Granville Stuart

Granville Stuart (1834 - 1918)

"Montana, in honoring his memory, honor herself. He thought as a sage although he felt like a man." This tribute was one of hundreds memorializing Granville Stuart when he died in Missouri on October 2, 1918. The accolades and remembrances of the man called "Mr. Montana" came from across the country and from persons who had known him throughout his 51-year career in the state. With his brother James, Stuart had arrived in Montana with the first white settlement.

In many ways, his story is the story of Montana Territory and the budding state of Montana.

Granville Stuart was born on August 27, 1834, in Clarkesville, Virginia. As a small child he moved with his parents to Illinois and later to Iowa. Stuart's father joined the gold rush to California in 1849 and three years later James and Granville followed him there. The brothers left California with their companion, Jesse Anderson. In 1857 they moved to the Bear Lodge Valley in North Dakota. He was one of three men discovered gold at the mouth of Gold Creek (Powell County), a find that led to many placer strikes in Montana in the 1860s. During the 1860s, however, he was engaged in the mercantile business, supplying mining camps with vital, and expensive, provisions.

After James Stuart died in 1873, Granville became involved in the shipping, mining, and banking. In 1879 he became a partner with Henry W. Nassau and Andrew D. Davis in an extensive open-range cattle operation in Fergus County. The D & H Bank was founded under the Stuart and Davis Bank, and its first president was John S. Stuart.

Granville Stuart was born in 1834 and died in 1918. He was a prominent figure in Montana's history, known for his contributions to the state's development.

A strong Democrat, Granville Stuart sat in the Territorial Legislature in 1872, 1875, 1876 and 1877. He served in President of the Council (Senate) in the 1872 session, and remained a significant figure in Democratic state politics into the twentieth century. In 1890 Stuart was appointed U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay and Paraguay, a position he held until 1893.

Upon returning to Montana, Stuart became head librarian at the Butte Public Library and worked diligently to document the history of Montana Territory (1864-1889). In 1907 the State Legislature funded some of his research and writing. The product of his last years is the two-volume Forty Years on the Frontier, a pivotal work in the study of Montana history.