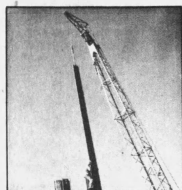


Construction of Canyon Ferry began in 1949 and was completed in 1953 at a cost of \$51 million.



## CONCRETE SOLUTION

By RITA MUNZENHIDER  
IR Staff Writer

As the Helena area grew, so did the need for a more sophisticated power structure, and thus the Canyon Ferry Dam.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation began construction of the Canyon Ferry Dam in 1949 to supply a demand for increased irrigation, power generation and flood control. It was completed nearly five years and \$51 million later when the first of its three generators kicked into operation in 1953.

The dam replaced a primitive power structure, built in 1888 by the Montana Power Co., that was located between

Cemetery Island and the mainland. Ironically, the old site was flooded by the new-generation dam.

Canyon Ferry's powerhouse, about 2½ times as large as Helena's Placer Hotel Building, was built near the site of an extremely profitable placer mining operation. In fact, Confederate Gulch was once known as the richest acre of ground in the world. But as gold deposits were depleted, many turned to farming, creating the need for irrigation from the nearby Missouri River.

The new facility, now irrigating about 35,000 acres of farmland, pushed the former 47,000-acre foot Lake Sewell up to the existing 2,051,000-acre-foot Canyon Ferry Lake. The headwaters moved closer to Townsend, ex-

tending the lake over 24 miles.

As the waters filled the reservoir, the small community of Canyon Ferry was flooded. Small Cemetery Island, the burial site for 50 pioneers who played a major role in the early history of the area, survived and remained an island.

But with the completion of the new dam and lake came the development of Helena's major recreational area. And, within a short time, a larger community with scores of summer homes was built along its shores.

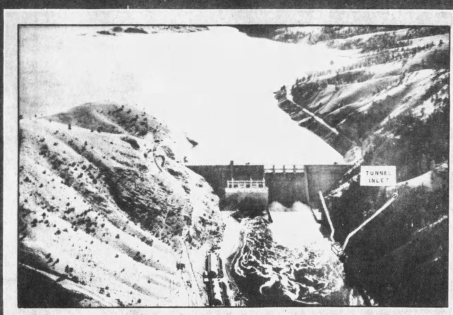
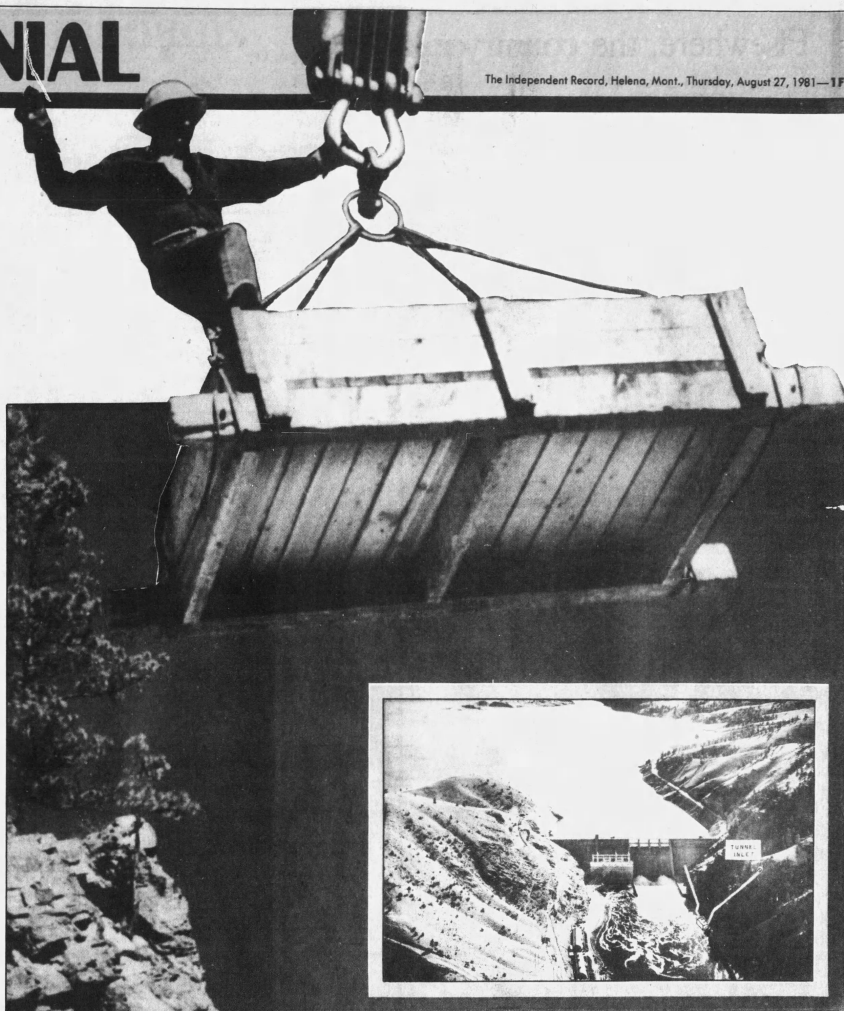
Today, the dam, sandy beaches, shoreline parks, ideal camping and picnicking spots and excellent fishing continue to attract recreators to the site.

Canyon Ferry Dam is one of three dams in the Helena area centered on the Missouri River.

Construction on the Holter Dam near Wolf Creek began in 1916, and two years later, the 50,000 kilowatt generating station went into operation.

The original Hauser Dam project was conceived by Samuel T. Hauser to supply economical electric power for mining companies in Butte and Anaconda. But a 300-foot section of the steel dam gave way in 1908 when the force of spring runoff undercut its foundation.

Hauser Dam was rebuilt in 1911 at a cost of \$2.4 million. Today it stands, constructed of concrete and built to last.



## ELSEWHERE, COUNTRY BUZZES

By GAYLE SHIRLEY  
IR Lifestyles Editor

As Helenans struggled to create civilization from the harsh territory they'd settled, Americans elsewhere were enjoying an era of enormous geographic and economic expansion.

From 1870 to 1900, the population of the United States rocketed from 39 million to 76 million. Many of those new citizens (more than 5 million in the 1880s alone) had immigrated from foreign countries, hoping to improve their lot in the burgeoning young land. Many also became part of the rush to settle the vast frontier. The population west of the Mississippi grew from fewer than 7 million to more than 16 million in those three decades, and the settlers tamed 430 million acres of new land.

The era was one of rags-to-riches achievement in which money had become the consuming passion of virtually all Americans. At the same time, it was an era of hard work, rural isolation and monumental inhibition.

Perhaps the most profound events of the time were the gearing up of the industrial revolution and the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869, which joined coastlines 3,000 miles apart. The new ease in mobility, coupled with the time to take advantage of it, helped bring about quick and astounding

changes before the end of the century that would transform life for all Americans.

Here's only a sampling of the events that were going on around them as residents of the rowdy mining camp called Helena built their city:

Electricity was becoming a fascination of late 19th century life, and Thomas Edison was the leading American hero. Though there were only 3,000 telephones in the country in 1876, by the end of the century there would be more than a million.

William Wrigley Jr., a former soap salesman from Philadelphia, was writing his own rags-to-riches story by developing a successful novelty called chewing gum. He and others like him prompted newspaper pundit Finley Peter Dunne, alias Mr. Dooley, to write, "The crownin' wurruk iv our civilization is th' cash raygister."



The automatic wheat thresher was being developed, putting thousands of farmhands out of work and revolutionizing the farming industry. While before the Civil War it had taken 61 hours of labor to produce an acre of handgrown wheat, by the 1890s machinery yielded the same amount in 3 hours and 19 minutes.

In 1880, the British Parliamentary Commission reported that a 33 percent profit could be made ranching in the United States. Cattlemen dominated the west until the middle of the 1880s, when a severe drought and harsh winter killed 90 percent of the cattle on the range.

(More on ELSEWHERE on page 2F)



## A CITY WITH NO MADAMS

By BILL SKIDMORE  
IR Staff Writer

Not to be sentimental, mind you, but a long and important part of Helena's history came to an end on April 17, 1973, when they closed the doors forever on Dorothy's Rooms.

For the first time, Helena was without an honest-to-God whorehouse.

Houses of prostitution, like vigilantes and hanging trees and ever-present dreams of gold, were synonymous with old-time Western mining towns of a century ago. And, although the profes-

sion had its up and downs and currently is flat on its back, it remained a fundamental part of Helena through nearly all of its history.

The earliest years of that history have been ably documented by historian Paula Petrik in a recent issue of "Montana, the Magazine of Western History."

published by the state's Historical Society.

Petrik, by carefully sifting through records of land transactions, mortgages, civil and criminal complaints and other early documents, has shown how prostitution became an intrinsic part of the economic and social fabric of society.

Among the first of Helena's ladies of the night, and destined to become the richest, best-known madam in those early days before the turn of the century, was Mary Welch, who arrived in New York harbor sometime in 1858 at the age of 14.

Within nine years, after learning her trade in Chicago and changing her name to the more elegant Josephine Airey, she arrived in Montana Territory, Petrik related. Josephine, soon to be known as "Chicago Joe," made her way to Helena and bought property on Wood Street in the heart of the city's red light district.

(More MADAMS page 3F)

# A city with no madams

(Continued from page 1 F)

Wood Street was just south of the Fire Tower Hill, about where the M.E. Anderson Apartments now stand. It was a busy place.

The 1870 census listed 485 women in town. Almost 12 percent, or 56, were prostitutes.

Helena suffered the same imbalance of the sexes as its sister towns throughout the west. Petrik noted that in some age groups young, single men outnumbered women by as much as five to one.

But a more telling point was this: at a time when social and economic conditions refused women "any but the most menial and lowest-paying work," prostitution paid big.

A skilled male artisan could earn between \$90 and \$100 a month and bank clerks earned \$125 a month, but the highest paid saleswoman could earn no more than \$65 a month.

In 1880, when several prostitutes maintained bank accounts, "a fancy lady plying her trade along Wood Street could expect an average monthly income of \$233," Petrik said. One such lady, Rosa Diamond, earned \$337 a month.

Fact was, prostitutes were doing just fine in Helena. Chicago Joe was only one of many who owned property, paid taxes, invested heavily in improvements through large mortgages, and, while hardly part of the city's upper crust, weren't harassed, either.

**N**obody cared about prostitution before 1886 — a generation after gold was found in the Gulch — and the police court itself was within the red-light district.

The city incorporated in 1881, and it soon began to pass ordinances designed to clean up Helena's act. In 1882 the city prohibited solicitation for the purpose of prostitution. The next year, houses of prostitution were effectively barred from the legitimate business area, which had moved to Main Street. Then, in 1886, an ordinance banned prostitution completely.

In August of that year, the authorities came down on Chicago Joe. They charged her with operating a "hurdy gurdy house."

Petrik said the assistant county attorney argued that hurdis are immoral "establishments where men's souls were lured to the shores of sin by the combined seductive influence of wine, women and dance."

Chicago Joe's lawyer took it in stride. Armed with a dictionary, he told the jury that a hurdy gurdy is a boxed, stringed instrument played by turning a crank, while Joe's music was provided by a violin, piano and cornet instead.

The verdict was "not guilty," and that was it for the war against prostitution. "The community," said Petrik, "continued to turn a blind eye toward Wood Street."

The madams continued to flourish, too. Chicago Joe had several houses, and built the Coliseum, a vaudeville variety theater. Molly Brynes constructed the "Castle" at the corner of Wood and Joliet streets just south of the Bluestone House. Lillie McGraw remodeled her houses nearby.

But even as business boomed, there was trouble in the wind. Alcoholism and drug abuse was beginning to take their toll. After the mid-1880s, several women died each year.

Blanche Mitchell and Kitty Williams, each age 26, committed suicide with morphine, Petrik reported. Lillie Fillmore died of syphilis at 30. Nellie Sommers, a black prostitute on Clove Street (which ran along the site of the old Eddy's Bakery) killed herself with whiskey laced with arsenic.

And by the turn of the century, the old madams also were dying away. Molly Brynes, who was in her early 40s, died in 1900 of acute alcoholism (although there were suspicions she died three days after signing her will, making her husband her only heir). Lillie McGraw died of cirrhosis of the liver at 61. Chicago Joe died at 56 of pneumonia.

After 1900, Petrik found, the era of women-operated whorehouses ended, and male pimps took over.

It wasn't until after World War I that women came to the front again — women with names like Ida "Jew Ida" Levy, Glenn Parker, and Dorothy "Big Dorothy" Baker. As the years went by, prostitution didn't regain the numbers that existed in the first 30 years of the city's history, but the houses remained.

During 1951, 1952 and 1953, the state attorney general commissioned a fact-finding study of prostitution



or BAD... Our classification of the conditions found in Helena, is BAD."

The full investigation report still is kept under wraps, but series of summary reports that lists madams as "Mrs. A," "Miss B," and so on assert that Helena "still clings to a policy of tolerating openly conducted brothels."

The report listed three of them that had been operating for years and "are as accessible as the business houses along the same main street of the city's busiest section."

One prostitute told the investigator: "This is the only place I've ever worked that was so wide open... If we have any trouble we just call the police and they come up and take care of it."

"We have to go to the doctor each week," she said, "then take the slides to the police station... They're in charge and keep a record."

One man told the investigator that one of the madams was "so in right that the chief often eats dinner out in her house and she in his."

One factor that helped fuel prostitution in those years was the presence of service men. One told the investigator: "Tom looks quiet, don't it? Well, it ain't... Plenty goin' on... three real joints and stuff in bars, too... Prices are right, \$5 and liquor at 50 cents a shot."

A madam (who hailed from Passaic, N.J.) said she'd been in town for 42 years. "And if I live 42 years more I'll still be able" to run the house, she said.

That confidence wasn't justified by half. Twenty years later the days of open houses of prostitution came to an end.

County Attorney Tom Dowling had attacked Big Dorothy's in 1909, getting a permanent restraining order against the long-time madam. The order was ignored, the back door at 19 1/2 Last Chance Gulch remained open.

But then came urban renewal, and Commissioner Kathleen Ramey raised a stink in the fall of 1972 when "Dorothy's Rooms" got a small grant for a renovation study.

"It was there before you were born and it will be there after you die," said Commissioner Ed Loranz.

Not so. Dowling commissioned a study of his own, hiring lawmen from Missoula and Kalispell to drop by Big Dorothy's.

Sure enough. "Dorothy asked if we would like a girl and we replied affirmatively," said one of the undercover men in an affidavit.

It was a tough assignment. One of the men said in his affidavit that one prostitute, called Judy, told him she'd have to give his money back "if I didn't take my clothes off and do something."

"At which time," he reported, "I asked her merely to take off her clothes and roll around on the bed, which she did."

But the county attorney, to whom the continued presence of Big Dorothy's had become an embarrassment, had what he needed.

"We're going to go all the way on this one," he told a reporter.

The sheriff met the police chief at Dorothy's back door on Tuesday morning, April 17, 1973. They knocked, went in and nabbed Dorothy Baker and one young woman, Diane Rogers, who was found hiding in a closet.

About an hour after the raid, as police were searching through the spacious building containing seven plush bedrooms and five sitting rooms, Charles "Timer" Moses — a well-known Billings criminal lawyer — arrived to begin Big Dorothy's defense.

But less than a month later, before she could go to trial, Big Dorothy died.

Dorothy's Rooms, the last whorehouse in Helena, died with her.

**HAPPY  
100TH  
HELENA!!**

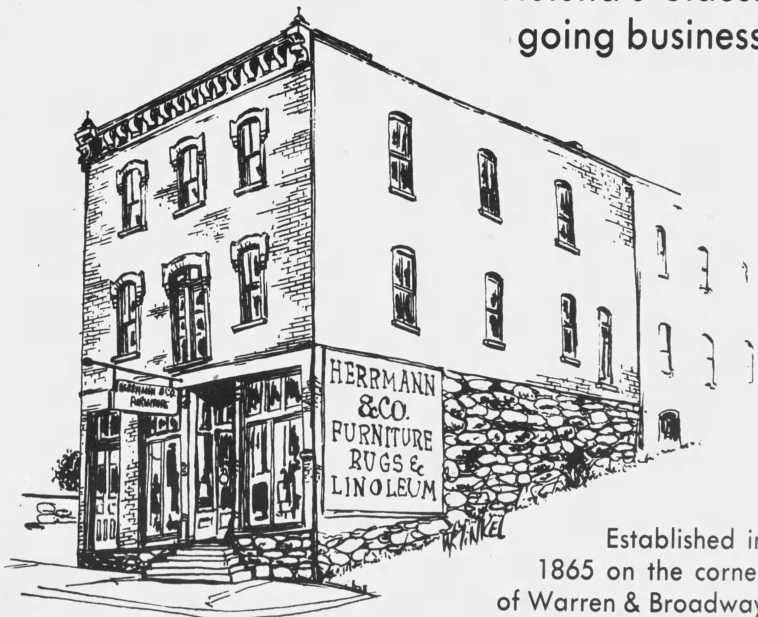
Helena — A Great Place to Live. For a Home in this Great Place, Call—



**442-0555  
In the Colonial Inn**

throughout the state. The investigator, a "specially trained and experienced member of the staff of the American Social Hygiene Association, Inc." of New York, reported thus: "Community conditions in regard to prostitution and related activities are classified as GOOD, FAIR, POOR,

Helena's oldest going business



Established in 1865 on the corner of Warren & Broadway

Herrmann & Co. Furniture is proud of its fine reputation for quality and service that has been a tradition for the 116 years of our existence. We're proud to say we were around to help establish the city of Helena, and take this opportunity to wish Helena a very happy 100th birthday!

We're looking forward to the next 100 years here in Helena.

For the finest furniture, see Herrmann & Co.

- PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE
- THOMASVILLE
- SIMMONS BEAUTYREST HIDE-A-BEDS
- LANE
- RANCH OAK
- STIFFEL LAMPS
- MANY OTHERS

**Herrmann & Co. Furniture**

"Where your decorating dreams come true"

Established 1865  
316 N. Last Chance Gulch - Downtown

Serving You Since 1895



Clover Leaf Dairy, the oldest dairy in Montana, originated in 1895 in Butte and Anaconda when James McHugh, an Irish immigrant, who had worked in the area's mines, was told by a doctor to find other work. He and his wife began the dairy with two cows and a lot of faith.

Today, Clover Leaf is still an independent, family-owned dairy, recognized as a leader in quality dairy products, and has won many national awards for excellence.

Clover Leaf milk comes from dairy farms in the Whitehall and Helena valleys and is processed in a modern plant in Helena. It is then rushed fresh to you in refrigerated delivery trucks.

We're proud to have been Helena's home town dairy for so many decades and hope to serve you and yours for many more.

Enjoy Clover Leaf dairy products with your family to help keep Helena bodies and businesses strong.

