

Gold and silver mining is very profitable in this Territory. More than Twelve Million of dollars gold dust was mined here during the past season, and the coming year promises to be the most profitable mining season ever known in the history of Montana. Labor here is very scarce, and consequently very high. Common day laborers readily command from \$5 to \$6 a day, and mechanics from \$6 to \$10 per day.

From the best information that I can obtain the Northern Pacific Railroad will open up the richest country in agricultural and mineral resources on the American continent, and if the people East and in Europe could see the rich land grant that the road has its bonds would not remain in the market ninety days. The coming year is certainly a propitious time to settle in Montana, and I shall take great pleasure in welcoming a soldier colony from old Molly Stark.

I almost forgot to speak of the climate. This winter is said to be colder than usual, but I can assure you that it is not so cold or disagreeable as Ohio winters. The atmosphere is dry and pure, making this mountain country the healthiest on the continent. On the high mountains snow falls to a greater depth, but the *valleys are scarcely ever covered with snow*. The cattle run at large during the entire year, and no grain or hay is fed them, yet they come out in the spring as fat as the best stall-fed cattle in Ohio. Our meat market here is supplied with beef driven in from the herd, and I can assure you the meat is better than I ever saw in Ohio.

In my haste I may have omitted to state many things you and your friends may want to know. If so, I shall be glad to answer any questions you propound.

Very truly yours,

B. F. POTTS.

The Land Commissioner of the United States, in his report for 1870, on page 131, says of Eastern Montana :

The climate is much milder than the latitude, and elevation would seem to indicate, and the soil is unsurpassed for productiveness. A large extent of country in this region is under cultivation. Wheat is reported to yield 50 bushels to the acre, oats 75 to 100 bushels, and potatoes from 300 to 400 bushels to the acre, while garden vegetables have a mammoth growth.

In the *Helena Daily Herald*, Montana, of March 21st, 1872, is the following item :

Mr. Sparks, just returned from the Muscle Shell Valley, where he has been during the winter, says the snow is very light there, and the cattle have had no difficulty in getting plenty of grass the entire winter.

Quincy A. Scott, describing the Yellowstone Valley, says :

Some of the other valleys are beautiful. This is grand. It abounds in magnificent scenery, most excellent farm-sites, and water-powers. The soil is very rich and fertile, timber very convenient, coal and iron cropping out in abundance at different points, and at others evidence of rich deposits of copper, while the surrounding mountains are full of gold and silver-bearing quartz.