farms remained in the county.<sup>6</sup> This number declined rapidly in the ensuing years even though farmers enjoyed relative prosperity at the time. Total farm numbers decreased in response to inflated land values during

1974 and 1975. Since 1976, the economic fortunes of Roosevelt County's farmers, most of whom are the aging sons or middle-aged grandsons of original homesteaders, have declined dramatically. High production costs and low market value for produce are now often insurmountable.

The farm count is now 650 and in great danger of taking another precipitous drop. Those who remain are second and third generation farmers who have ties to the land that go deeper and have a higher meaning than the mere showing of a positive cash flow on a financial balance sheet. Few sons or grandsons for that matter are willing to give up without a fight the farms their fathers spent a lifetime building.

From the beginning the farmers of Roosevelt County have struggled to stay on the land. The odds against success in their endeavor have always been high and they show little likelihood of improving in the foreseeable future. The survivors now face a future which regrettably has a tragic component. With or without government help, grain farms in Roosevelt County have not been overwhelmingly successful. Admittedly, there are years when price and production complement each other. Those years, however, are not common enough. A steady trend toward bigger and more "economical" operations has not ensured survival but only delayed defeat. The current administration tells farmers to raise wheat and sell it for \$2.50 per bushel. Only farmers who have access to irrigation and raise newly-developed high-yielding varieties of wheat may

have an outside chance to produce at this price and still make a profit, provided they control a large amount of acreage.

As for Roosevelt County, the end result may indeed be the culmination of what has been in progress since 1917. On dry land the maximum yield seldom exceeds fifty bushels per acre. In fact, it will probably be closer to twenty bushels per acre and much less than that in a dry year. Two facts are obvious from the above data. Given current production costs, the farm would have to be much larger than any now in operation. The only way to get a farm of this size is through the elimination of many smaller units. Second, the establishment of such a unit or for that matter a dozen of them in Roosevelt County would change the character of the county. Towns that now exist will disappear or stagnate and grow smaller as a result of the impending demise of the family farm.

History tells us that each year, since 1925, the number of farmers in Roosevelt County has decreased and that there is little chance that this trend will change in the near future. However, those who remain continue the battle first joined by their grandfathers and pray against the day when they too must join the out-migration.

APPENDIX A  
SOURCE ANALYSIS

Two specific areas discussed in this paper required considerable original research. First, the work included the tracing of the origins and destinations of the original homestead claim filers. Second, original land records provided data which facilitated a time-analysis of homesteading in Roosevelt County.

The origins and destinations of some of the original homesteaders remain unknown. However, available data found in the social column of old newspapers and substantiated by personal interviews established the general nature of population movement.

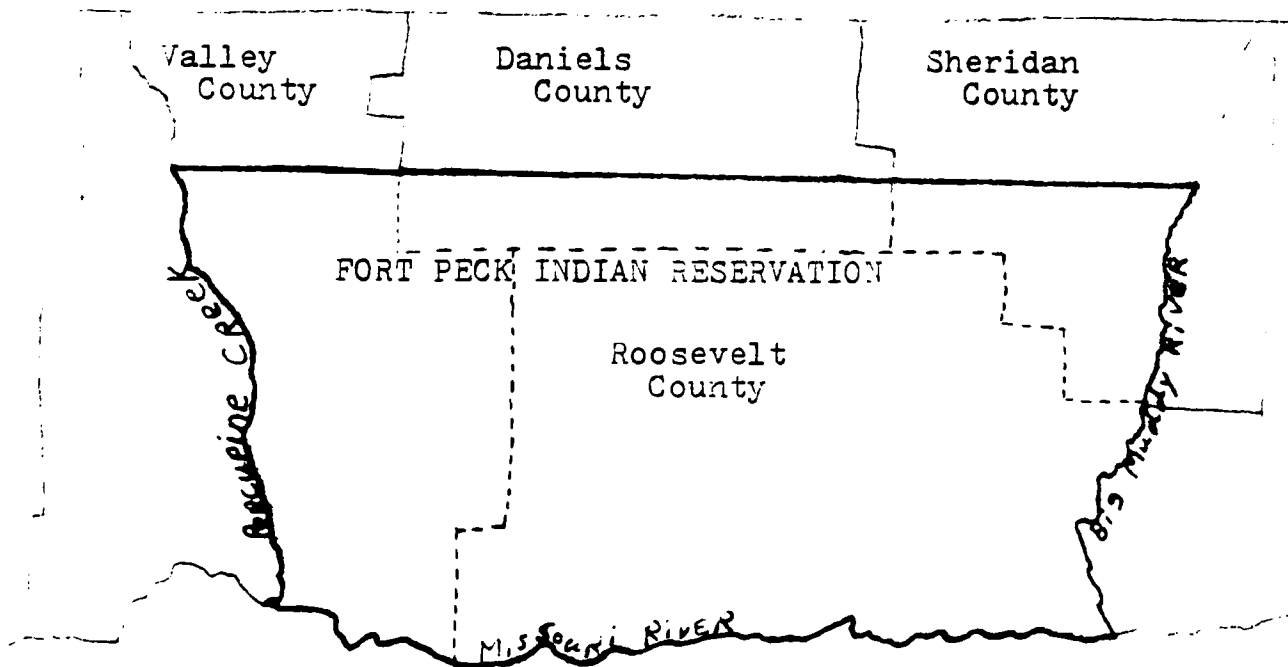
The original land records located at the State Historical Library in Helena provided a listing of original filing applications. Illegible signatures, unrecorded dates and incomplete final status data limited the completeness of these records as a source. Approximately 5 per cent of the records displayed the above deficiencies. The limited scope of error though easily discernible does not preclude an accurate interpretation of the historical problems which this paper explores.

APPENDIX B

FORT PECK INDIAN RESERVATION

The confines of the Fort Peck Reservation extend beyond those of Roosevelt County. Much of this paper concerns that part of the reservation within the current boundaries of Roosevelt County. However, references to laws which relate specifically to Fort Peck Reservation apply to the entire reservational area. Numerical data concerning the number and final resolution of specific homestead entries were taken only from records relating to that area of the reservation located within present-day Roosevelt County.<sup>1</sup> (see Map F)

NORTHEASTERN MONTANA

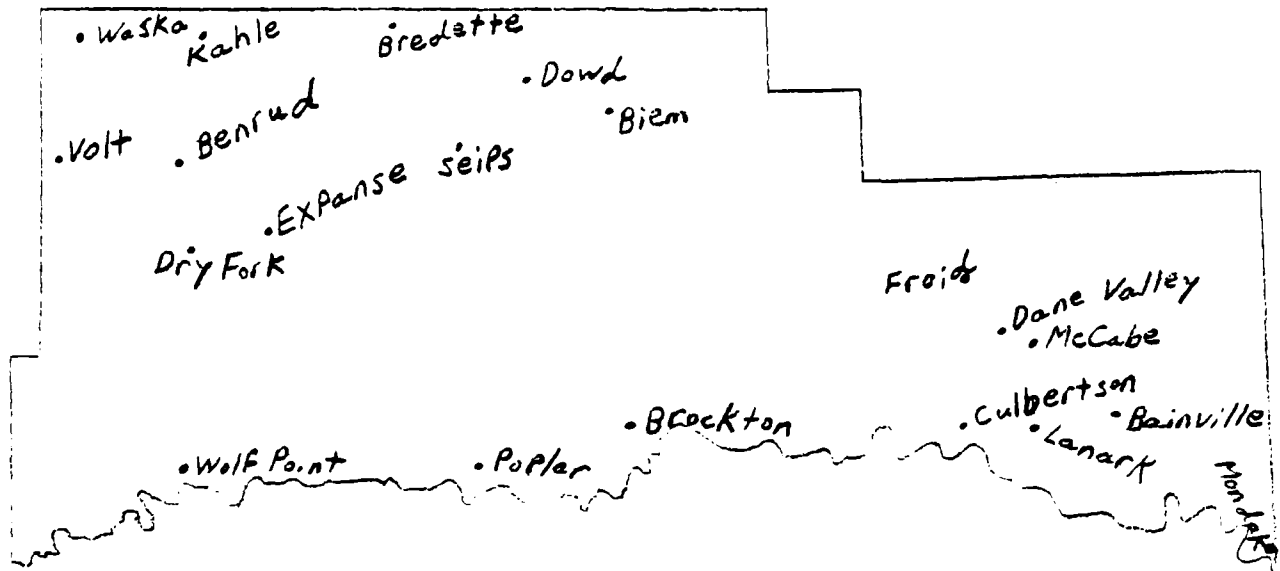


MAP F: FORT PECK INDIAN RESERVATION

APPENDIX C

COUNTY COMMUNITIES

Numerous communities developed during the Homestead Era in Roosevelt County. The following map shows the location of many of the individual communities.



MAP G: ROOSEVELT COUNTY COMMUNITIES<sup>2</sup>



APPENDIX D  
SOIL DISTRIBUTION

The character of the soil, along with precipitation rates and farming methodology, determined the yield per acre that the settler received from his claim. However, the profitability of his operation depended on the price per bushel.

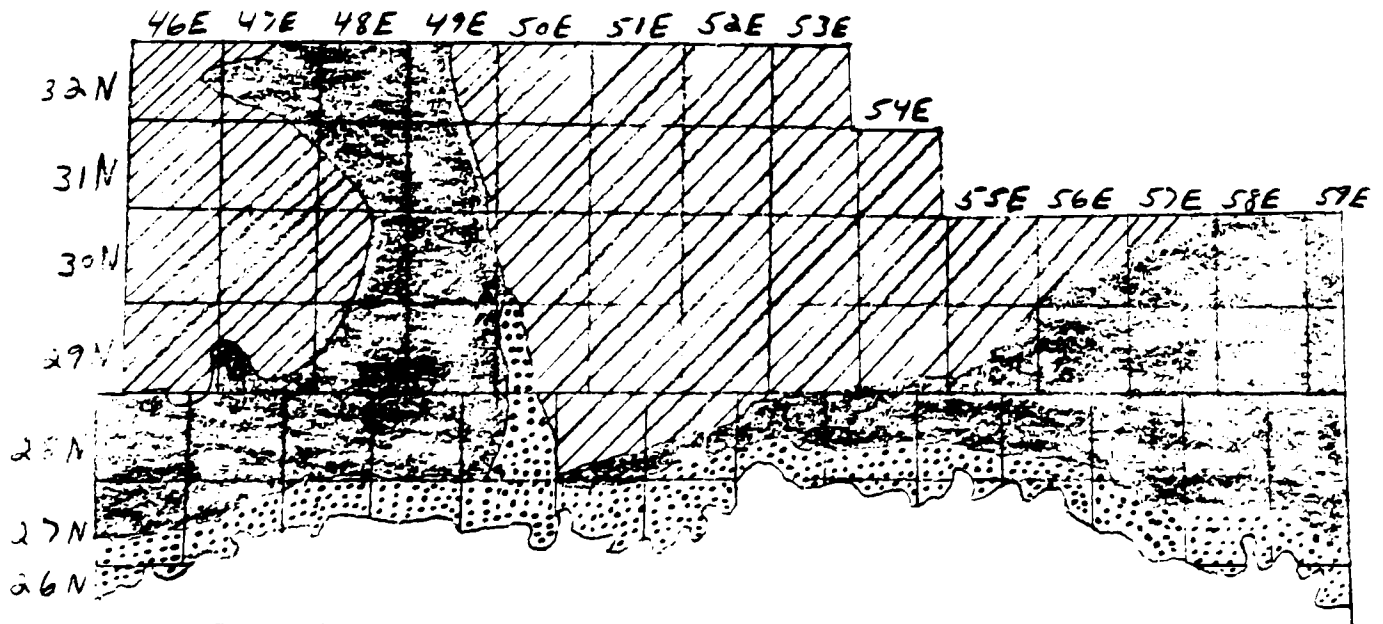
A recent (1980) soil survey of Roosevelt County revealed three different soil regions within the area. Each region was subdivided into general soil units. Finally, the general units were examined and classified into nearly seventy sub-units. This work concerns itself only with the major regions and with the general soil units.

The first soil region is a flood plain. This area is ribbon-like. It parallels the Missouri River and its major tributaries, the Poplar River and Big Muddy Creek. This area is flat; the slope of the land being from 0 to 2 per cent. Cultivated crops, irrigated hay land, and rangeland are common to this soil environment. It makes up approximately 10 per cent of the county's land area.




The second region consists of steep uplands and terraces. This area often occurs next to the flood plain and along minor tributary creeks. The slope of the land is between 15 and 45 per cent and supports grazing. It makes up about 23 per cent of the county's land area.

The third soil region contains many acres of level land

as well as some which is characterized as strongly sloping. The slope of the land ranges from 0 to 15 per cent. Cultivated non-irrigated crops are grown on this acreage. Approximately 75 per cent of the land in this third region as well as most of the land located on the flood plains would be considered prime farmland if an adequate water supply were available.<sup>3</sup> (see Map H)



Code for Soil Distribution:

- |                                                                                     |                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
|  | 1. Flood Plains                             |
|  | 2. Steep Uplands and Terraces               |
|  | 3. Nearly Level to Strongly Sloping Uplands |

MAP H: SOIL DISTRIBUTION<sup>4</sup>

APPENDIX E

CHART 3: RELATIVE RAINFALL (INCHES) 1905-1928<sup>5</sup>

<u>1905</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>Total(growing season)/year</u>	
Poplar	0	1.57	3.73	1.99	.95	8.24	----
Culbertson	T	1.21	2.66	1.99	.90	6.76	----
<u>1906</u>							
Glasgow	1.92	5.69	7.12	.34	1.26	16.33	----
Poplar	3.10	4.94	8.12	.75	2.04	18.95	25.35
Culbertson	2.20	3.50	6.60	.45	1.99	16.74	22.43
<u>1907</u>							
Glasgow	.67	1.50	3.35	.88	1.97	8.37	----
Poplar	.93	1.98	4.71	1.14	.42	9.18	12.50
<u>1908</u>							
Poplar	2.03	2.79	2.47	1.70	1.04	10.03	15.72
<u>1909</u>							
Poplar	.22	2.20	3.84	2.08	.95	9.29	12.22
Culbertson	.02	2.70	2.86	3.88	----	-----	----
<u>1910</u>							
Poplar	1.24	1.25	1.50	.74	1.67	6.40	9.72
<u>1911</u>							
Glasgow	----	2.09	1.03	1.01	1.83	-----	----
Poplar	.68	2.37	1.75	1.35	1.74	7.89	14.36
Culbertson	.72	3.88	1.48	.95	.99	8.02	----
<u>1912</u>							
Glasgow	.90	5.60	1.06	2.66	5.12	15.34	17.90
Poplar	.34	4.56	1.83	4.37	2.96	14.06	15.51
Culbertson	1.58	4.00	1.38	4.49	3.55	15.00	17.85
<u>1913</u>							
Glasgow	.04	2.07	2.33	1.08	1.11	6.63	----
Poplar	.01	1.87	2.42	1.61	2.14	8.05	11.06
Culbertson	.09	2.35	2.82	1.87	2.80	10.74	13.96
<u>1914</u>							
Glasgow	----	1.67	4.68	2.98	2.99	-----	----
Poplar	.14	.47	8.62	1.71	2.68	13.62	17.16
<u>1915</u>							
Glasgow	.14	4.66	2.64	3.17	.58	11.19	16.73
Poplar	.15	2.28	1.80	3.02	.29	7.54	11.42

	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>Total (growing season)/year</u>	
<u>1916</u>							
Glasgow	.45	2.18	4.90	2.97	.95	11.45	20.47
Poplar	.25	1.20	4.70	3.87	.06	10.08	15.40
<u>1917</u>							
Glasgow	1.44	.08	1.22	.89	.32	3.95	7.55
Poplar	1.26	.81	1.54	.35	.57	4.53	7.23
<u>1918</u>							
Glasgow	1.12	.37	.66	1.90	4.26	8.31	11.65
Poplar	1.79	.37	1.23	2.33	3.21	8.93	12.98
<u>1919</u>							
Glasgow	.81	1.22	1.01	1.81	.89	4.72	7.74
Poplar	.29	2.17	.39	1.86	.41	5.73	8.13
<u>1920</u>							
Glasgow	1.27	1.17	2.19	1.49	1.27	7.39	----
Poplar	.61	1.55	1.97	.17	1.63	5.93	10.07
<u>1921</u>							
Glasgow	1.29	2.05	6.35	2.65	.07	12.41	16.96
Poplar	1.46	1.26	7.32	2.22	.55	12.81	15.68
<u>1922</u>							
Glasgow	1.07	4.36	1.75	2.32	2.37	11.87	15.18
Poplar	1.00	2.60	4.21	1.58	1.53	10.97	13.31
<u>1923</u>							
Glasgow	.51	2.37	10.3	2.66	1.16	16.99	19.37
Poplar	.63	1.35	4.69	3.21	-----	-----	-----
<u>1924</u>							
Glasgow	1.09	1.90	4.87	1.01	3.10	11.97	18.28
Culbertson	1.03	1.16	3.52	1.59	1.23	8.53	11.76
<u>1925</u>							
Glasgow	1.30	1.00	2.39	.79	.09	5.57	13.24
Poplar	.72	.85	4.05	.96	.12	6.70	12.00
<u>1926</u>							
Glasgow	.09	1.60	2.30	.44	1.66	6.09	11.74
Poplar	.04	1.24	2.02	.51	1.46	5.27	8.79
<u>1927</u>							
Glasgow	1.34	4.99	2.10	2.83	1.39	12.65	20.37
Poplar	.35	5.28	2.02	1.56	1.83	11.04	16.82
<u>1928</u>							
Glasgow	.64	.78	3.80	1.88	1.09	8.19	9.79
Poplar	.24	.28	5.04	4.72	.31	10.59	11.31

APPENDIX F

CHART 4: AVERAGE U.S. WHEAT PRICES AND EXPORTS (1905-1928)<sup>6</sup>

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PRICE/DU.</u>	<u>PRODUCTION(1000 BUSH)</u>	<u>EXPORTS BUSH(1000 BUSH)</u>
1905	\$.75	726,819	100,349
1906	.66	756,775	150,594
1907	.86	637,981	166,304
1908	.92	644,656	115,901
1909	.98	700,434	88,465
1910	.88	635,121	71,338
1911	.87	621,338	78,447
1912	.76	730,267	143,938
1913	.80	763,380	146,306
1914	.99	891,019	335,162
1915	.92	1,025,801	239,591
1916	1.60	636,318	181,067
1917	2.01	636,655	102,775
1918	2.04	921,438	276,615
1919	2.15	967,979	216,671
1920	1.44	833,027	312,625
1921	.93	814,905	265,590
1922	1.07	867,598	205,079
1923	.92	797,394	131,892
1924	1.30	864,428	254,695
1925	1.42	676,765	92,669
1926	1.20	831,381	205,994
1927	1.12	878,374	190,578
1928	.97	914,876	142,301

NOTES

Preface

<sup>1</sup>Leota Hoye, ed. Roosevelt County's 'Treasured Years' (Great Falls, Montana, 1976), pp. 61-62.

Chapter One

<sup>1</sup>Barney Langer, interview, Scobey, Montana, September 1985.

<sup>2</sup>General Land Office, Bureau of Land Management, Montana Tract Books, Montana office set and Washington D.C. set, arranged by legal description (Billings, Mt.: BLN Micro-films).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Hoye, p. 125.

<sup>5</sup>General Land Office, Montana Tract Books.

<sup>6</sup>Hoye, p. 273.

<sup>7</sup>The Herald (Wolf Point, Mt.) News, 4 January 1954.

<sup>8</sup>U.S., Department of Agriculture, U.S., Weather Bureau, Climatological Report: Montana Section Vol. 9, p. 105.

<sup>9</sup>Hilton S. Eisenhower, ed., Yearbook of Agriculture 1931 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931), p. 583.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>An Act Making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian Department and for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes, Statutes at Large 33, Chap. 1402, 195 (1904).

<sup>12</sup>Culbertson Searchlight, 1 March 1906.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 8 March 1906.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 4 April 1906

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 15 March 1906.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 22 March 1906.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 26 April 1906.

- 18 Culbertson Searchlight, 24 August 1905.
- 19 Ibid., 5 April 1906.
- 20 Ibid., 22 February 1906.
- 21 Poplar Standard, 4 December 1925.

Chapter Two

<sup>1</sup>An Act to ratify and confirm an agreement with the Gros Ventre, Piegan, Blood, Blackfeet and River Crow Indians in Montana, and for other purposes, Statutes at Large 25, Chap. 213, 116 (1888).

<sup>2</sup>Culbertson Searchlight, 4 August 1904.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 4 January 1906.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 25 January 1906.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 16 February 1907.

<sup>6</sup>U.S., Congress, Senate, A Report for the Survey and Allotment of Lands Now Embraced within the Limits of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, S.R. 202, 60th Congress 1st Sess., 10 February 1908, Senate Reports Vol. 1.

<sup>7</sup>An Act to amend the Act to provide for the allotment of land in severalty to Indians on the various reservation, Statutes at Large 34, Chap. 2348, 183 (1906).

<sup>8</sup>An Act For the Survey and allotment of lands now embraced within the limits of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, and the sale and disposal of all the surplus lands after allotment, Statutes at Large 35, Chap. 237, 562 (1908).

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 558.

<sup>10</sup>General Land Office, Montana Tract Books.

<sup>11</sup>Great Falls Tribune, 1 September 1963.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>U.S., President, Proclamation, "A Proclamation," Statutes at Large 38, 25 July 1913, pp. 1952-4.

<sup>14</sup>Poplar Standard, 24 December 1915.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 22 October 1914.

<sup>16</sup>Glasgow Courier, 22 October 1914.

- <sup>17</sup>Glasgow Courier, 22 October 1914.
- <sup>18</sup>U.S., Department of Interior, General Land Office, Report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office to the Secretary of the Interior for 1917, p. 65.
- <sup>19</sup>An Act to provide for agricultural entries on coal lands, Statutes at Large 36, Chap. 318, 583 (1910).
- <sup>20</sup>Poplar Standard, 15 November 1917.
- <sup>21</sup>An Act providing for second and additional homestead entries, and for other purposes, Statutes at Large 33, Chap. 1776, 527 (1904).
- <sup>22</sup>An Act to provide for an enlarged homestead, Statutes at Large 35, Chap. 160, 639 (1909).
- <sup>23</sup>An Act to amend an Act entitled "An Act to provide for an enlarged homestead," Statutes at Large 37, Chap. 39, 666 (1913).
- <sup>24</sup>An Act to allow additional entries under the Enlarged Homestead Act, Statutes at Large 39, Chap. 98, 925 (1917).
- <sup>25</sup>An Act to amend an Act entitled "An Act to provide for an enlarged homestead" by adding a new section known as section seven, Statutes at Large 39, Chap. 220, 344 (1916).
- <sup>26</sup>An Act to restore homestead rights in certain cases, Statutes at Large 39, Chap. 101, 926 (1917).
- <sup>27</sup>An Act to withdraw certain public lands from private entry, and for other purposes, Statutes at Large 25, Chap. 381, 854 (1889).
- <sup>28</sup>Joint Resolution Authorizing temporary leaves of absence for homestead settlers, Statutes at Large 34, [No. 4], 1419 (1907).
- <sup>29</sup>An Act to amend section twenty-two hundred and ninety-one and twenty-two hundred and ninety-seven of the Revised Statutes of the United States, Statutes at Large 37, Chap. 153, 123 (1912).
- <sup>30</sup>An Act to provide for leave of absence for homestead entrymen in one or two periods, Statutes at Large 38, Chap. 270, 704 (1914).
- <sup>31</sup>An Act to provide for a leave of absence for homestead entrymen in one or two periods, and for a longer time, Statutes at Large 40, Chap. 21, 1153 (1919).



<sup>32</sup>An Act making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for 1920, Statutes at Large 41, Chap. 26, 270 (1919).

<sup>33</sup>An Act to authorize absence by homestead settlers and entrymen, and for other purposes, Statutes at Large 41, Chap. 64, 288 (1919).

<sup>34</sup>An Act Extending the time for certain homesteaders to establish residence upon their lands, Statutes at Large 36, Chap. 14, 189 (1910).

<sup>35</sup>Poplar Standard, 20 August 1914.

<sup>36</sup>An Act Authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to classify and appraise unallotted Indian Lands, Statutes at Large 37, Chap. 155, 125 (1912).

<sup>37</sup>Poplar Standard, 13 May 1915.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., 28 October 1915.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 16 December 1915.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 27 April 1916.

<sup>41</sup>U.S., Congress, House, Allotment and Sale of Lands on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, H.R. 1966, 69th Cong., 2d Sess., 1927, pp. 1-3.

<sup>42</sup>U.S., President, Proclamation, "A Proclamation," Statutes at Large 38, 25 July 1913, 1952-4.

<sup>43</sup>Poplar Standard, 20 August 1914.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., 27 April 1916.

<sup>45</sup>An Act Providing additional time for the payment of purchase money under homestead entries of lands within the former Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Statutes at Large 39, Chap. 148, 994 (1917).

<sup>46</sup>U.S., Congress, House, Representative Stafford discusses payment extension of (S. 5612), 64th Cong., 2d Sess., 19 February 1917, Congressional Record 54: 3622-23.

<sup>47</sup>Poplar Standard, 27 September 1917.

<sup>48</sup>U.S., Congress, House, Representative Mann comments on extension for homesteaders (S. 183) 66th Cong., 2d Sess., 1 December 1919, Congressional Record 59: 7-13.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>50</sup>U.S., Congress, House, Representative Mann comments on extension for homesteaders (S. 183) 66th Cong., 2d Sess., 1 December 1919, Congressional Record 59: 12.

<sup>51</sup>Poplar Standard, 3 September 1919.

<sup>52</sup>An Act providing additional time for the payment of purchase money under homestead entries of lands within the former Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Statutes at Large 41, Chap. 4, 365 (1919).

<sup>53</sup>Wolf Point Herald, 21 April 1921.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., 13 April 1922.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>U.S., Congress, House, A Report on Delinquent Homesteaders on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, H.R. 1377, 67th Cong., 4th Sess., 1923, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>58</sup>An Act to provide for extension of payment on homestead entries on ceded lands of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation, Statutes at Large 43, Chap. 533 (1925).

<sup>59</sup>U.S., Congress, House, A Report providing for the Extension of payment on Homestead Entries, Fort Peck Indian Reservation, H.R. 1318, 68th Cong., 2d Sess., 1925, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup>Poplar Standard, 13 November 1925.

<sup>61</sup>U.S., Department of Interior, General Land Office, Circulars and Regulations of the General Land Office, 1930, pp. 712-4.

<sup>62</sup>U.S., Congress, Senate, A Report on Relief of certain settlers on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in the State of Montana, S.R. 1146, 72d Cong., 2d Sess., 1933, pp. 1-2.

<sup>63</sup>Herald News, 25 April 1940.

<sup>64</sup>Poplar Standard, 6 September 1917.

<sup>65</sup>Scobey Citizen, 4 January 1918.

<sup>66</sup>Poplar Standard, 4 January 1918.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 21 February 1918.

<sup>68</sup>Wolf Point Herald, 25 April 1918.

<sup>69</sup>Wolf Point Herald, 4 January 1920.

<sup>70</sup>An Act Making appropriations for the Department of Agriculture for 1922, Statutes at Large 41, Chap. 127, 1347 (1921).

<sup>71</sup>Wolf Point Herald, 26 May 1921.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., 30 March 1922.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., 21 August 1919.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 23 October 1919.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 20 April 1922.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 15 March 1923.

<sup>77</sup>Eisenhower, Yearbook of Agriculture, p. 583.

<sup>78</sup>Wolf Point Herald, 15 May 1919.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 6 March 1919.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 3 November 1921.

<sup>81</sup>Eisenhower, Yearbook of Agriculture, p. 583.

### Chapter Three

<sup>1</sup>Poplar Standard, 4 December 1925.

<sup>2</sup>General Land Office, Montana Tract Books.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

### Chapter Four

<sup>1</sup>Material used in determining the origins of settlers came from numerous personal interviews and from family histories in Hoye's Roosevelt County's "Treasured Years."

<sup>2</sup>Material used in determining the destinations of settlers came from numerous personal interviews and from family histories in Hoye's Roosevelt County's "Treasured Years."

<sup>3</sup>Wolf Point Herald, 15 April 1920.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 15 May 1919.

<sup>5</sup>Henry Carlson, interview, Wolf Point, Montana, March 1979.

<sup>6</sup>Wolf Point Herald, 6 June 1916.

<sup>7</sup>Glasgow Courier, 14 April 1916.

<sup>8</sup>Wolf Point Herald, 13 November 1919.

#### Chapter Five

<sup>1</sup>Oscar Olson, interview, Culbertson, Montana, March 1979.

<sup>2</sup>Wolf Point Herald, 6 January 1921.

<sup>3</sup>Joseph K. Howard, Montana: High, Wide, and Handsome (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 207.

<sup>4</sup>K. Ross Toole, Twentieth-Century Montana: A State of Extremes (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), p. 80.

<sup>5</sup>General Land Office, Montana Tract Books.

<sup>6</sup>Roosevelt County, Roosevelt County Overall Economic Development Plan (1977), p. 15.

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<sup>1</sup>Hoye, Roosevelt County's "Treasured Years," p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 996.

<sup>3</sup>Dennis R. Smetana, Soil Survey of Roosevelt and Daniels Counties Montana (Washington D.C.: National Cooperative Soil Survey, 1985), pp. 7-14.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>U.S., Department of Agriculture, U.S., Weather Bureau, Climatological Report: Montana Section.

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