

## Chapter 1

# When Copper Was King

(22:08 minutes)

## Synopsis

This 22-minute video explores the profound impact of the copper mining industry on Montana. This video can be viewed as two shorter segments if desired. **Segment 1** (10:55) focuses specifically on the Copper King's 1894 Capital Fight between Helena and Anaconda. **Segment 2** (11:13) focuses on the tensions between laborers and management in Butte's copper mines in the early 20th century. These tensions paralleled the growth of unions in Butte. This video presents an overarching theme of industrialization during the period from 1892 until World War I-era Montana.

► The video begins with students giving their best answer to the following focus question, which relates to Segment 1: **“Why is Helena our state capital?”** Teachers may wish to ask their students the same question before viewing the episode.

### The narrator answers the focus question:

“Late in the Nineteenth Century, the arrival of transcontinental railroads together with the development of the copper industry drove Montana into an age of industrialization. Big players in the new state's copper industry fought each other to gain financial, political, industrial, and popular advantage. The ‘Capital Fight of 1894’ proved an important contest for ‘Copper Kings’ Marcus Daly and William A. Clark. That battle plunged Montana into political corruption lasting well into the Twentieth Century—and crowned Helena as the state's capital.”

Teachers may wish to stop the video at 10 minutes and 55 seconds and discuss the capital fight before watching the second segment. A possible focus question for Segment 2 could be: **“Why would workers form a union?”**

## Post-viewing Discussion Questions

Engage students' critical thinking skills and elicit their emotional responses with the following four questions, most easily remembered through the acronym DICE: What **disturbed** you? What **interested** you? What **confused** you? What **enlightened** you?

### “Getting at the Meaning” Questions

#### Segment 1

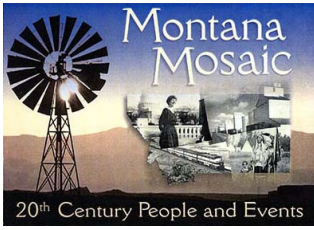
1. How has your understanding of the 1894 Capital Fight and the way in which Helena became Montana's capital changed?
2. The early years of Montana statehood were marked by political corruption and dishonesty. Why do you think this was so? Do you think this level of corruption could exist today? Why or why not?

#### Segment 2

1. How was the relationship between laborer and employer different than today? How is it similar?
2. How did World War I affect Butte, the Butte miners, and the unions?
3. How did control over the media affect politics during the first decades of the twentieth century? How, if at all, does it today?

## Vocabulary Terms

**Isolationism:** refers to America's commitment to staying out of European wars. Isolationists maintained the position that America



(Chapter 1, continued)

would profit most from a policy of orienting itself internally instead of on external and international affairs. (Information from <https://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1601.html>)

**Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)/The “Wobblies”:** an organized labor movement established in 1905. The majority of members were low-wage and unskilled workers such as miners and loggers. The “Wobblies” hoped to provoke increased wages, shorter working hours, and safer working conditions through organized and collective action. This collective action could be achieved through strikes and boycotts. The Industrial Workers of the World was one of the few unions of the period that organized based on class and included those typically excluded from unions, such as minorities, immigrants, women, and the unemployed. (Information from <https://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1050.html>)

### **Additional Resources**

For more information on topics addressed in this episode, see *Montana: Stories of the Land*, Chapter 10, “Politics and the Copper Kings, 1889–1904,” (<https://mhs.mt.gov/education/textbook/chapter10/Chapter10.pdf>); Chapter 15, “Progressive Montana, 1900–1924,” (<https://mhs.mt.gov/education/textbook/chapter15/Chapter15.pdf>) and Chapter 16, “Montana and World War I, 1914–1918” (<https://mhs.mt.gov/education/textbook/chapter16/Chapter16.pdf>).

### **Content Standards**

This chapter of *Montana Mosaic* aligns to the Montana Social Studies Content Standards as follows: 2.3, 2.6, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 5.2, 6.1, 6.3, 6.6