

# 10 Politics and the Copper Kings

## 1889-1904

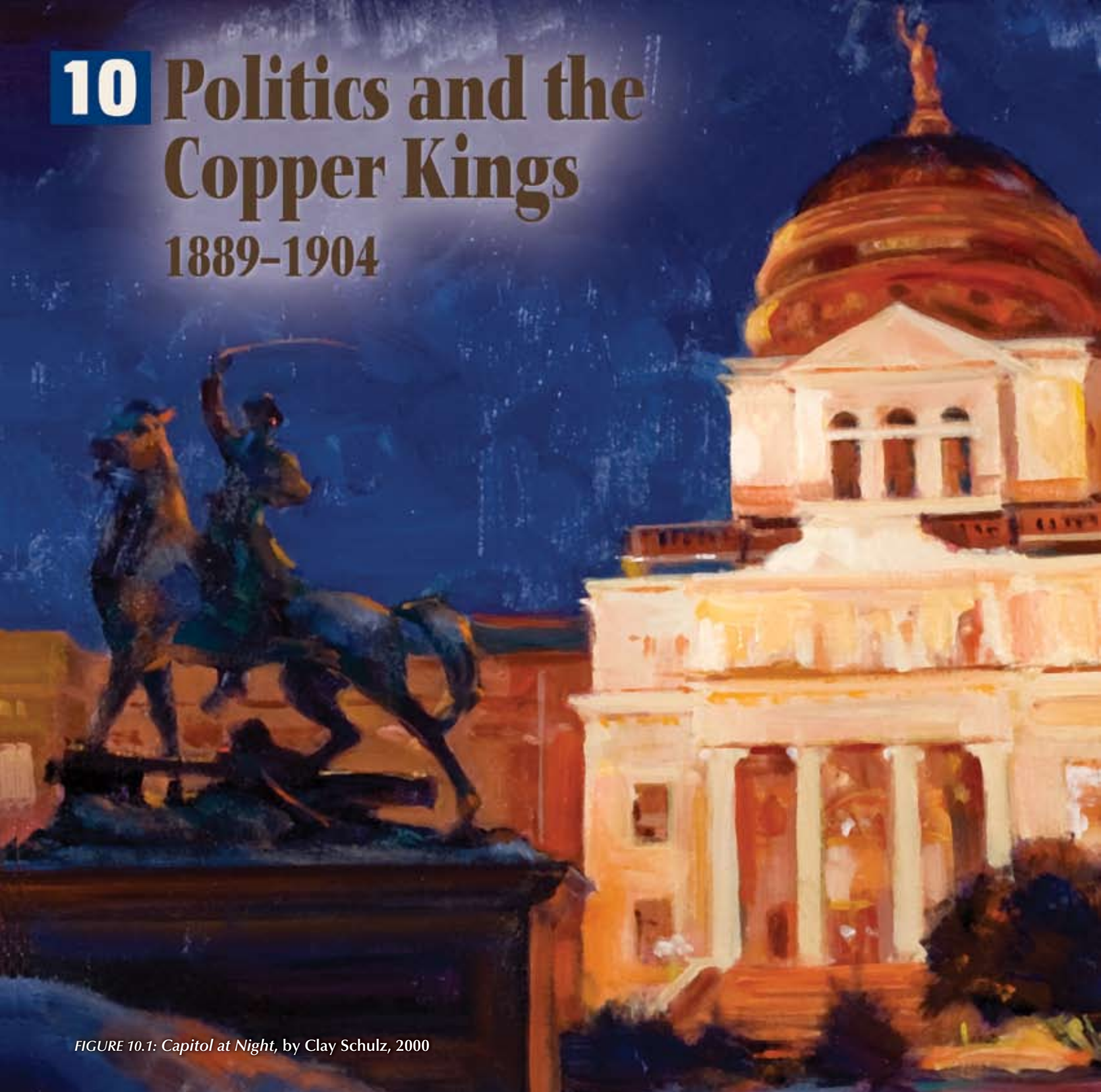
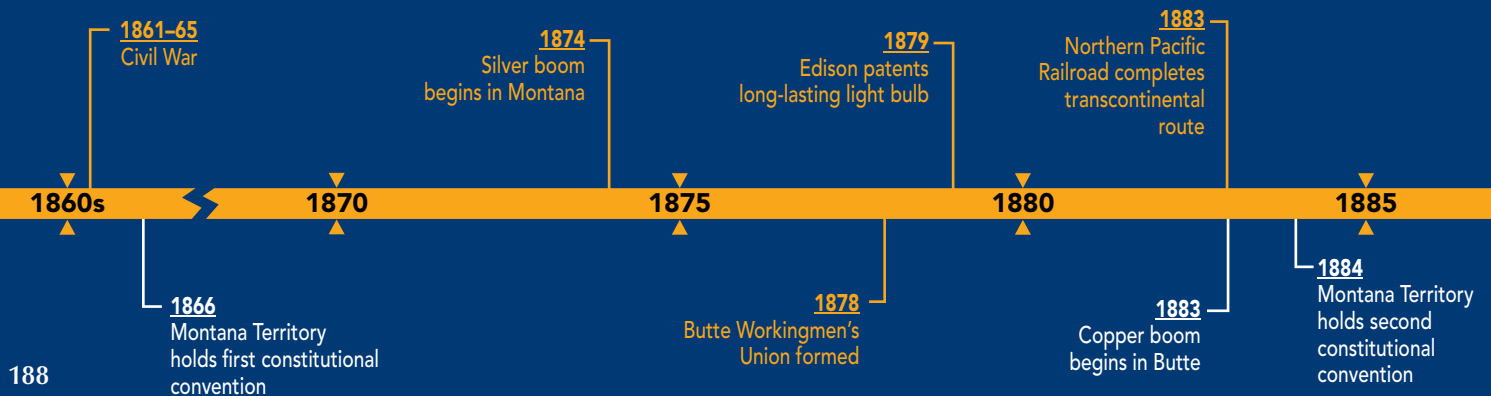


FIGURE 10.1: *Capitol at Night*, by Clay Schulz, 2000



## READ TO FIND OUT:

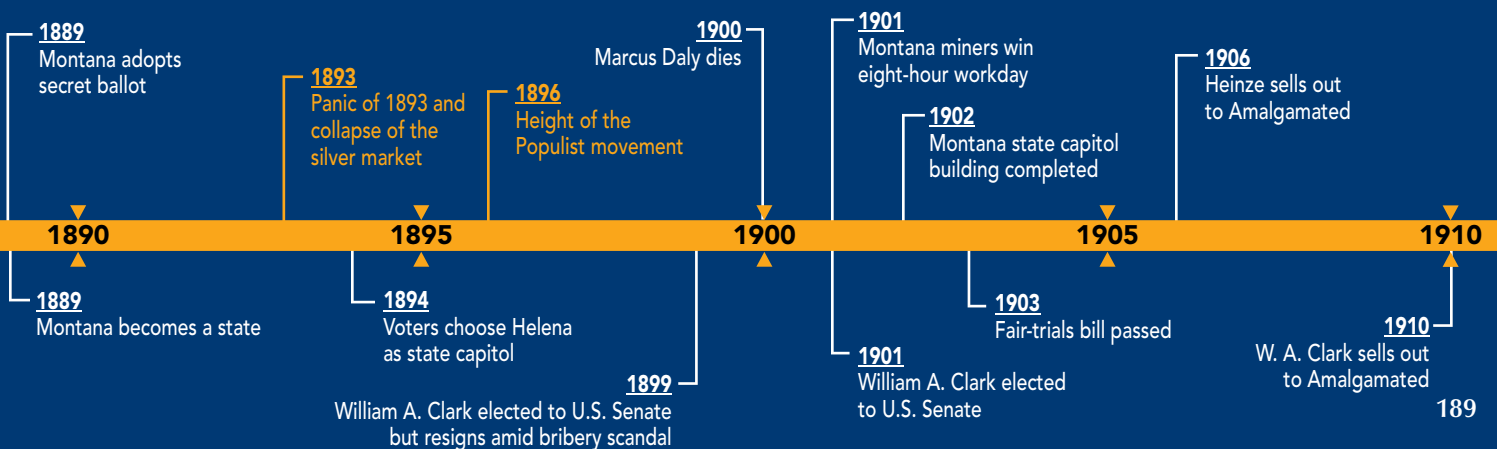
- Why it took so long for Montana to become a state
- How the copper industry shaped Montana politics
- What the “War of the Copper Kings” was all about
- How ordinary people tried to regain control over their state

## The Big Picture

When Montana became a state, many different forces fought one another for control of its rich resources. It was a constant challenge to keep Montana’s government in the hands of the people.

**G**old lured the first prospectors to Montana, and silver attracted industrialists, but it was copper that carried Montana’s economy into the twentieth century. Electric motors, telephone and telegraph wires, and electric power lines all used copper. Some of the richest veins of copper in the world lay under the Butte hill, and as the world’s demand for copper soared, Butte’s mines expanded.

Copper mining required enormous amounts of lumber, so Montana’s lumber industry developed right alongside the copper industry (see Chapter 12). Railroads built transportation networks to support these industries and also brought skilled labor into Montana to work in the mines, smelters, lumberyards, and cities (see Chapter 9). The worldwide demand for copper brought growth, prosperity, and new opportunities—including the chance for Montana Territory to become a state. But the rich resource also caused problems as conflicting interests competed for power.



## The Road to Statehood

Euro-American immigrants started pushing for statehood almost as soon as they arrived in the territory. They did not like living in a territory where they could not vote for their own governor. They did not like that the federal government controlled the territory's funds and appointed government leaders. And they wanted true representation in Congress. The territory's congressional representative could **lobby** (try to influence) congressmen and senators, but he could not vote.

Once it became a state, Montana could control its own funds. Montanans could elect their own governor, judges, and state officers. Montana would gain one seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and two seats in the U.S. Senate. The state **legislature** (the branch of government that passes laws) could tax corporations, so that at least some money earned from Montana's resources would stay to benefit Montana. And statehood came with a large **land grant** (free land that the federal government gives to a company, an organization, or a state) to help fund education.

### Montana's Early Constitutional Conventions

Even though a territory could not apply for statehood until its non-Indian population reached 60,000, citizens called Montana's first **constitutional convention** (a meeting to write a constitution) in 1866. Having a **constitution** (a document that sets the rules for government) was an important step toward statehood. But at the time, fewer

than 20,000 non-Indians lived in the territory. The 1866 constitution was not even presented to the people for a vote. It was too early for Montana to become a state.

Montanans called their second constitutional convention in 1884. Citizens elected **delegates** (representatives of the people) to go to the convention and draft a state constitution. Voters approved it by a huge margin. But national politics got in the way.

That year Democrats controlled the U.S. House of Representatives and Republicans controlled the U.S. Senate. House Democrats wanted to increase their power by admitting territories with mostly Democratic voters—like Montana—into the

*FIGURE 10.2:* These 45 delegates to the 1884 constitutional convention wrote a popular state constitution, but Congress still refused to grant statehood to Montana.



union. The Republican Senate wanted to admit only territories whose citizens would vote Republican, like Washington and Dakota. For five years neither side would allow the other's territories to gain statehood.

### 1889: Statehood at Last

The 1888 election swept a new group of politicians into Congress. They voted to admit Montana, Washington, and North and South Dakota as states. On February 25, 1889, President Grover Cleveland signed into law a bill **enabling** (allowing) Montana to become a state. People called it the Enabling Act. The next step was to write a constitution.

## Montana's Constitution: Who Gets Control?

In July 1889 Montana held a new constitutional convention to write a constitution for Montana's voters to **ratify** (formally approve). Seventy-five delegates gathered in Helena for the convention. They included mine owners, stockmen, farmers, merchants, real estate agents, and politicians. There were 39 Democrats and 36 Republicans.

Two big fights arose during the convention. Both of them pitted the mining interests (and related industries like railroads and lumber mills) against farmers and ranchers. By this time copper had grown into such an important industry that the owners of large copper mines and smelters had tremendous power. And they were used to getting what they wanted.

### How Should the Legislature Be Structured?

The first fight erupted over representation to the state senate. Delegates from sparsely populated eastern counties wanted each county to elect one state senator no matter how many people lived in that county. This would give rural counties more power.

Delegates from the mining towns wanted representation in the senate to be based on population, as it was in the state house of representatives. This would give the heavily populated mining areas more power.

As the debate raged on, Montanans realized how much the copper interests wanted to control the legislature. Eventually, however, the mining interests gave in and agreed to the one-county-one-senator plan. They worried that voters would not ratify the constitution otherwise.

### Who Should Pay the Most Taxes?

The second fight arose over taxes on mines. The mining industry insisted that state taxes on mines should be especially low because mining was so important to Montana's economy. For most of Montana Territory's history, mines had paid very little in taxes—even though they yielded many more millions of dollars than ranching or any other industry.

FIGURE 10.3: Great Falls celebrated statehood by printing satin ribbons welcoming all four new states to the Union: Washington, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana.



FIGURES 10.4 and 10.5: Who should pay more in corporate taxes to the state—the mine owner who lives in this mansion or the owner of this general store in Terry? Mine owner William A. Clark, who owned the house pictured here, thought he should pay less in taxes than the Stith family, who owned the general store, because his business contributed more to Montana’s economy.



Mine owners wanted to write this special tax status into the constitution so that legislators could not change it later (because changing the constitution requires a majority of all voters). This time the mining interests refused to compromise. As a result Montana’s first state constitution called for mines to be taxed only on the value of the original mining claim. Most original mining claims cost \$5—even the ones that produced millions of dollars of copper or silver.

This measure had a lasting impact in Montana. It severely limited how much Montana could benefit from its own natural resources. It also meant that ranches and other businesses in Montana paid most of the state’s expenses for many years.

### Should Women Get to Vote?

The delegates agreed on almost all the rest of the 1889 constitution. The federal government had given detailed instructions about what states should include in their constitutions, and the convention followed those instructions.

Delegates did debate one other **controversial** (provoking disagreement) measure: whether to allow women the right to vote. At that time, no state in the union allowed women’s **suffrage** (the right to vote). Clara McAdow, an extremely successful businesswoman from Billings, lobbied hard for women’s suffrage. She talked to every delegate, asking them to give the vote to “persons” instead of just “men.”

Nearly half the delegates said they would. But leaders of the convention thought that Montana’s male voters might not ratify the constitution if it included women’s suffrage. The delegates did not want anything to delay Montana from becoming a state. Women’s suffrage was defeated 43 to 25. Women in Montana could not vote until 1914.

### The War of the Copper Kings

Two of the richest copper **tycoons** (wealthy businessmen) were Marcus Daly and William A. Clark. They were so rich and owned so many mines that people called them the “copper kings.”

Both men worked to keep mining taxes low during the constitutional convention. And both were leaders in the Democratic Party. But they disagreed about almost everything else.

Clark and Daly were extremely competitive, and they liked getting their own way. Their arguments exploded into a battle so public, so expensive, and so nasty that it became known as the War of the Copper Kings.

Their first fight came in 1888, a year before statehood, when William Clark ran as a Democrat for the office of territorial representative to Congress. He expected to win because most Montanans were Democrats.

But Daly had his own goals. Daly owned lumber companies that had been illegally cutting timber on public lands, and his companies were in trouble with the federal government. He knew that a Democrat would not be able to protect his business interests from a Republican-controlled government.

So Daly worked to elect Clark's Republican opponent, Thomas H. Carter. He gave out free whiskey and cigars to any man who said he would vote against Clark. He also told all his employees and contractors that they would lose their jobs if they voted for Clark. At that time, people's votes were not secret as they are now, so Daly could easily find out how his employees voted. The voters were so enraged at this obvious control that in 1889 Montana became one of the first states in the union to adopt the secret ballot.

Clark lost the election by 5,000 votes. He became Daly's bitter enemy.

### Clark Tries to Buy a Senate Seat

When Montana became a state, Clark had another chance to run for office—this time the U.S. Senate. At that time, only members of state legislatures voted for U.S. senators. (This changed in Montana in 1911.) In 1890 Montana's first state legislature met. Clark hoped the legislators would elect him to one of Montana's two senate seats.

But Montana's first legislature was such a disaster that its members could not agree on two senators. The legislature was so evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats—and the two parties fought so

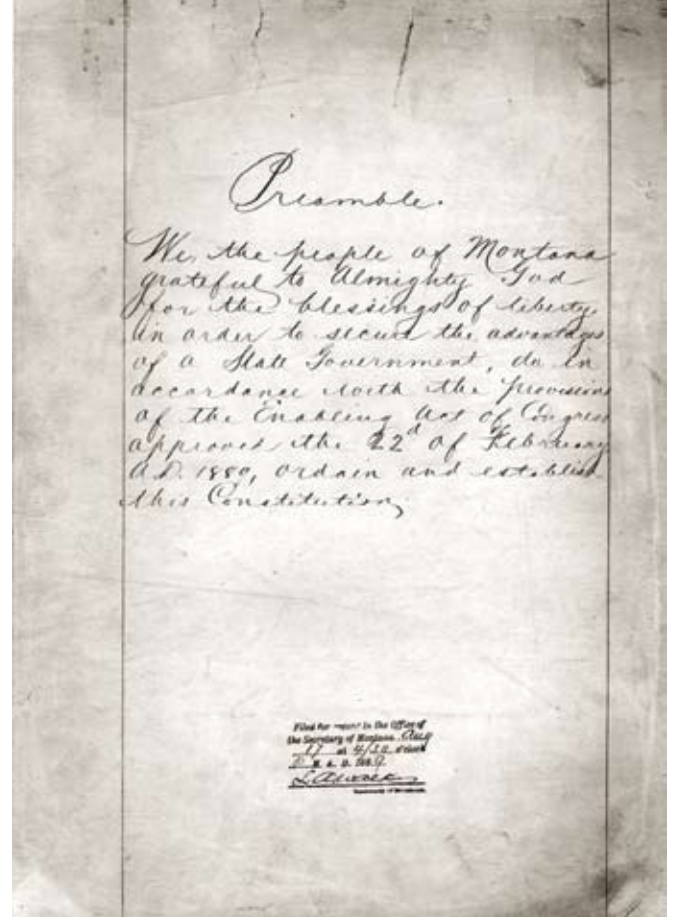


FIGURE 10.6: Voters passed the 1889 constitution by an overwhelming majority on October 1, 1889. On November 8, Montana became the 41st state in the union.



### Marcus Daly

Marcus Daly was born outside the town of Ballyjamesduff, Ireland, in a time of terrible poverty. He was stout as a bear, intelligent, and generous. He wanted to be the most successful mine developer in the country. Daly came to Butte

in 1876 as a young mining engineer with “a nose for ore.” In 1882, with investments from several **financiers** (investors who finance huge projects), Daly sank a deep shaft at the Anaconda mine, which a silver miner was eager to sell. At about 300 feet he struck a vein of copper 100 feet wide. “The world does not know it, yet,” Daly told a friend, “but I have its richest mine.” By 1890 Daly's Anaconda Copper Mining Company was producing \$17 million worth of copper per year—equal to \$343 million today.

## William A. Clark

William A. Clark was Marcus Daly's chief rival. He was born in a log cabin in Pennsylvania. He was small with sharp features and a cold manner. He was a shrewd businessman with an eye for profit. He arrived in Montana in 1863 and started buying up silver mines and stamp mills from owners who could not pay back their bank loans. Eventually, Clark owned 13 copper and silver mines in Butte (and other mines across the West). He also owned many other businesses, including banks, smelters, and utility companies. Clark was politically ambitious, and his life goal was to serve in the U.S. Senate. It soon became clear that he would do anything to get there.



much—that nothing got done. So each party elected its own senators, and Montana sent four U.S. senators to Washington, D.C. That year Republicans controlled the U.S. Senate. They seated the two Republican senators and sent the two Democrats—including William Clark—home.

The next Senate election was in 1893. By this time Clark wanted to be a U.S. senator so much that he was willing to **bribe** (offer illegal payments) the legislators for their votes. Daly wanted Clark defeated just as strongly. He found out how much Clark had bribed each legislator, then paid each one the same amount to change his vote.

When the day came for the legislature to vote, Clark was confident of victory. He sat in the legislative chamber fingering the pages of his acceptance speech. But he lost by three votes. Both Clark and Daly accused each other of bribery and **corruption** (dishonesty). The legislature voted again and again—over 50 days—and never did agree on who should be Montana's second senator. For the next two years, Montana had only one U.S. senator.

### 1894: Clark, Daly, and the Capital Fight

The next time Clark and Daly clashed, it was over the location of the state capital. State government can be incredibly valuable to a town. It pours money into the community, pays for land and buildings, creates jobs in the area, and adds prestige to the town. It also gives local residents constant access to their state leaders, which was important to business tycoons like Clark and Daly.

In 1892 the voters were asked to choose between seven towns: Helena, Boulder, Bozeman, Butte, Deer Lodge, Great Falls, and Anaconda, this last one a town founded by Marcus Daly and named for his mining company.

None of the choices won a **majority** (more than half) of the votes. The top two cities were Helena (with 30 percent of the votes) and Anaconda (with 22 percent). So in the next election, two years later, voters would decide between Helena and Anaconda. It was the perfect setup to pitch William A. Clark against Marcus Daly.

Once again, the copper kings battled to control the election. Daly wanted the capital in his own town of Anaconda, the site of his huge copper smelter. But Clark had made a secret agreement with some Helena businessmen that he would support Helena as the capital if they would help him get elected to the U.S. Senate.

Once again, Clark and Daly applied all their resources to persuade voters. They sponsored parades, speeches, and fireworks. They

## Communities Awarded State Institutions



**Boulder City**—state training school and hospital  
(now Montana Developmental Center)

**Bozeman**—state agricultural college (now Montana State University)

**Butte City**—school of mines (now Montana Tech)

**Columbia Falls**—state soldiers home (now Montana Veterans Home)

**Deer Lodge City**—state prison (Montana State Prison)

**Dillon**—state normal (teacher) college  
(now University of Montana—Western)

**Helena**—state capital

**Miles City**—state reform school (juvenile detention center;  
now Pine Hills Youth Correctional Facility)

**Missoula**—state university (now University of Montana)

**Twin Bridges**—state orphanage (closed in 1975)

distributed free cigars, drinks, and \$5 bills to win people's loyalty. Clark handed out miniature men's shirt collars made of copper to symbolize the stranglehold the Anaconda Mining Company would have on Montana if Anaconda won. Daly opened "Anaconda for Capital" clubs across the state and turned them into social centers.

To gain more influence, the two men also bought newspapers—or paid editors to support their cause. Marcus Daly already owned the *Anaconda Standard*. Soon he also purchased the *Great Falls Tribune*. William Clark already owned the *Butte Miner*. Soon he also controlled Missoula's daily paper as well. Many small-town weekly editors also took their orders from either Clark or Daly.

It was a close election, but Helena won, 27,028 to 25,118. Later, it was said that Clark had spent nearly \$500,000 on the capital fight and that Daly had spent more than \$2.5 million. Since only 52,000 men could vote, the two copper kings had spent \$56 (equal to \$1,356 today) per voting man.

### 1899: The Feud Continues

In 1899 William A. Clark once again ran for the U.S. Senate. This time, he vowed to get himself elected no matter the cost.

Once again, when the state legislature set about to elect another U.S.

*FIGURE 10.7:* In addition to fighting over the capital, towns competed for other state institutions. People wanted their towns to have the jobs and economic stability these institutions promised. This map shows where state institutions were located, along with Montana counties, in 1889.



HE VOTED FOR HELENA, LIKEWISE FOR GROVER.

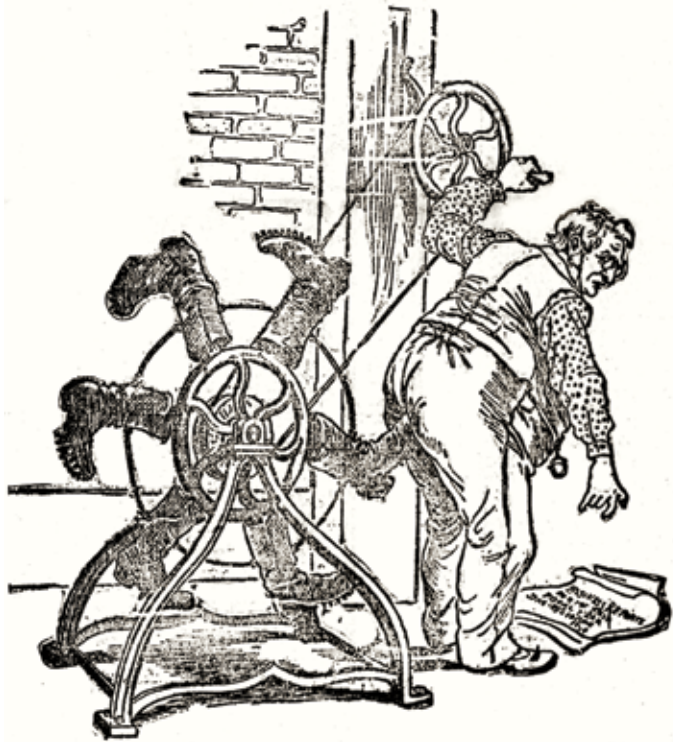


FIGURE 10.8: Every newspaper in the state took sides in the capital fight. The *Hamilton Western News* published this political cartoon on August 22, 1894, inviting anyone who might vote for Helena for capital in the upcoming election to “apply the machine unsparingly.”

“Jeers and catcalls echoed in the galleries as the vote was taken and onlookers shouted, as legislators’ names were called, the price Clark was known to have paid for their support. Political morality had ceased to exist in Montana.”

—JOSEPH KINSEY HOWARD,  
*MONTANA: HIGH, WIDE, AND HANDSOME* (1943)

senator, Clark was one of the candidates. This time, he knew he would win. But just as the state senate met to vote, a young state senator from Flathead County named Fred Whiteside stood up, waved four envelopes containing \$30,000 in cash, and said a representative of Clark had paid four senators to vote for Clark for U.S. Senate.

A grand jury was called to investigate. Whiteside and the three other senators testified that Clark had tried to bribe them. Clark denied it. He said it was all a plot by Marcus Daly. The grand jury chose not to **indict** (decide to prosecute) anyone. A few weeks later, the legislature elected Clark to the U.S. Senate.

Later evidence showed that Clark had paid between \$5,000 and \$25,000 to each legislator he had bribed. Only 13 legislators had turned him down. In all, his U.S. Senate seat had cost him \$1 million in bribes (close to \$21 million in today’s dollars).

When Senator Clark went to Washington, Whiteside (and Marcus Daly) insisted that the U.S. Senate investigate him for bribery and **fraud** (lying with criminal intent). A Senate investigation found Clark guilty. In punishment, the Senate threatened to deny Clark his seat. But before the Senate could act, Clark resigned in a fury. The governor appointed Paris Gibson, founder of Great Falls, to take his place.

When the legislature **convened** (assembled) again in 1901, they once again elected Clark to the U.S. Senate. By this time Marcus Daly had died, and Clark was allowed to serve unchallenged.

## Labor Unions and the People’s Party

Many ordinary citizens disagreed with the way Clark, Daly, and other corporate bosses tried to control Montana politics. They organized to have their say by joining **labor unions** (organizations of employees that bargain with employers) and through political action. Sometimes the copper kings seemed to have a stranglehold over the state. But when the copper kings fought each other, working people gained more power.

### Labor Unions Gain Strength

Joining together in a labor union was one of the main ways workers could gain power. Unions like the Butte Miner’s Union negotiated with mine owners for better pay and safer working conditions. Improving safety was especially important in the mines, where accidents killed an

average of one miner every other day in the 1890s.

The corporations had money, power, and political connections. But a union that represented all or most of the workers controlled whether or not the work got done. If conditions got too bad, a union might call a **strike** (an organized protest in which workers refuse to work).

Belonging to a union was important to workers. The union helped its members when they were sick and helped pay for their funerals. But most importantly, unions gave workers a voice.

Unions became very powerful in Butte, and they were very popular with their members. Marcus Daly and William A. Clark needed allies in their battles against each other, so they competed for their workers' loyalty and tolerated their unions.

### Populism: A People's Political Party

The copper kings' influence over politics and the widespread corruption of state politics made many Montanans angry. Corporate influence was not just a problem in Montana. Across the United States, as corporations grew in wealth and power, corporate owners gained increasing control over the nation's political and economic policies. In the early 1890s a new political party formed in the United States to protest this control—the Populists.

The Populist Party (**populist** means "of the people") fought to give common people more voice in government. Populists protested laws and economic policies that favored the rich and powerful. And they demanded that the government pay closer attention to the needs of farmers, workers, and small businessmen.

**Populism** (politics based on issues important to everyday people) really took hold in Montana, where corporate control and corruption of state government was so obvious. Many Montanans began campaigning for populist issues like mine safety laws and giving voters the right to elect U.S. senators.

Populists also campaigned for women's right to vote. In 1892 the Montana Populists



FIGURE 10.9: This is a photo of the evidence of Clark's bribery: an envelope marked with the initials W.A.C. (William A. Clark) containing ten \$1,000 bills. Clark allegedly gave out several of these envelopes to members of the 1899 Montana legislature to encourage them to elect him U.S. senator.

FIGURE 10.10: These three miners were photographed while working 1,900 feet underground. Where they were working it was 92°F with 90 percent humidity. The nearest ventilation was 500 feet away. Men like these looked to their unions to help them fight for better pay and working conditions.





**FIGURE 10.11:** Ella Knowles was the first woman to pass the Montana bar exam and become an attorney. She ran for state attorney general on the Populist ticket.

ran the first woman candidate for attorney general—Ella Knowles, who was the first woman **attorney** (lawyer) in Montana. She ran a strong race for attorney general, even though women were not allowed to vote. She lost the election but made a strong stand for women’s political future in Montana.

### Silver and the Panic of 1893

Populists opposed policies that helped the rich get richer at the expense of the poor. But in the spring of 1893, the Populists saw all their worst fears realized when the nation suffered a horrible economic collapse. Banks closed, and millions of ordinary people lost their life savings. Although the economic depression lasted several years, it was called the Panic of 1893.

The panic became even worse in Montana when the federal government decided to stop **minting** (making) silver coins in the fall of 1893. When the government stopped buying millions of ounces of silver for coins, Montana’s silver mines closed. Silver towns like Wickes and Granite became ghost towns overnight. Banks shut their doors. Within a few months nearly one-third of Montana’s workers—20,000 people—lost their jobs.

### The People Fight Back

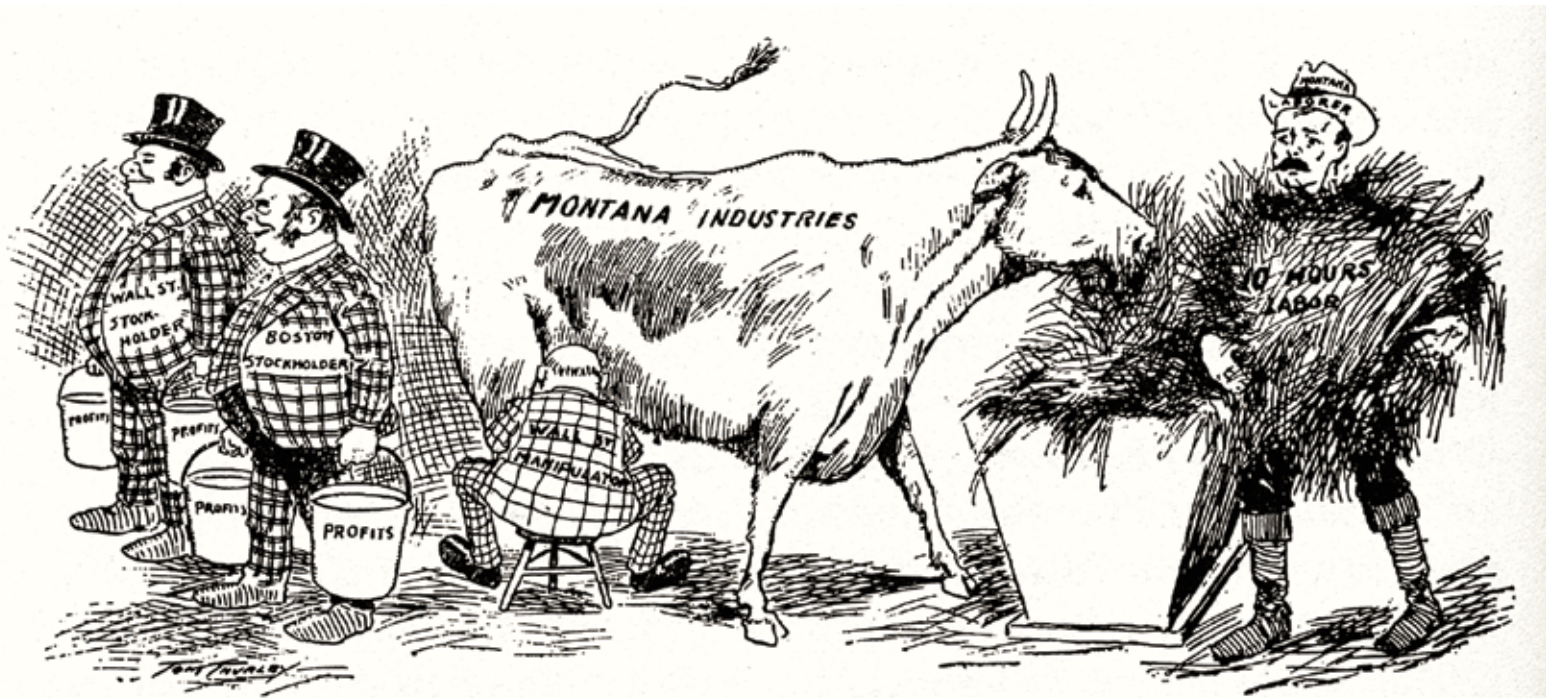
The panic created outrage among working people. Wealthy people had been able to protect themselves from the worst of the depression by buying gold. When banks, mines, and other businesses closed, it was the working class that suffered the most. More Montanans switched to the Populist Party. In the next election, Montana Populists elected 16 representatives and senators to the state legislature.

That same year William Hogan, an unemployed worker from Butte, staged a spectacular demonstration of the people’s outrage. Hogan heard that Populists across the country were organizing a big march on Washington, D.C. Jacob S. Coxey, their leader, intended to demand unemployment relief from the government.

Hogan recruited more than 400 other jobless



**FIGURE 10.12:** The Miner’s Union Day Parade was a grand occasion that drew hundreds of silver-mine workers even in a little town like Granite (near Philipsburg). About three years after this picture was taken, all the Granite miners lost their jobs and Granite became a ghost town.



**Fed in Montana, Milked in the East.**

men from Butte to join Coxey's march on Washington. To get there, they took control of a Northern Pacific train and barreled eastward across the state. As they passed through Bozeman, Livingston, and Billings, people thronged the tracks in support. The state militia finally stopped Hogan and his men at Forsyth. There they arrested Hogan, who served six months in jail. But many Montanans supported Hogan and the others for trying to gain attention for the plight of the unemployed.

FIGURE 10.13: Many Montana workers resented the fact that their work mostly benefited wealthy eastern businessmen. On November 6, 1900, the *Butte Miner* published this cartoon of a milk cow named "Montana Industries." The cow is fed by a Montana workman (labeled "10-hours labor") while rich easterners haul off the profits.

## War of the Copper Kings, Part Two: Clark, Daly, and Heinze

Montana's economy recovered by 1898, and the War of the Copper Kings began a new chapter. Marcus Daly sold part of the Anaconda Copper Mining Company to Henry H. Rogers and William Rockefeller, top executives of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. Standard Oil was one of the biggest oil companies in the world.

Rogers and Rockefeller wanted to control the nation's copper industry just as they controlled much of the oil industry. So they formed a **holding company** (a corporation that owns other corporations) called Amalgamated Copper Company. Amalgamated began buying up other big Montana companies, including the Boston and Montana Company—Montana's second-biggest copper producer—and most of William Clark's mines and smelters. Montanans began calling all of Amalgamated's copper operations simply "the Company."

In 1900 Marcus Daly died. Daly had been one of the world's biggest



**FIGURE 10.14:** Frederick Augustus Heinze knew the power of the press just as well as Clark and Daly did. He gained national attention as the **maverick** (independent thinker) who stopped the Standard Oil trust. Meanwhile, he was stealing copper from one of the biggest corporations in the world.

**FIGURE 10.15:** William Hogan and his group of unemployed miners seized a Northern Pacific train in Butte and drove it all the way to Forsyth. They were trying to join protestor Jacob S. Coxey's march on Washington, D.C. When they were stopped in Forsyth, they proudly displayed a sign that read "General Coxey Company 6."



industrialists, but he was also a miner and a Montanan. When he died, his company fell under the complete control of Rogers and Rockefeller. They had little understanding of Montana and no sympathy at all for the laborers who lived and worked here.

### The Man Who Outsmarted Standard Oil

Frederick Augustus Heinze was 20 years old when he came to Butte in 1889 to work for the Boston and Montana Company. Heinze was handsome, free with his money, and smart. He built a smelter in 1892–93, where he processed the ores of small, independent mines.

Then he had a daring idea. He bought a tiny mining claim called the Rarus, which was only 10 feet wide and 70 feet long. Federal mining laws said that if a vein of ore rose to the surface on any given mining claim, the owner of that mining claim had the right to follow that vein no matter where it led—even if it trespassed into other claims. This law was called the “Apex Law,” named after the **apex** (highest part) of a vein of ore.

Heinze knew that just a few feet underground, Butte’s immensely rich hill became a tangle of ore veins. These veins were more interconnected than veins in most other mines in the world. He also knew that it would be hard to prove which vein apexed where.

So Heinze simply began tunneling from the Rarus into all the veins that apexed on his claim—which happened to connect to three enormous copper mines owned by Amalgamated and the Boston and Montana Company. Amalgamated immediately sued to stop him, but Heinze was ready for that. He claimed in court that the Apex Law gave him ownership

over the three major copper mines on the hill. Heinze demanded that the judge shut Amalgamated down.

Heinze had two powerful friends who were judges in the Butte courts. He had spent great sums of money to get these two judges elected. In every court case Amalgamated brought, these two judges sided with Heinze.

Amalgamated appealed its cases all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, but these appeals took time. Meanwhile, Heinze’s crews worked 24 hours a day, quickly and efficiently

removing millions of dollars of copper ore from Amalgamated's properties.

By 1902 Heinze had 37 lawyers fighting nearly 100 lawsuits. These lawsuits did not scare Heinze. For one thing, his mining profits far exceeded his legal costs. And for another, most of Butte and much of Montana liked him. Frederick Heinze spent his money in local businesses, spread his wealth around, and made many friends.

Amalgamated, on the other hand, was run from New York City by a company known for being ruthless with its employees. The company that Daly had started began to lose support among Montanans. When Heinze said that Standard Oil wanted to own everyone in Montana, people believed him.

### Amalgamated Shuts Down the State

Tied up in hundreds of lawsuits, Amalgamated made a power play. On October 23, 1903, the Company abruptly shut down all its Montana operations—mines, smelters, railroad, logging operations, and mills. Fifteen thousand people were locked out of work. Montana's economy screeched to a standstill. Amalgamated kept only its newspapers operating, and they loudly blamed the shutdown on Heinze.

A few days later an angry crowd of 10,000 people—many of them unemployed miners—mobbed the downtown streets to protest the shutdown. They demanded to hear what Heinze had to say.

Heinze strode up the steps of the courthouse and faced the crowd. "My friends," he said, "the Amalgamated Copper Company is the greatest menace that any community could possibly have within its boundaries."

The crowd grew quiet as Heinze went on. "These people are my enemies—fierce, bitter, **implacable** (unforgiving). But they are your enemies, too. If they crush me today, they will crush you tomorrow. They will cut wages and raise the **tariff** (price) in the company stores on every bite you eat, and every rag you wear. They will force you to dwell in Standard Oil houses while you live—and they will bury you in Standard Oil coffins when you die."

When he finished, a loud roar of support rose from the crowd. Whether Heinze's legal tricks had caused the shutdown or not, most people were angry at Amalgamated. They needed to feed their families.



FIGURE 10.16: The *Butte Reveille*, owned by Frederick Heinze, printed this editorial cartoon in 1903 showing Amalgamated as a thug mugging the state of Montana as a wealthy eastern investor looks on.

**“The Amalgamated Company deserves the most unsparing censure [criticism] for throwing thousands of men out of work for the sole purpose of gaining political advantage.”**

— EDITORIAL IN THE LEWISTOWN DEMOCRAT,  
AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER, OCTOBER 30, 1903

Winter was beginning. Thousands wrote letters to Governor Joseph K. Toole demanding help. But Governor Toole could not order Amalgamated to reopen.

Then Amalgamated made an offer. The Company printed a message in the *Anaconda Standard* saying that if Governor Toole would call a special session of the legislature to move the court cases out of Butte (where Heinze controlled the courts), the Company would resume operations and Montanans could go back to work.

### **Should Corporations Make Decisions for the Legislature?**

Governor Toole had a problem. Should he let Amalgamated dictate when the legislature should meet and what laws they should pass? On the other hand, should he let the shutdown go on, knowing that thousands of Montanans would suffer far more than Amalgamated's corporate executives would? The shutdown already had lasted almost a month. People were going hungry. Almost every business, large or small, felt the pinch.

Governor Toole called the special session on December 1, 1903. In his opening speech, he urged the legislators to remember that what-

ever laws they passed would affect not just Amalgamated, but all of Montana. “You are legislating for the future of the whole state,” he reminded them.

The legislators did exactly what Amalgamated demanded: they passed a fair-trials bill, allowing anyone who thought that one court was unfair to move their court case to another town. Under this law, Amalgamated could sue Heinze in other towns besides Butte, where Heinze controlled the judges.

The day after this law passed, Amalgamated gave the signal to reopen, and Montanans went back to work.

### **Amalgamated Copper Company Wins the War**

Amalgamated had won the last battle in the War of the Copper Kings. In 1906 Heinze sold his

**FIGURE 10.17:** Ten thousand people swarmed the Butte courthouse on October 26, 1903. Many of them were angry at Heinze because his lawsuits had shut down Anaconda's activities. Some in the crowd, shown here, were armed. But when Heinze finished speaking, the crowd erupted in a roar of approval.



mining interests to the Company for \$12 million and moved to New York City. Burton K. Wheeler, who became a U.S. senator from Montana, later wrote, “The lesson for Butte was clear. No matter how clever, **unscrupulous** (dishonest) or spendthrift the opponent, you couldn’t lick Amalgamated.”

Four years later William Clark sold his mining interests to Amalgamated as well. In 1915 Amalgamated merged all of the companies it controlled into a single company: the Anaconda Copper Mining Company.

### Crisis in the Labor Unions

Labor unions had done well under Daly and Clark. When Heinze arrived, he supported the labor unions and used them as allies. He agreed to the unions’ demand for an eight-hour workday to gain the loyalty of his workers.

But Amalgamated was an eastern company. Back east, corporations and labor unions fought intense, bloody battles. Amalgamated came on the scene already hostile to labor unions.

In 1900 Amalgamated secretly began to send its own men, and sometimes trained detectives, to join the unions and to work their way into leadership positions. Within a few years the Company controlled the unions.

In 1906 the Butte Miner’s Union asked Amalgamated for a 50-cent wage increase. Miners had made \$3.50 per day (about \$70 today) for almost 15 years. During that time the cost of living had increased—and so had company profits. Amalgamated offered a raise of 25 cents instead. The company-controlled union leaders accepted the lower raise and even wrote Amalgamated a letter of thanks.

The union’s working men were outraged. They saw that their own union leaders had betrayed them. The union split into two factions. The leaders stayed loyal to the Company, while committed union members called for a strike. It looked like the union might tear itself apart.

At this point the Company took charge, once again closing its mines. The committed union men struggled to maintain the strike, while the company union men argued against it. But strikes only work when everyone participates. Without a unified voice, the union had no power. The company-controlled union leaders remained in control of the union, and the mines opened again.

Montana’s labor unions had learned an important lesson. When different companies compete against one another, labor unions gain strength and negotiating power on behalf of workers. When one company holds a **monopoly** (exclusive control), labor unions lose strength.

This lesson hit home in 1912 when Amalgamated issued **rustling cards**. Each miner had to get a card from the Company before he could

“It took the Amalgamated Copper Company just three weeks to coerce Montana into falling on her knees with promises of anything that big corporation might want.”

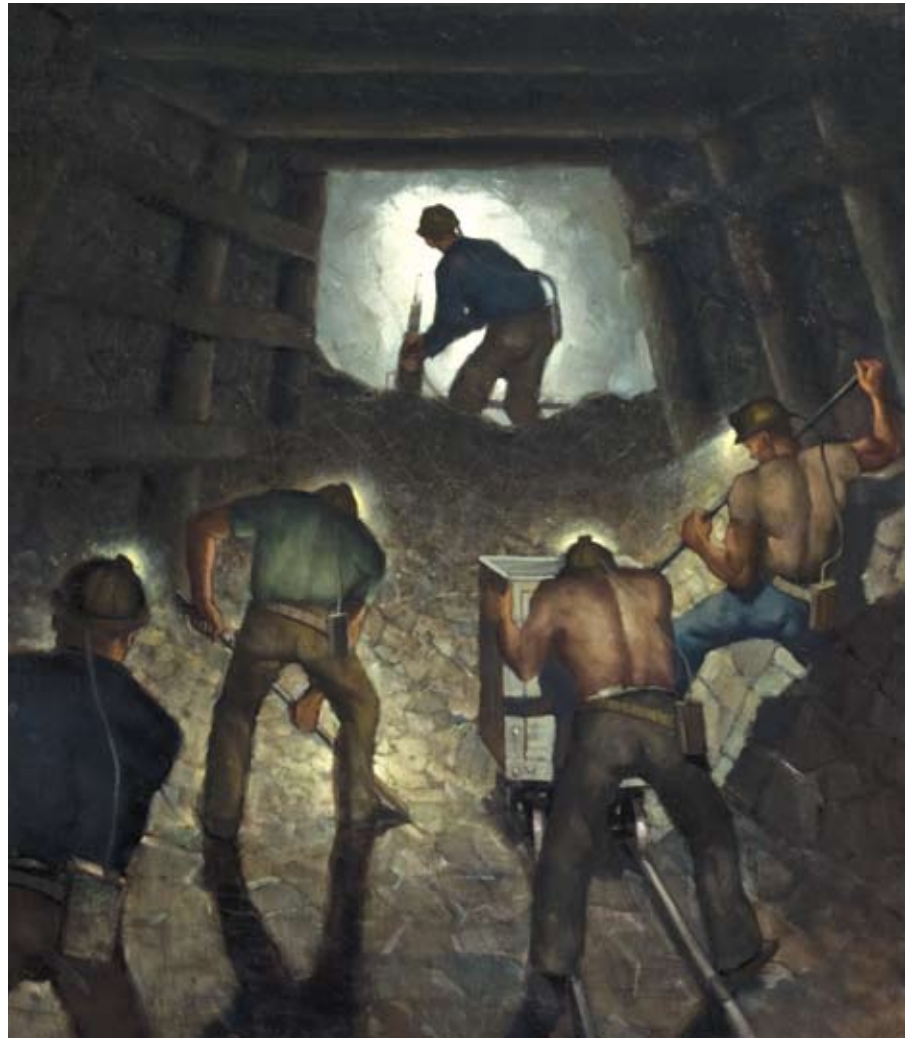
—IDAHO STATE TRIBUNE



**rustle** (round up) work. Anyone who spoke out against the Company lost his card and could not work. In one simple act, Amalgamated wiped out much of the unions' power. Union members continued to fight for workers' rights, and they sometimes won small victories, but the unions would not regain real strength until the 1930s (see Chapter 18).

## Stepping into a New Century

Montana faced many challenges in its early years: political corruption, tension between rural and industrial parts of the state, and too much power in the hands of a few. Many of these early problems continued to trouble the state in the twentieth century. Yet citizens did not give up trying to make things better. Another political movement would arise after the turn of the century to challenge the power of the Company and fight for honest government. This new movement was called Progressivism (see Chapter 15).



*FIGURE 10.18:* Hard-working miners, who risked their lives in dangerous jobs every day, could not match the power and control that huge corporations like Amalgamated wielded. American artist Paul Sample (1896–1974) painted this picture in 1936.

# Expressions of the People

## The Montana Capitol

When Montana became a state, it needed a state capitol building. A capitol building provides a home for government offices and a place for the legislature to meet. It is also a **symbol** (something that represents an idea or an event).

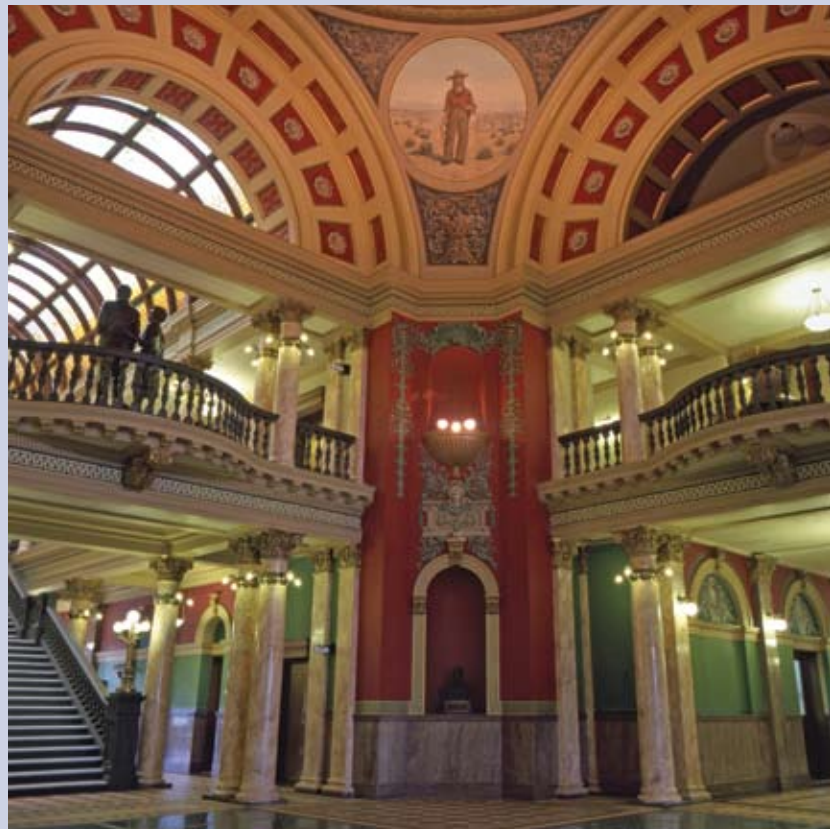
The architecture of Montana's capitol building shows how people felt about statehood and about the United States. Its stone exterior symbolizes the strength of Montana's people and the solidity of its future. The stone came from Stillwater County near Columbus.

Architects gave the building marble columns and a 165-foot-high dome. These **neoclassical** (reflecting Greek and Roman traditions) elements symbolize the strength and wisdom of western civilization as carried forth by the United States. The dome is topped with copper, signifying the richness of Montana's natural resources.

The elaborately decorated capitol building reflected Montana's sophistication in the early 1900s. Montanans wanted to show that even though their state was far away from the centers of fashion and power, it could still build a grand capitol. People also wanted their "temple of democracy" to be a building of grace, stability, and dignity.

The Capitol holds 36 permanent murals, numerous stained-glass windows and ceilings, historic paintings, and sculptures that celebrate the rich and varied history of the state.

*FIGURE 10.19:* The inside of the state capitol building was designed to make visitors feel the nobility, balance, and grandeur that democracy brings to a society. At the same time, paintings like the one of this cowboy celebrate Montana's colorful history.





*FIGURE 10.20:* Montanans love to stage demonstrations, memorial services, and celebrations on the Capitol lawn. These girls were part of a May Day celebration in 1916.



*FIGURE 10.21:* Irish revolutionary Thomas Francis Meagher served as Montana's acting territorial governor from 1865 to 1867. To Irish immigrants he was a hero—though as acting governor he was controversial. Irish Americans in Butte and Anaconda raised the money to erect this statue in front of the Montana State Capitol in honor of their Irish heritage.

Architects Charles E. Bell and John H. Kent designed the building and supervised its construction. The Capitol cost approximately \$500,000 to build. Thomas Cruse, the owner of one of Montana's richest gold and silver mines, helped finance the project. Helena real estate developer Peter Winne donated 17 acres of land more than a mile from Helena's downtown. The cornerstone of the building was laid July 4, 1899, and the building was completed in 1902.

In 1909 the building was already too crowded, and work began to add wings to both ends of the original building. The new wings were completed in 1912.

After almost 100 years of use, the Capitol was renovated in 1999–2000. Today the Capitol stands as a monument to Montana's distinctive heritage and the democratic ideals of its people.

# CHAPTER 10 REVIEW

## ► CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. Identify: (a) Marcus Daly; (b) William A. Clark; (c) Fred Whiteside; (d) Populist Party; (e) Ella Knowles; (f) Panic of 1893; (g) William Hogan; (h) Henry H. Rogers; (i) Joseph K. Toole; (j) Augustus Heinze
2. Define: (a) lobby; (b) constitution; (c) delegate; (d) ratify; (e) legislature; (f) suffrage; (g) convene; (h) labor union; (i) strike; (j) populism; (k) monopoly; (l) rustling card
3. Why did Euro-Americans want statehood for Montana Territory?
4. What was the Enabling Act?
5. What were the two main disagreements at the 1889 constitutional convention? How were they resolved?
6. Why didn't Marcus Daly want William Clark to be the territorial representative to Congress?
7. Why did William Clark support Helena as the capital for the new state of Montana?
8. What were the two primary goals of labor unions?
9. How did the national Panic of 1893 affect Montana?
10. How did Marcus Daly's death affect mining in Montana?
11. Why did people support Augustus Heinze over Standard Oil?
12. What was the fair-trials bill?

## ► CRITICAL THINKING

1. Compare the arguments in the Montana 1889 constitutional convention over representation to the arguments over the same issue at the 1787 constitutional convention in Philadelphia. In both cases, do you think the outcome was fair?
2. At the 1889 constitutional convention, mining companies argued that they should pay less tax than other businesses because they were so important to Montana's economy. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your reasoning.
3. Before 1911 the state legislature elected Montana's senators. Now voters elect senators. List pros and cons for each system.
4. Describe the role of the press in the War of the Copper Kings. What would have been different if Daly and Clark had not owned rival newspapers?

5. In the section about unions, you read, "When the copper kings fought each other, working people gained more power." What does this mean?
6. Think about the information you have read about labor unions. Why might workers want to join a union? Why might they not want to?
7. How did the life of a miner for one of the large companies differ from that of one of the earlier placer miners?

## ► PAST TO PRESENT

1. The early years of Montana statehood were marked by political corruption and dishonesty. Why do you think this was so? Do you think this level of corruption could exist today? Why or why not?
2. Amalgamated Copper Mining Company dominated Montana's economy in 1910. Could any one company gain the same level of control today? Why or why not?

## ► MAKE IT LOCAL

1. Does your community have historic ties to a large corporation (for example, the Anaconda Company, a railroad, or a logging firm). If so, how did that relationship affect the life of your town?

## ► EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Choose one of the political cartoons that appear in the chapter. Analyze its purpose and explain why it is effective.
2. Discuss what rules (laws) are necessary in a classroom setting that would, and would not, have to be included in a state constitution. Then write a constitution for your class.
3. Research the history of labor unions in the United States and the working conditions that gave rise to these unions.
4. Research what it was like to work in the Butte mines. Based on your research, write a story titled "A Day in the Life of a Copper Miner."

# Credits

The following abbreviations are used in the credits:

BBHC Buffalo Bill Historical Center, Cody, Wyoming  
GNPA Glacier National Park Archives  
LOC Library of Congress  
MAC Montana Arts Council, Helena  
MDEQ Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Helena  
MDT Montana Department of Transportation, Helena  
MFWP Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Helena  
MHS Montana Historical Society, Helena  
MHSA Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena  
MHSL Montana Historical Society Library, Helena  
MHS Mus. Montana Historical Society Museum, Helena  
MHS PA Montana Historical Society Photograph Archives, Helena  
MSU COT Montana State University College of Technology, Billings  
NMAI National Museum American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.  
MSU Billings Special Collections, Montana State University Billings Library  
NARA National Archives and Records Administration  
NPS National Park Service  
NRIS Natural Resource Information System, Montana State Library, Helena  
SHPO State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Historical Society, Helena  
TM Travel Montana, Helena  
UM Missoula Archives & Special Collections, The University of Montana-Missoula  
USDA United States Department of Agriculture  
USFS United States Forest Service  
WMM World Museum of Mining, Butte

## Chapter 10

- FIG. 10.1** *Capitol at Night*, Clay Schulz, MHS Mus.
- FIG. 10.2** Constitutional Convention, 1884, photo by Bundy & Train, Helena, MHS PA 952-001
- FIG. 10.3** Ribbon, MHS Mus. X1988.31.38
- FIG. 10.4** J. W. Stith Store, 1889, photo by Evelyn Cameron, MHS PA PAc 90-87
- FIG. 10.5** Interior of Copper King mansion, courtesy John Thompson, Copper King Mansion, Butte
- FIG. 10.6** Montana Constitution (1889) Preamble, MHSA RS 250, bx.2
- SIDEBAR, PAGE 195**, Marcus Daly, photo by Davis & Sandford, New York, MHS PA 941-880
- SIDEBAR, PAGE 194**, William Andrews Clark, 1898, photo by Wilhem, New York MHS PA 941-722
- FIG. 10.7** Spoils of Statehood, map by MHS, base map courtesy NRIS
- FIG. 10.8** "He voted for Helena, likewise for Grover," *Hamilton Western News*, Montana, August 22, 1894, MHSL
- FIG. 10.9** Bribe money, 1899, MHS PA 941-727
- FIG. 10.10** Butte miners, ca. 1910, MHS PA Lot 8 Box 1/9.12
- FIG. 10.11** Ella Knowles Haskell, *Progressive Men of Montana*, p. 472 MHS PA 942-591
- FIG. 10.12** Miner's Union Day, Granite, MT, photo by Hower, Philipsburg, MT, MHS PA 947-770
- FIG. 10.13** "Montana Industries," *Butte Miner*, November 1900, MHSL
- FIG. 10.14** F. Augustus Heinze, C. P. Connolly, "fight of the Copper Kings," *McClure's Magazine* VXXIX #1, p. 318, May 1907
- FIG. 10.15** Coxey's Army, Forsyth, 1894, photo by L. A. Huffman, MHS PA 981-802
- FIG. 10.16** "Will Her Children Come To Her Rescue?" *The (Butte) Reveille*, November 27, 1903, MHSL
- FIG. 10.17** F. Augustus Heinze and crowd in Butte, courtesy WWM
- FIG. 10.18** *Miners in the Stope*, Paul Sample, MHS Mus.
- FIG. 10.19** Interior of State Capitol Rotunda, 2002, photo by Tom Ferris, MHS PA
- FIG. 10.20** May Day, 1916, photo by Edward Reinig, MHS PA PAc 74-104
- FIG. 10.21** Thomas Francis Meagher statue, photo by George Lane, *Helena Independent Record*, July 1, 2005