

Scott Kremer returned on Saturday last from Anaconda , Mont., He says wages are good there and that when work can be obtained the wages paid are \$6 to bricklayers; \$4.50 to carpenters and \$3 to \$3.50 for unskilled labor.

Mr. Kremer reports that Anaconda has a colony of some 20 or 30 former Yakimans including Morris Harris and wife; Abe Kreidel; B.D. Vandever, Mrs. Miller, Tom Murray and wife; Clarence C. Steele , who was shot at by C.Q. Halbert and James McKeague, the contracting carpenter who build the P.A. Bounds residence--Yakima Herald, Dec. 31, 1896.

There is a marked difference now between the price of flour and the point it reached one season in the early days of Montana.

There are not so very many residents of the state who were here when flour sold for \$40 per 100 pounds one day and jumped to \$100 per 100 pounds the next, even going higher subsequently. Those who were in the territory remember that the people took the law in their own hands as they had a way of doing in grave emergencies and that after what is termed by the chronicles of that period a flour riot, the price came down.

The time referred to was the spring of 1865 and the place was Virginia City which was then the principal city of the territory. The preceding winter had been one of remarkable deep snow and cold weather. The chinook winds were frozen out for they did not cross the range into Montana that winter and when came spring freighting between the territory and Salt Lake City was almost suspended.

The snow was so deep in the Snake River range that it was almost impassable for the heavily laden trains to cross. One large flour train arrived at the foot of the Snake River divided but the snow was so deep and the cold intense. The oxen could find no food and they perished by the scores where they were.

In the meantime provisions were getting scarce. Flour came to be hoarded like gold dust and was almost as precious. Potatoes, beans and all substitutes for flour were almost exhausted. A good portion of the people were then living on beef straight. Potatoes were scarce at 25 cents a pound.

The latter part of February saw a big rise in flour. The price jumped from \$25 to \$40 per hundred, then \$100 and then began to go up again. In a short time it reached \$150. There was no fixed price. A portion of the time it could not be purchased for love or money.

There were rumors that designing men had gotten up a flour corner and deep mutterings were heard against the men who had done it. A few days after the last rise word was flashed up and down the gulch that the citizens were going to rise against the flour merchants. The crowd did meet in Leviathan Hall. K.S. Blake was elected chairman. Hugh McQuaid was nominated for secretary, but he declined and the meeting proceeded without one.

The people formed a line and with a flour sack nailed to a pole for a banner proceeded up and down the street.

The impression got abroad then, and there was some excuse for it, that the town would be sacked. The men in the line of march did look determined and as yet there had been no intimation of the gathering except in the hall. They marched up and down Wallace street. During the beginning of the demonstration three men went into a clothing store.

"If we see what we want we will take it along I guess," one of the trio remarked carelessly.

One of the clerks was sent out for Neil Howie, one of the chiefs of the Vigilante Committee. He responded. Drawing his revolver he stepped forward and covered the three men.

"Gentleman this is an uprising to get a reasonable amount of flour for a reasonable price. It is not an excuse to sack the town. The first man caught stealing will be shot or hanged and none such will escape."

The ready made clothing fell from the hands of the men addressed and the word got around quickly there would be no mercy shown to anyone stealing.

Then Col. Wilbur F. Sanders and others then in the city addressed the crowd, advising an orderly search for flour and recommending that a reasonable price be paid after making an

equitable division of it with the men in whose possession it might be found.

Parties were organized to march in stores and cellars for hidden flour.

In some manner a rumor went out, it was a day of rumors, that a wagon load of flour had gone in the direction of Col. Sander's and one small party called at the colonel's house while he was out in another direction. Mrs. Sanders had them search the premises which they did but not a panful of flour was found.

Other houses were visited and armed guards watched the roads leading into and out of the city. The loaded wagon was overhauled and taken back to Virginia City.

Taylor Thompson & Co., had a supply in their store. They caused the doors to be barricaded and placed men behind the sacks armed with doubled barreled shot guns. Other stores were barricaded and preparations made to resist the patrols. But the searchers made it plain that they did not want any trouble and in some instances compromises were effected.

The flour was gathered from all parts of the city and stored in Leviathan hall. The hiding places were many. There was flour under hay stacks and in cellars, beneath the rafters of buildings but the searchers were keen with hunger as they found the most of it, so it is said. Every place where more than one sack was found the surplus was taken away to the common warehouse.

The committee met after the search had been almost completed and decided to allow the owners of the flour \$36 per hundred pounds which it was voted was profit enough. Men formed in line and received 18 pounds to each man, at the same price paid the owners. After a few hours the supply was reduced to 10 pounds to the man but even then the supply did not hold out.

Many went away disappointed.

A party of miners volunteered to go to the Snake River and try to shovel a path through for one of the pack trains, but the men returned discouraged and unsuccessful.

The supply grew scarcer and scarcer, and for a while fears of starvation were felt. But the snows melted early and at last the joyous news was shouted through the streets that flour -- a train of it, was slowly moving up the gulch.

And then when the price dropped to \$40 a sack men paid the price cheerfully and thought it cheap as dirt--Helena Independent, February, 1896.

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