

Unit 6: Annotated Student Text

CHAPTER 6

MONTANA: LAND AND PEOPLE

- What makes Montana special?
- Who are some great Montanans?



Artist Charlie Russell loved Montana better than any place else. He painted this picture of buffalo crossing the Missouri River and called it *When the Land Belonged to God*.

Have you ever sung the song "America the Beautiful"? It starts with these words:

"O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!"

*Teach Part 1:
Celebrating Montana
with Montana's Charlie
Russell (p. 291)*

The person who wrote “America the Beautiful” was trying to express the greatness of the United States, but she could have been talking about Montana. Montana is known for its **spacious** (large) skies. That’s why one of our nicknames is “Big Sky Country.” Drive through the “Golden Triangle” area north of Great Falls in August, and you will see “**amber** (yellow) waves of grain.” Look at Montana’s mountains at sunset, and you will see “purple mountain majesties.”

The land and sky make Montana special. Montana’s people do, too. Montanans are artists and farmers, ranchers and scientists. Here are just a few of the people whose stories are interwoven with the story of our state.

CHIEF DULL KNIFE/MORNING STAR, LEADER (CA. 1810–1883)

Dull Knife was also called Morning Star. He was a Northern Cheyenne chief who signed the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. A few years later, the U.S. government broke the **treaty** (agreement between nations). Dull Knife and his people tried to live and hunt as they always had, but in 1877, the U.S. Army forced them to move one thousand miles away to Indian Country (which is now Oklahoma).

The Northern Cheyennes suffered in Indian Country, where it was very hot. There was not enough food. Many got sick and died.

*Teach Part 2: Amazing
Montanans (p. 296)*

Chief Dull Knife and Chief Little Wolf risked their lives to bring their people back to Montana. The journey was long and dangerous, and many people died. A year after Chief Dull Knife died, the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in southern Montana was established.

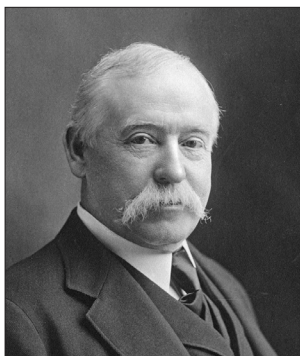
Dull Knife believed strongly in education. That is why Chief Dull Knife College on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation is named in his honor.



Chief Dull Knife

MARCUS DALY, “COPPER KING” (BUTTE, 1841-1900)

Born to a poor family in Ireland, Marcus Daly came to America at age fifteen. He became a miner in California, and then moved to Nevada. In Nevada, he learned how to recognize rich veins of ore. Daly went to work for the Walker Brothers, who sent him to Butte, Montana, in 1876 to help them decide if they should buy a silver mine there.



Marcus Daly

Daly soon realized that Butte had more copper than silver. He also realized that copper was going to become valuable. Copper wires are used to **transport** (move) electricity, and people living in cities were just starting to use electric lights. To bring electricity to everyone's house required a lot of copper wire. Daly quietly bought up copper mines. He soon founded the town of Anaconda and built the world's largest copper smelter. By the time of his death, he was one of Montana's richest men.

EVELYN CAMERON, PHOTOGRAPHER (1868-1928)

Evelyn Cameron and her husband Ewen first came to Montana on a hunting trip they took for their honeymoon. They loved it so much that they decided to move to Terry, Montana, to ranch.

Ewen was a scientist who studied birds. He was not interested in ranching, so Evelyn had to do most of the work herself. Even though it was hard, she loved it. She wrote in her diary: "I like to break colts, brand calves, cut down trees, ride & work in a garden."

She also liked to take photographs. In 1894, Evelyn Cameron



Evelyn Cameron with her camera and tripod, September 4, 1921.

Tip: Both Evelyn Cameron's diaries and over 600 of her photographs are available through the Montana History Portal [website](#).

got her first camera. She took beautiful pictures of the people, animals, and landscapes of southeastern Montana. Her photographs have been **published** (printed) in several books and are also in the Montana Historical Society's collection.

CHARLES M. RUSSELL, ARTIST (1864-1926)

A sculptor, painter, and storyteller, Charlie Russell is Montana's best-loved artist. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri, and grew up hearing stories about the Old West, which fascinated him. His parents thought he would get tired of the West once he tried living there, so they found him a job on a Montana sheep ranch when he was sixteen. Charlie hated sheep, but he loved Montana. He worked as a trapper and a cowboy, and all the time he drew, painted, and made sculptures.



Charles M. Russell in his studio painting *The Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 1918.

Charlie loved painting cowboys. He also loved painting Indians as he imagined they had lived in the days before white settlement. In 1896, Charlie married Nancy Cooper, who became his business manager. Nancy shared Charlie's work with the world and made him famous. Today his artwork can be seen in museums across the United States, including in Helena and Great Falls, Montana.

Activity idea: More lesson plans for exploring Charlie Russell's artwork are available on the Montana Historical Society's Montana's Charlie Russell [web page](#).

JEANNETTE RANKIN, POLITICIAN (1880-1973)

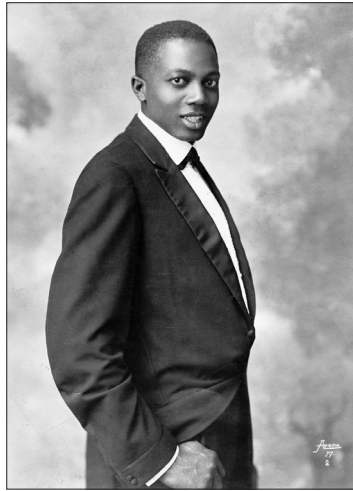
Jeannette Rankin was born in Missoula, Montana. After graduating from college, she worked as a social worker. She soon decided that politicians needed to do more to help the poor. At the time, women could not vote, so Jeannette Rankin became a full-time **suffrage activist** (someone working to win women the right to vote). Once Montana women could vote, Rankin ran for office. She won and became the first woman elected to the U.S. Congress.

*Jeannette Rankin*

Jeannette Rankin stood up for what she believed in, even when it was unpopular. She was a **pacifist** (someone who believes that problems cannot be solved by fighting). She would say, "You can no more win a war than you can win an earthquake." She served in Congress at the beginning of World War I and again at the beginning of World War II. Both times she voted against going to war.

TAYLOR GORDON, SINGER (1893-1971)

Taylor Gordon grew up in White Sulphur Springs, Montana. His family was the only African American family in the town. When he was seventeen, he got a job with rancher and circus owner John Ringling. He traveled across the United States with Ringling and ended up in New York City in the 1920s.



Taylor Gordon

Taylor Gordon went to Harlem, an all-Black neighborhood in New York City. He became part of the "Harlem Renaissance." (**Renaissance** means rebirth.) The Harlem Renaissance was a time when Black artists, musicians, and writers celebrated their **culture** (shared customs and ideas) and heritage. Taylor Gordon began performing a **traditional** (old) type of African American music called spirituals. He became a hugely popular singer who performed across the United States and in Europe.

Activity idea: Explore more of Montana's African American history with lesson plans and materials on the Montana's African American Heritage Resource Project [web page](#).

HARRIETTE CUSHMAN, SCIENTIST (1890-1978)

Harriette Cushman was born in Alabama. She went to college in New York and earned degrees in chemistry and **bacteriology** (the study of bacteria). She went on to study **poultry** (birds raised on farms, like chickens and turkeys). In 1922, she took a job in Bozeman as Montana's first poultry specialist. She was one of the first women to work as a poultry specialist.



Harriette Cushman

Harriette Cushman traveled throughout Montana, teaching farmers everything they needed to know to raise healthy poultry. She started many 4-H groups, so that kids could learn how to raise poultry, too.

Cushman's work was especially important during the Great Depression, when many farmers were struggling to make a living. She helped farmers find buyers and get good prices for their eggs and turkeys. Many people said that they would not have made it through the Depression without Harriette Cushman's help.

Tip: Harriette Cushman is one of thirty-five women included in the [Montana Women at Work Lesson Plan](#). Consider using this two-hour activity to teach your students more about Montana women's employment opportunities between 1866 and 2014.

SUSIE WALKING BEAR YELLOWTAIL, NURSE (1903-1981)

Susie Walking Bear Yellowtail was born in Pryor, Montana. Like many other American Indians, she went to boarding school. Her teachers wanted her to give up her Crow language and culture, but Susie loved her culture. All her life, she helped other people learn about the Crow people and their culture.

In 1923, Susie graduated from a nursing school in Boston. She was the first Crow tribal member to become a registered nurse. Working as a nurse, she often saw things that were unfair, and she always tried to make them better. She worked her entire life to improve Indian health care on the Crow Reservation and beyond.

Susie Walking Bear Yellowtail also encouraged other tribal members to become nurses. She received many awards for her work, but her favorite was from the American Indian Nurses Association, a group she founded. The association named her "Grandmother of American Indian Nurses."



Susie Walking Bear Yellowtail, with her husband Thomas

Did you know? Susie Walking Bear Yellowtail was inducted into the Gallery of Outstanding Montanans in 1987.

GEORGE OIYE, SOLDIER (1922-2006)

George Oiye grew up near Three Forks, Montana, where his dad worked at the cement plant. In high school he was co-captain of the six-man football team and the starting quarterback.

Oiye's life changed dramatically on December 7, 1941, when the United States declared war against Germany, Italy, and Japan. People started treating anyone who looked Japanese as "the enemy." George's parents were both born in Japan, and George's father lost his job. George tried to enlist in the army, and at first, the army refused to take him because of his family background.

In 1943, the United States set up a special unit for Japanese American soldiers. Oiye joined and became a staff sergeant. His unit won more medals than any other fighting unit of its size in American history. George Oiye himself was awarded a Bronze Star for his bravery on the battlefield.



Sergeant George Oiye

*Did you know?
Historically, Montanans
served in the military
at much greater rates
than people from other
states.*

ANNA BOE DAHL, PRESIDENT OF THE SHERIDAN COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE (1892-1986)

Anna Boe Dahl moved to northeastern Montana in 1917. After teaching school for two years in Dagmar, she married farmer Andrew Dahl. Anna and Andrew's farm did not have electricity, which made life very hard. According to Anna, all the work had to be done by "muscle-power."

Power companies would not build the power lines needed to bring electricity to isolated farms like the Dahls'. It cost too much money. So, Anna Dahl worked with her neighbors to set up the Sheridan County Electric Cooperative (called the co-op). When it started providing power in 1948, the co-op brought electricity to over six hundred families in Sheridan County. It soon expanded to serve parts of Roosevelt and Daniels counties, too. Dahl continued to work with the co-op to help farm families like hers until she retired at age seventy-five.

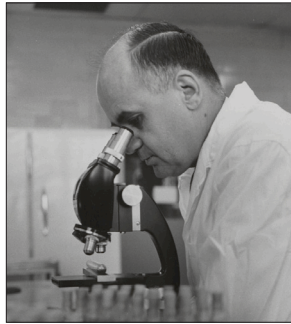


Anna Boe Dahl and children

Did you know? By 2021, Montana had 25 electric coops that collectively served more than 400,000 Montanans across the state.

MAURICE HILLEMAN, SCIENTIST (1919–2005)

Not every great Montanan stayed in the state. Maurice Hilleman was born on a farm outside of Miles City, Montana. He credited the lessons he learned as a child on the farm and his education at Montana State University for his success. He became one of the most important scientists in the United States.



Maurice Hilleman

Hilleman was a microbiologist. **Micro** means small. **Biology** is the study of life. Microbiologists study tiny living creatures like bacteria and viruses. As a microbiologist, Hilleman specialized in creating vaccines to fight against **diseases** (sickness), like measles and mumps, that are caused by viruses. During his career, he developed over forty vaccines that are estimated to save nearly eight million lives a year.

JIM MURRY, LABOR LEADER (1935–2020)

Jim Murry grew up in Laurel, Montana. After high school, he went to work in the oil refinery there. Jim was active in the oil refinery workers' labor union. (A **union** is an organization that stands up for workers' rights and fights for better pay.) He went on to lead the Montana AFL-CIO. The AFL-CIO brought together many unions—

*Did you know?
Maurice Hilleman
was inducted into the
Gallery of Outstanding
Montanans in 2015.*

from oil workers to teachers—so they could work together to try to improve the workers' lives.

Jim Murry worked for the Montana AFL-CIO from 1966 to 1981. This was a hard time for Montana workers. Increasing **mechanization** (using machines to do the work that people once did) meant that it took fewer miners to dig copper in Butte or cut **timber** (wood for building) in Libby.



Jim Murry

There was also less copper to dig. To help the workers who lost their jobs, Jim brought training programs to Montana. These programs helped people learn new skills, so they could find new ways to make a living.

ELOUISE PEPION COBELL, BANKER-ACTIVIST (1945–2011)

Elouise Cobell grew up on the Blackfeet Reservation in a home without electricity or plumbing. She studied business in college and started the Blackfeet National Bank. It was the first national bank owned by an Indian tribe. She also became tribal **treasurer** (the person who keeps track of money).

Cobell discovered a problem. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA),

Did you know? Elouise Cobell was a huge Elvis Presley fan. Before she resigned to focus on her landmark lawsuit, she was the president of Montana's Elvis Presley fan club.

a part of the U.S. government, controlled a lot of Indian land. The BIA **leased** (rented) that land to ranchers or mining companies. The BIA was supposed to pay Indian landowners the money it made from leasing their land, but it had not kept good records.



Elouise Cobell with President Barack Obama

When the BIA refused to fix things, Elouise Cobell sued them in court. After thirteen years and several trials, Cobell and her team proved that the BIA owed many Indian landowners money. To settle the lawsuit, the U.S. government agreed to pay these landowners \$3.4 billion.

WHAT WILL YOUR CONTRIBUTION BE?

How will you contribute to our state, nation, or world when you grow up? Will you become an artist like Charlie Russell, a businessman like Marcus Daly, or a nurse like Susie Walking Bear Yellowtail? Will you stay in Montana and work to make your community a better place to live, like Anna Dahl? Or will you be like Maurice Hilleman, and use what you learn growing up in Montana to help the world?

Activity idea: There are so many amazing Montanans who didn't make this chapter! If your students wrote biographical poems in Unit 4, discuss whether they think any of the people they featured in their poems should have been included in this chapter.