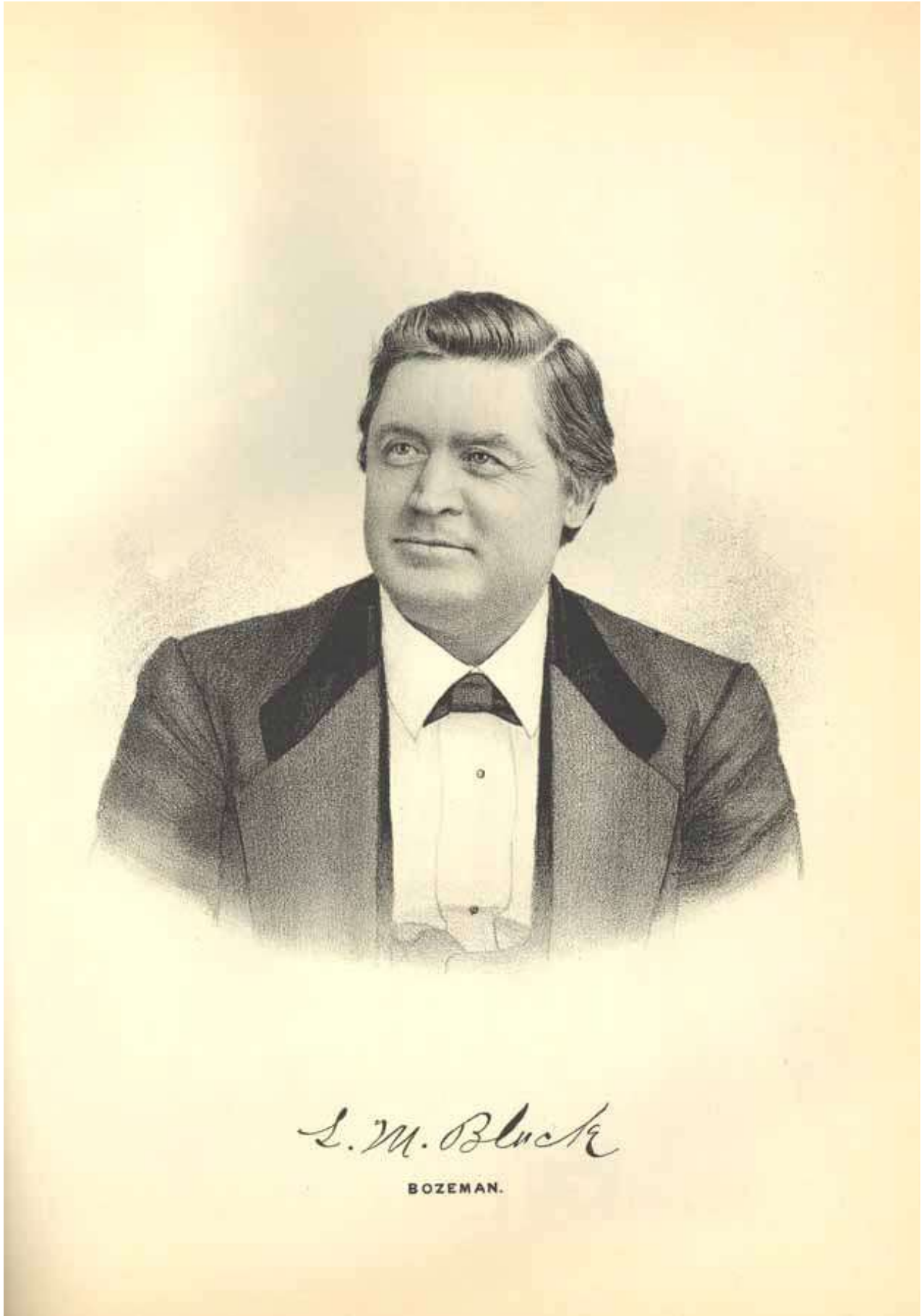


Leander Black



Black, Col. Leander M. – Born in Laurel Co. KY, 1830. 1866-68 – State Senator in Colorado. 1869 he came to Bozeman. He died 1885 – Black St. named after him. Home was on Elks Lodge site 1910. Was partner with Nelson Story. He owned ½ interest in 1st National Bank – His son Matt Black was Bookkeeper – Married Rosa Fridley here. Col. Black bought Gal. Val. 1st Newspaper from Editor Maguire and other stockholders in 1869.

1872, Fortunes on the Frontier, L. M. Black:

“L. M. Black left Kentucky in 1859 with all possessions ‘in a satchel.’ In Colorado by 1866 he had \$250,000. In Montana he increased this greatly. In the Indian Wars he expended \$150,000 in equipping a citizen army.” – Avant Courier, March 21, 1872

7. Leander M. Black came to Bozeman in 1869 from Denver where he had carried on a profitable freighting and contracting business for the government since the beginning of the Civil War. He had contracts to supply goods to the Crow Indians. He built a number of business and residential structures in Bozeman, operated the Bozeman Times, bought the Guy House and changed its name to the Northern Pacific Hotel, opened Bozeman's first bank, the First National, which soon went bankrupt. He promoted coal and silver mining, railroad development, and flour milling in several parts of the state, including the Bedford Mill near Townsend. His wife and three daughters led the social life in Bozeman during the summers, but returned to a family home in St. Joseph, Missouri, during the winter. His son, Matt, lived with his father in Bozeman, and married Rosa Fridley in 1875. Mr. Black was taken ill in Helena and died two days later of acute peritonitis on June 18, 1881 at age 51.

OBITUARY.

At the residence of her daughter, Mrs. T. J. Lynde, Salesville, Gallatin county, Mont., Nov. 3rd, 1895, Mary A. Black, aged about 62½ years.

The death of Mrs. Black removes another prominent, kind-hearted, early-day resident from our midst—one who was very generally known and highly respected for her many excellent qualities of head and heart. Although for several years past Mrs. Black was unable to get around much among her friends and neighbors, on account of rheumatic afflictions, she was almost incessantly engaged as a matter of habit and choice in some useful household duties, and always appeared to be cheerful and hopeful at all times and under the most depressing circumstances. She was a member of the Christian church, and the funeral services on Tuesday last were conducted under the auspices of that society.

Mrs. Black was born in Laurel county, Kentucky, March 23, 1833. She was married to the late Col. L. M. Black in 1854. They left Kentucky in 1863 and moved to St. Joe, Mo., where the family remained until July, 1871—Col. Black preceding them to Montana several years. The surviving children are, Madison M. Black of this city; Mrs. T. J. Lynde of Salesville, this county, and Mrs. Laura Arment, of Denver, Colo.

Colonel Black Left Imprint

Street Named For Busy Kentuckian

By RITA McDONALD
State Historical Library

The name of Bozeman, Story, Tracy, Mendenhall and most of the other downtown streets of Bozeman have a familiar ring. People who know something of the history of the town readily associate them with the names of old-time families who played an important part in the development of the community. But the name of one of Bozeman's most important thoroughfares usually draws a blank. Few people know for whom Black Street was named. Yet its namesake, Colonel Leander M. Black, was a well-known figure in Montana in the early 1870's.

In fact, by 1872, during the three years he had spent in the Territory, he had become almost a legendary figure. An article in the Pacific Rural Press of that year speaks glowingly of him as the "savior of Eastern Montana"—the merchant who was first to advance supplies for acting Governor Francis Meagher's 1867 volunteer army. The San Francisco Scientific Press further elaborates on Black's patriotic services to Montana at that time:

"At a critical juncture in the history of the Territory," it states, "and when large numbers of hostile Indians were threatening its destruction and when in a response to a call for troops men were found in abundance but no means of feeding them, Colonel Black came forward promptly saying, 'I will feed all who fight.' He was as good as his word and long trains of provisions were soon rolling toward the Yellowstone to feed the volunteer protectors of Montana. In this prompt act of patriotism the Colonel expended \$150,000 not a dollar of which has been returned to him . . ."

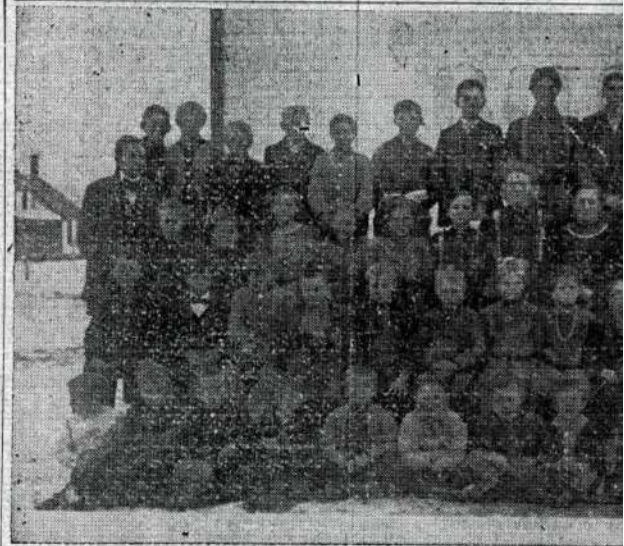
Not a Montanan

Both of these accounts neglected to mention that the Colonel was not a resident of Montana in 1867. He was a western contractor at the time with headquarters in Denver and doubtless he supplied provisions for Meagher's army since he was eventually reimbursed for his outlay when the "Meagher war claims were settled. However, no

account in the 1867 Montana papers links the name of Colonel Black with Meagher's enterprise; there is nothing to indicate he was the principal source of the volunteer army's supplies; and the "war claim" reports credited him with furnishing hay and horses rather than merchandise. Yet such was the colonel's popularity that his fellow citizens apparently gave no thought to these facts when they proudly read the praise bestowed upon their friend and neighbor as reprinted in the Bozeman Avant Courier.

It would seem that their pride and affection were fully justified. When the Colonel died in June, 1881, the Helena Herald and Independent as well as the Bozeman Courier, paid tribute to him as a genial and public-spirited man, of untiring energy and indomitable perseverance, who had perhaps done more than anyone else "to build up and enhance the material interests of Bozeman." "Few men were better known or more universally esteemed throughout Montana than Leander M. Black," said the Independent. "He was a splendid type of frank, energetic, warm-hearted Western man."

Colonel Black was born in Laurel county, Ky., in 1830. In 1858 he married Mary A. McHargue, the daughter of a Kentucky neighbor. Four years after his marriage the enterprising Black left his family with his wife's parents and joined the stampede to Pike's Peak, carrying all his worldly goods in a satchel. Like many another Pike's Peak stamper he failed to find riches in the mines but it took more than that to discourage the indomitable young man from Kentucky in his determination to make his fortune in the West. Soon he was established at Denver engaged in supplying the government with wood, hay and grain; and when the Civil War broke out he became the principal contractor for the Army of the Platte. Throughout the war his ox and mule teams continually crossed the plains from the Missouri river points to the mountains and back; and by 1866 the Kentucky adventurer, who had left home with almost nothing in addition to the clothes he wore, was said to be worth \$250,000.



LITTLE HOLLAND SCHOOL—The group of 53 children in 1911 represents about one-quarter of today's enrollment—Reformed School of today got its start from a class of 19 that school picture reprinted here was taken 43 years ago, and identified Hyink (5th from left in third row) of 410 North Third. The child, only one not identified; Nanning Claver, Herman Van D DerMeyden, Phillip Vrieling, Bill Dykstra, Kelly VanDerWouvoort, Dora Telling, and Fillie Broekema. 2nd row—Henry VanDerMey, Bert VanDyken, Herman Dykstra, Harry Klav Garrett Vrieling, Jake Dykstra, Bert Boss, Joe Hyink, Henry Ypma. 3rd row—William VanDeRiet (teacher), Nellie VanD Hyink, Fannie Vrieling, Trinia Kimm, Weke Kimm, Lena J Jennie VanDerWoude, Gertrude Ypma, Kate VanDyken, and row—Wesley Gaanzevoort, Tom VanDerMey, Jake Hoogland Verwolf, Henry Dyk, Lester Hyink, Henry Kim, William Bo and Fred Ypma.

During part of the war period Black was completely isolated from his people in Kentucky but as soon as he could do so he returned to his old plantation home arriving in time for a joyful reunion with his family on Christmas Day, 1864. By that time all of Black's hopes were grounded in the new country of the West and in January he moved his family to St. Joseph, Mo. He continued however, to maintain his own residence in Denver and in 1867 he was elected to the state senate of Colorado.

In 1869 the Colonel was appointed special agent to the Crow Indians with authority to build an agency and furnish it with supplies. In the fall of that year, he built Fort Parker, the first Crow agency in the Territory, some five miles east of the present town of Livingston. This fort cost the government some \$35,000 and it was burned to the ground in 1872 a few short years after it was built.

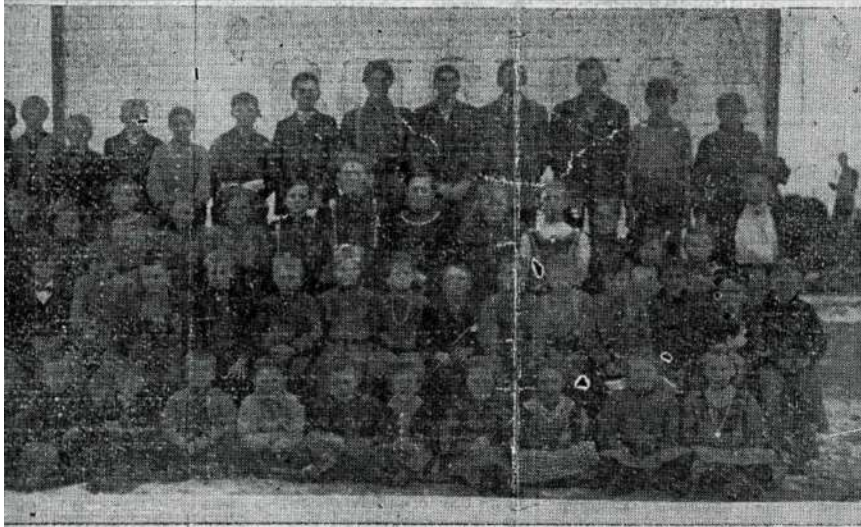
In the meantime Colonel Black had established his headquarters

at Bozeman and within a few years he had expanded his contracting business to cover the whole of western Montana and adjacent territory. His bull trains were regularly running through the Territory, regularly running through the summer and fall carrying sugar, coffee and other goods to the Indians and into his main warehouse, built in 1870, a two-thirds of the flour produced in Gallatin county found its way there. "Several cargoes purchased a by him during 1871 footed nearly 500 tons," reported the Helena Herald. "During the preceding April 20, 1871, he checked nearly \$175,000 from Helena banks."

Black Makes Impact

It did not take the Colonel long to make an impact upon the life of the small frontier town where he made his headquarters. His neighbors were proud of their prosperous fellow citizen and liked the aura of benevolent activity that always surrounded him. They enjoyed the "harmless" tournaments in which he took part about town—the barouche prancing grays and gold-martinettes and the Concord which he had had manufactured in Chicago at a cost of \$2,000.

t Imprint Although Here But



HOLLAND SCHOOL—The group of 53 children (above) at the Holland Settlement school presents about one-quarter of today's enrollment—233. However, the Manhattan Christian school of today got its start from a class of 19 taught by D. J. Walvoord in 1894-95. The photo reprinted here was taken 43 years ago, and identification was volunteered by Esther (second row left in third row) of 410 North Taird. The group includes, front row, from left: first row—William VanDeRiet (teacher), Nellie VanDyke, Anna Vrieling, Grace Ompta, Esther Vrieling, Trinia Kimm, Weke Kimm, Lena Klaver, Nettie Hyink, Anna Schuurmans, Gertrude Ypma, Kate VanDyken, and Anna VanDerBraak, (teacher). Back row—Gaanzevoort, Tom VanDerMey, Jake Hoogland, Frank Hoogland, Ralph Van Dyke, John Hyink, Lester Hyink, Henry Kim, William Borekema, Harm Dyk, Mike Schuurmans, Ypma.

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Colonel was appointed to the Crow Indians to build an agency with supplies. In the year he built Fort first Crow agency in some five miles east town of Livingston, the government some was burned to the a few short years built.

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Black Makes Impact

It did not take the Colonel long to make an impact upon the social life of the small frontier town where he made his headquarters. His neighbors were proud of the prosperous fellow citizen and they liked the aura of benevolence and activity that always surrounded him. They enjoyed the "handsome tournouts" in which he travelled about town—the barouche with prancing grays and gold-mounted harness and the Concord coach which he had had manufactured in Chicago at a cost of \$2,000. It was this coach that Black sent to Vir-

tensively both within and without the Territory. The Helena papers frequently noted his visits to their town and the Courier was always chronicling his many comings and goings. When he returned from an extended visit to Washington, D.C., the Courier outdid itself in its efforts to pay fitting tribute to the event. First the paper announced that the Colonel was expected to leave for the West on a certain date; then week by week it printed notices of his return trip, via San Francisco, mentioning his various stops along the way; and finally it triumphantly reported that, to the joy of the town, Bozeman's foremost citizen (and incidentally the owner of the Courier's physical plant) was home. That evening the Colonel's return was duly celebrated with a serenade of the Silver Cornet Band.

The arrival and departure of Mrs. Black and her three charming daughters was deemed equally newsworthy by the local press. The Courier gave its readers to think that the whole town rejoiced when the Black ladies visited Bozeman in the spring and mourned when they took their departure for St. Joseph in the fall, always hoping that they would eventually decide to make Montana their year round

third log cabin and the first one to have a floor in the new town.

During his nine years stay in Bozeman, Colonel Black had a multiplicity of business interests in addition to his contracting and freighting enterprises. He opened stores in Bozeman at various times and he erected a number of residential and business houses there including a fire store, two story brick block on Main Street; he bought and plotted 40 acres of land south of the townsite of Bozeman which became known as the Black addition; he owned land on the Yellowstone and in the Madison and Gallatin valleys which he used as winter grazing for his oxen and mules and where he raised wheat; and from 1874 to 1878 he owned, and operated under lease, the old Bedford Mill, then the Springville Mill, which is still standing beside the highway on the road to Helena.

He owned the physical plant of the Bozeman Avant Courier, having purchased it in 1870 from the defunct Pick and Plow; and in 1874 he inaugurated the short-lived Bozeman Times. He was instrumental in bringing the first land office to Bozeman in the fall of 1871. In connection with his freighting business he was awarded the contract for carrying the mails and express between Bozeman and Helena in 1875 and 1876; he was given the first mail contract from Cantonment, now Miles City, to Buford in 1877; he had a sutlership at Cantonment; and, in partnership with Major Fellows Pease, he established trading posts at the mouth of the Big Horn and on what was known as Baker's battle ground in the late 1870's.

For a few years after coming to Bozeman he owned a livery stable. In 1872 he acquired Guy House, the leading hotel in Bozeman, which he operated for some years as the Northern Pacific Hotel and which became one of the most popular hotels in the Territory. The same year as he bought Guy House he purchased a large building on Main Street where he set up his friend and associate, G. W. Odell, in the billiard and saloon business. It was in the hall on the second floor of this building that Bishop Tuttle once held Sunday services when no other accommodations were available to him.

Colonel Black was a staunch supporter of Bishop Tuttle and of Bozeman's pioneer Protestant Episcopal Church. He took a lively interest in local politics and he was always liberal in his donations to public causes whether it was a matter of giving \$200 to the Yellowstone Wagon and Prospecting Expedition or \$100 to the Helena Public Library. "No enterprise ever solicited him in vain", said the Courier, "and his ear was never deaf to the de-

In 1873, when railroad foreto Gallatin county one of the first "capitalists" to commence development. He abandoned the railroad fail

During Black's West it had seen enterprise came interested but towards the his luck began Herald put it. trained in business Colonel lost confidence advised and business. One success First National the first bank to that city, which the summer of president and fortunately for the many of his bank and its simple's Bank of Helena year 1878. Subsequently the Colonel's was put up for included his residence sold to Peter K \$300 for the furniture different in those are now.

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tournaments" in which he travelled about town—the barouche with prancing grays and gold-mounted harness and the Concord coach which he had had manufactured in Chicago at a cost of \$2,000. It was this coach that Black sent to Virginia City in the summer of 1875 for the travelling convenience of General W. W. Belknap, then Secretary of War, en route to Fort Ellis and the National Park. The Colonel himself met the General and his party ten miles out of town in an "elegant turnout" and accompanied them back to Bozeman. As they came near the town the Bozeman Silver Cornet Band, organized by the Colonel's son, Matt, was playing by the roadside; flags were flying in great profusion; and a salute of 17 guns was fired in honor of the Secretary's arrival. "The reception was certainly creditable for so small a village", reported one of the party.

The Colonel himself travelled ex-

that the whole town rejoiced when the Black ladies visited Bozeman in the spring and mourned when they took their departure for St. Joseph in the fall, always hoping that they would eventually decide to make Montana their year round home.

Whether or no Bozeman's social life went in eclipse when the Black family was not in residence, it is certain that the Black's did contribute towards its gayety. One of the most stylish weddings of early day Bozeman took place when Matt Black and Rose Fridley were married in 1875 by the much beloved Bishop Daniel Tuttle. The popular bride was already an old resident of Gallatin Valley at the time of her marriage. When she was six years of age she had accompanied her parents and brothers in a wagon train journey across the plains, arriving in 1864 at what is now the city of Bozeman. Her father, Benjamin Fridley, built the

causes whether it was a matter of giving \$200 to the Yellowstone Wagon and Prospecting Expedition or \$100 to the Helena Public Library. "No enterprise ever solicited him in vain", said the Courier, "and his ear was never deaf to the demands of charity." In business matters he was always an opportunist; but most of his business enterprises were such that they served to promote the development of the community where he made his home and thus added to his well-deserved reputation for being a public-spirited citizen.

though Here But Short Time



Holland Settlement school the Manhattan Christian Alvoord in 1894-95. The volunteered by Esther front row, from left: first DerMeyden, Henry VanHuizen, Susan GaanzeVanDerMeide, William Henrietta VanDerMeide, te Vrieling, and George ng. Grace Ompta, Esther ink, Anna Schuurmans, Braak, (teacher). Back yk, Ralph Van Dyke, John yk, Mike Schuurmans,

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In 1873, when the promise of a railroad foretold prosperity for Gallatin county coal fields, he was one of the first of the Bozeman "capitalists" to lay claim to and commence developing a coal mine. He abandoned it, however, when the railroad failed to materialize.

During Black's first years in the West it had seemed that any business enterprise in which he became interested proved successful; but towards the end of the 1870's his luck began to change. As the Herald put it: "careless and untrained in business matters the Colonel lost considerable sums in ill advised and badly managed ventures." One such venture was the First National Bank of Bozeman, the first bank to be established in that city, which opened its doors in the summer of 1872, with Black as president and half owner. Unfortunately for the Colonel and for many of his neighbors both this bank and its sister bank, the People's Bank of Helena, failed in the year 1878. Subsequently most of the Colonel's Bozeman property was put up for auction. This included his residence which was sold to Peter Koch for \$1700 plus \$300 for the furniture. Prices were different in those days than they are now.

Black's business enterprises during the few years previous to this had centered less and less in Bozeman and he now removed his family to Butte, where he had patent-

ed the "Black Placer" mine. He also had become interested in the Mantle mine at Cataract and had acquired a two-thirds interest in the A. M. Holter lode at Elkhorn, both in Jefferson county. Most of his energies during the next few years were devoted to his mining interests but he had time for one more venture, of service to the commercial development of the Territory, before his untimely death in 1881. Under contract with the Helena Chamber of Commerce, he built a new road between Helena and Butte, over Boulder Pass and through Elk Park, via the present rout of U. S. Highway 91, shortening the then distance between the two cities by forty or fifty miles.

Colonel Black was taken suddenly ill while staying at the International Hotel in Helena on Saturday, June 16, 1881, and he died of acute peritonitis two days later. Little of his fortune remained as proof of his great enterprise but, said the Herald, "No one had a larger circle of friends and acquaintances." "His liberality passed into a proverb", stated the Courier and "He was one of the best citizens any community could have", added the Independent. In view of such testimony from his contemporaries it would be a pity if Bozeman should completely forget this enterprising, warm-hearted pioneer citizen who did so much for the town's early development.

THE SAVIOR OF EASTERN MONTANA



by **B. DEREK STRAHN**

Of Bozeman's early pioneers, one of the least well known and perhaps most influential is Leander M. Black. During Black's brief stay in town, he quickly became a legendary figure — one of the most admired and celebrated figures in Montana Territory. An 1872 article in the *Pacific Rural Press*, for example, glowingly described him as nothing less than "the savior of eastern Montana," and yet, about all we have to remind us of his early presence in Bozeman is a street name. Although little is recalled of his ambitious and sorted career today, Leander M. Black arguably did as much as anyone to ensure the early growth and development of our fair city.

Born in Laurel County, Ken., in 1830, Black at age 32 left his young family and joined the stampede to Pike's Peak, Colo. Like many others, he failed to find riches in the goldfields.

Undeterred, he established himself in Denver, earning lucrative contracts to supply the government with wood, hay and grain.

As the Civil War intensified, Black became the principle contractor for the army of the Platte. Throughout the bloody conflict, his ox and mule teams continually freighted supplies across the Great Plains, from the Rocky Mountains to Missouri and back again. In the years before railroads traversed the West, there was extraordinary money to be made in the transportation of goods, and by 1866, the Kentucky adventurer was said to be worth \$250,000. Seemingly able to do no wrong, the following year he was rewarded for his efforts with a seat in the Colorado Senate.

Enjoying close political connections, Black's friends in Washington D. C. appointed him special agent to the Crow Indians in 1869. After relocating to Bozeman with his family, the determined Black erected Fort Parker — the first Crow Agency in Montana — some five miles east of present day Livingston.

In the dynamic years that followed, Black's bull trains regularly carried flour, sugar, coffee, and other Indian annuities to his giant storehouse on Mission Creek. According to an article written by Rita McDonald of the State historical Library, it is estimated that two-thirds of the flour produced in the Gallatin Valley between 1869 and 1872 found its way into Black's reservation warehouse.

As local entrepreneurs like Thomas Cover, Perry McAdow and Nelson Story well knew, the federal contract business was especially rewarding during the decades that followed the war between the states. Wagonloads of commodities purchased and

sold by Black totaled nearly 500 tons in 1871 alone, according to the *Helena Herald*, and in the eight months prior to April of 1872, Black "checked nearly \$175,000 from the Helena banks."

Now one of the wealthiest men in the Territory, Black made a dramatic impact on the small frontier town where he made his headquarters. His fancy \$2,000 coach with prancing gray horses always drew attention, and area newspapers regularly recorded the flamboyant comings and goings of Bozeman's foremost citizen.

During his nine-year stay in town, Black involved himself in numerous business interests, which further supplemented his earnings. Black's diverse and impressive real estate investments included extensive lands in the Yellowstone, Madison and Gallatin Valleys, where he raised wheat and grazed his

numerous oxen and mule teams.

He also owned and operated under lease the profitable Springville Flour Mill on the Road to Helena.

Black's tireless efforts to develop profitable investments triggered an infectious optimism in a town with a future that was still anything but certain. He was instrumental in bringing the first land office to Bozeman in 1871. That same year, he platted Black's Addition as a southern extension of the original townsite, giving further hope to a young community struggling to maintain a less-than-thriving, pre-railroad economy.

The very first edition of the *Avant Courier* newspaper sheds light on Black's profound influence, and the hungry dreams of an isolated town far from the burgeoning population centers of the East. "From early

PRESERVATION

Black purchased the Guy House Hotel on Main Street in Bozeman (as shown in this photo c.1869) and later renamed it the Northern Pacific Hotel. Opposite page: Bozeman pioneer, Leander M. Black.



Strahn dawn to the setting sun, the hammer of the builder makes the welcome ring (of) cheerful notes of industry and progress," the paper reported. "Several handsome new buildings are being erected ... and others will be commenced as soon as lumber can be procured." Black's Addition was becoming "the most attractive part of our beautiful city," the paper concluded, "and its rapid improvement due to the enterprise of Col. L. M. Black."

With profits from his rapidly developing addition, and wishing to express confidence in Bozeman's chances of success, Black erected the first brick commercial building in Bozeman at 118-122 East Main St. He then acquired a livery stable and the Guy House — the leading inn in Bozeman — which he renamed the Northern Pacific Hotel in honor

of the transcontinental that was slowly progressing toward Bozeman. By 1873, when the promise of the coming railroad foretold prosperity for the Gallatin Valley, Black became one of the first to invest heavily in the coalfields of the Bozeman Pass area. The following year, he established the short-lived *Bozeman Times* newspaper, which holds the distinction of being the first in the country to report of Custer's demise at the hands of Sioux and Cheyenne Indians.

Not all of Black's business ventures were successful. Hoping to capitalize on the recent establishment of Yellowstone National Park, Black and partner Bart Henderson constructed a wagon road through the treacherous Yankee Jim Canyon, just north of present day Gardiner. In the months that followed, Black

regularly lobbied Congress for a bill that would grant him an exclusive, 30-year, \$1 million contract to build toll roads, station houses and hotels in the vicinity of America's wonderland.

Unfortunately for Black and Bozeman, Congress defeated the bill on the grounds that it would create a monopoly and lacked the support of Montana's territorial representative, Martin Maginnis. "In his opposition to the bill," the *Avant Courier* noted, "Mr. Maginnis struck Bozeman and Eastern Montana the severest blow they have ever received."

Equally disappointing was Black's venture with the First National Bank of Bozeman. Opening in 1872 with Black as president and half owner, the first bank in town floundered during the national depression known as the Panic of 1873.



By 1878, the institution had utterly failed. Subsequently, most of Black's local property was auctioned off, including his furnished residence, which sold to Peter Koch for \$2,000.

Embarrassed by these significant failures, Black took refuge in Butte, where his investments in mining properties were coming to fruition. There, under contact with the Helena Chamber of Commerce, he constructed a new road between Helena and Butte, via Boulder Pass and Elk Park. The new highway shortened the distance between Montana's territorial capital and its preeminent mining center by nearly 50 miles. Today, that road is U.S. Highway 91.

When Black died suddenly on June 16,

1881, the area press paid tribute to him as a hard-working and public-spirited man of indomitable perseverance.

"Few men were better known or more universally esteemed throughout Montana," the *Helena Independent* opined. Likewise the *Bozeman Courier* held Black in high regard, declaring that he had perhaps done more than anyone else "to build up and enhance the material interests of Bozeman."

Derek Strahn is a historic preservation consultant and teaches social studies at Bozeman High. He can be reached at DerekStrahn@msn.com.

*Copy returned to
Loren E. Pochter
304 No. Black*

*Montana
Street - ~~Black~~ -*

COLONEL LEANDER M. BLACK FOR WHOM BLACK STREET
IS NAMED

By Rita McDonald State Historical Library of Wyo

The name of Bozeman, Story, Tracy, Mendenhall and most of the other downtown streets of Bozeman have a familiar ring. People who know something of the history of the town readily associate them with the names of old-time families who played an important part in the development of the community. But the name of one of Bozeman's most important thoroughfares usually draws a blank. Few people know for whom Black Street was named. Yet its namesake, Colonel Leander M. Black, was a well-known figure in Montana in the early 1870's.

In fact, by 1872, during the three years he had spent in the Territory, he had become almost a legendary figure. An article in the Pacific Rural Press of that year speaks ~~not~~ glowingly of him as the "savior of Eastern Montana" - the merchant who was first to advance supplies for ~~the~~ Governor Francis Meagher's 1867 volunteer army. The San Francisco Scientific Press further elaborates on Black's patriotic services to Montana at that time:

"At a critical juncture in the history of the Territory," it states, "and when large numbers of hostile Indians were threatening its destruction and when in a response to a call for troops men were found in abundance but no means of feeding them, Colonel Black came forward promptly saying 'I will feed all who fight.' He was as good as his word and long trains of provisions were soon rolling toward the Yellowstone to feed the volunteer protectors of Montana. In this prompt act of patriotism the Colonel expended \$150,000 not a dollar of which has been returned to him ..."

Both of these accounts neglected to mention that the Colonel was not a resident of Montana in 1867. He was a western contractor at the time with headquarters in Denver and doubtless he supplied provisions for Meagher's army since he was eventually reimbursed for his outlay when the "Meagher war ~~claims~~ ^{claims} were settled. However no account in the 1867 Montana papers links the name of Colonel Black with Meagher's enterprise; there is nothing to indicate

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he was the principal source of the volunteer army's supplies; and the "war claim" reports credited him with furnishing hay and horses rather than merchandise. Yet such was the colonel's popularity that his fellow citizens apparently gave no thought to these facts when they proudly read the praise bestowed upon their friend and neighbor as reprinted in the Bozeman Avant Courier.

It would seem that ~~that~~ ^{their} pride and affection were fully justified. When the Colonel died in June, 1881, the Helena Herald and Independent as well as the Bozeman Courier, paid tribute to him as a genial and public-spirited man, of untiring energy and indomitable perseverance, who had perhaps done more than anyone else "to build up and enhance the material interests of Bozeman." "Few men were better known or more universally esteemed throughout Montana than Leander M. Black," said the Independent. "He was a splendid type of frank, energetic, warm-hearted Western man."

Colonel Black was born in ~~Kentucky~~ ^{Ky} Laurel county, ~~Kentucky~~, in 1830. ~~When~~ In 1838 he married Mary A. McHargue, the daughter of a Kentucky neighbor. Four years after his marriage the enterprising Black left his family with his wife's parents and joined the ~~1858~~ stampede to Pike's Peak, carrying all his ~~worldly~~ ^{worldly} goods in a satchel. Like many another Pike's Peak stamper he failed to find riches in the mines but it took more than that to discourage the ~~indomitable young man~~ ^{indomitable young man} from Kentucky in his determination to make his fortune in the West. Soon he was established at Denver engaged in supplying the government with wood, hay and grain; and when the Civil War broke out he became the principal contractor for the Army of the Platte. Throughout the war his ox and mule teams continually crossed the plains from the Missouri river points to the mountains and back; and by 1866 the Kentucky adventurer, who had left home with almost nothing in addition to the clothes he wore, was said to be worth \$250, 000.

During part of the war period Black was completely isolated from his people in Kentucky but as soon as could do so he returned to ~~Kentucky~~ his old

(3)

plantation home arriving in time for a joyful reunion with his family on Christmas Day, 1864. By that time all of Black's hopes were grounded in the new country of the West and in January he moved his family to St Joseph, ^{Mo} ~~Missouri~~. He continued however, to maintain his own residence in Denver and in 1867 he was elected to the state senate of Colorado.

In 1869 the Colonel was appointed special agent to the Crow Indians with authority to build an agency and furnish it with supplies. In the fall of that year he built Fort Parker, the first Crow agency in the Territory, some five miles east of the present town of Livingston. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
^{35,000}
This fort cost the government some ~~thirty five thousand~~ dollars and it was burned to the ground in 1872 a few short years after it was built.

In the meantime Colonel Black had established his headquarters at Bozeman and within a few years he had expanded his contracting business to cover the whole of western Montana and adjacent territory. His bull trains were kept regularly running throughout the summer and fall carrying flour, sugar, ~~and~~ coffee and other goods to the Indians and into his mammoth warehouse, built in 1870, at least two-^{thirds} ~~thirds~~ of the flour produced in Gallatin county found its way. "The several cargoes purchased and sold by him during 1871 footed up to nearly five hundred tons," reported the Herald, and, during the eight months preceding April 20th, 1872, "he checked nearly \$175,000 from the Helena banks."

It did not take the Colonel long to make an impact upon the social life of the small frontier town where he made his headquarters. His neighbors were proud of their prosperous fellow citizen and they liked the aura of benevolence and activity that always surrounded him. They enjoyed the "handsome turnouts" in which he travelled about town - the barouche with ^{the} ~~the~~ grays and gold-mounted harness and the Concord coach which he had had manufactured in Chicago at a cost of \$2,000. It was this coach that Black sent to Virginia City in the summer of 1875 for the travelling convenience of

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General W. W. Belknap, then Secretary of War, en route to Fort Ellis and the National Park. The Colonel himself met the General and his party ten miles out of town in an "elegant turnout" and accompanied them back to ~~xxxx~~ Bozeman. As they came near the town the Bozeman Silver Cornet Band, organized by the Colonel's son, Matt, was playing by the roadside; flags were flying in great profusion; and a salute of seventeen guns was fired in honor of the Secretary's arrival. "The reception was certainly creditable for ~~some~~ small a village", reported one of the party.

The Colonel himself travelled extensively both within and without the Territory. The Helena papers frequently noted his visits to their town and the Courier was always chronicling his many comings and goings. When he returned from an extended visit to Washington, D. C., the Courier outdid itself in its efforts to pay ~~fittingly~~ fitting tribute to the event. First the paper announced that the Colonel was expected to leave for the West on a certain date; then week by week it printed notices of his return trip, via San Francisco, mentioning his various stops along the way; and finally it triumphantly reported that, to the joy of the town, Bozeman's foremost citizen (and incidentally the owner of the Courier's physical plant) was home. That evening the Colonel's return was duly celebrated with a serenade of the Silver Cornet Band.

The arrival and departure of Mrs. Black and her three charming daughters was deemed equally newsworthy by the local press. The Courier gave its readers to think that the whole town rejoiced when the Black ladies visited Bozeman in the spring and mourned when they took their departure for ~~S~~ Joseph in the fall, always hoping that they would eventually decide to make Montana their year round home.

Whether or no Bozeman's social life went into eclipse when the Black family was not in residence, it is certain that the Black's did contribute towards its gayety. One of the most stylish weddings of early day Bozeman took place when Matt Black and Rose Fridley were married in 1875 by the much beloved Bishop Daniel Tuttle. The popular bride was already an old resident of Gallatin

Valley at the time of her marriage. When she was six years of age she had accompanied her parents and brothers in a wagon train journey across the plains, arriving in 1864 at what is now the city of Bozeman. Her father, Benjamin F. Bidley, built the third log cabin and the first one to have a floor in the new town.

During his nine years stay in Bozeman, Colonel Black had a multiplicity of business interests in addition to his contracting and freighting enterprises. He opened stores in Bozeman at various times and he erected a number of ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ residential and business houses there including a ~~five~~ store, two story brick ~~xxxx~~ block on Main Street; he bought and plotted forty acres of land south of the townsite of Bozeman which became known as the Black addition; he owned land on the Yellowstone and in the Madison and Gallatin valleys which he used as winter grazing for his oxen and mules and where he raised wheat; and from 1874 to 1878 he owned, and operated under lease, the old Bedford Mill, then the Springville Mill, which is still standing beside the highway on the ~~road~~ ^{road} to Helena.

He owned the physical plant of the Bozeman Avant Courier having purchased it in 1870 ~~from~~ ^{from} the owner of the defunct Pick and Flow; and ~~xxxx~~ in 1874 he inaugurated the short-lived Bozeman Times. He was instrumental in bringing the first land office to Bozeman in the fall of 1871. In connection with his ^efreighting business he was awarded the contract for carrying the mails and express between Bozeman and Helena in 1875 and 1876; he was given the first mail contract from Cantonment, now Miles City, to Buford in 1877; ~~he~~ had a sutlership at Cantonment; and, in partnership with Major Fellows Pease, he established ~~xx~~ trading post^s at the mouth of the Big Horn and on what was known as Baker's battle ground in the late 1870's.

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For a few years after coming to Bozeman he owned a livery stable. In 1872 he acquired Guy House, the leading hotel in Bozeman, which he operated for some years as the Northern Pacific Hotel and which became one of the most popular

hotels in the Territory. The same year as he bought Guy House he ~~xxxxxxxx~~ purchased a large building on Main Street where he set ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ up his friend and associate, G. W. Odell, in the billiard and saloon business. It was in the hall on the second floor of this building that Bishop Tuttle once held Sunday services when no other accommodations were available to him.

Colonel Black^{ck} was a staunch supporter of Bishop Tuttle and of Bozeman's pioneer Protestant Episcopal Church. He took a lively interest in local politics and he was always liberal in his donations to public causes whether it was a matter of giving \$200 to the Yellowstone Wagon and Propsecting Expedition or \$100 to the Helena Public Library. "No enterprise ever solicited him in ~~xxxx~~ vain", said the ~~xxxxxx~~ Courier, "and his ear was never deaf to the demands of charity." In business matters he was always an opportunist; but most of his business enterprises were such that they served to promote the development of the community where he made his home and ~~they~~ ^{thus} added to his well-deserved reputation for being a public-spirited citizen.

In 1873, when the promise of a railroad foretold prosperity for Gallatin county coal fields, he was was one of the first of the Bozeman "capitalists" to ~~claim~~ ^{lay claim to} and commence developing a coal mine. He abandoned it, however, when the railroad failed to materialize.

Again in 1873, Black, in partnership with Bart Henderson, commenced building a wagon road through Yankee Jim canyon. The following year, after Congress had set aside the Yellowstone National Park, The Colonel had a bill introduced into Congress asking for a lease of thirty years during which he and his associates would have exclusive rights to build roads from any point on the north or west of the Yellowstone River to the Park; to build station houses or other necessary buildings on these roads; to select grounds on which to erect a commodious hotel or hotels within the park; to supply and manage these hotels and station houses without restriction "on the grounds that their own interests will be best subserved by making everything satisfactory to their patrons"; and to charge such tolls for the use of their roads as shall be deemed equitable Gallatin History Museum

9

and right. The permanent headquarters of this organization was to be at Bozeman City with a suboffice in the City of New York; and a million dollars was to be invested in the improvements outlined above.

~~Here~~ The bill was defeated on the grounds that it would create a monopoly. It lacked the support of Montana's territorial representative to Congress, Martin Maginnis, who, incidentally, belonged to a different party than that of Colonel Black and his associates. Said the Courier, which by this time was owned by W. W. Alderson: "In his opposition to the bill Mr. Maginnis struck Bozeman and Eastern Montana the severest blow they have ever received." The blow was too much for the Colonel and he lost interest in building a road to the park. The road he had commenced, however, was finished by "Yankee Jim" George and became the well known Yankee Jim toll road.

During Black's first years in the West it ~~has seemed~~ ^{had seemed} that any business enterprise in which he became interested proved successful; ~~but~~ ^{but} towards the end of the 1870's ~~a change set in.~~ ^{his luck began to change.} As the Herald put it: "careless and untrained in business matters the Colonel lost considerable sums in ill advised and badly managed ventures." One such venture was the First National Bank of Bozeman, the first bank to be established in that city, which opened its doors in the summer of 1872, with ~~Colonel~~ Black as president and half owner. Unfortunately for the Colonel and for many of his neighbors both this bank and its ~~sister~~ ^{sister} bank, the People's Bank of Helena, failed in the year 1878. Subsequently most of the Colonel's Bozeman property was put up for auction. This included his residence which was sold to Peter Koch for \$1700 plus \$300 for the furniture. Prices were different in those days than they are now.

Black's business enterprises during the few years previous to this had centered less and less in Bozeman and he now removed his family to Butte, where he had patented the "Black Placer" mine. He also had become interested in the Mantle mine at Cataract and had acquired a two-thirds interest in the A. M. Holter lode at Elkhorn, both in Jefferson county. Most of his ~~time~~ ^{energies} during the next few years were devoted to his mining interests but he had time for one

more venture, of service to the commercial development of the Territory, before his untimely death in 1881. Under contract with the Helena Chamber of Commerce, he built a new road between Helena and Butte, over Boulder Pass and through Elk Park, via the present route of U. S. Highway 91, shortening the then distance between the two cities by forty or fifty miles.

Colonel Black was taken suddenly ill while staying at the International Hotel in Helena on Saturday, June 16, 1881, and he died of acute peritonitis two days later. Little of his fortune remained as proof of his great enterprise but, said the Herald, "No one had a larger circle of friends and acquaintances." "His liberality passed into a proverb", stated the Courier and "He was one of the best citizens any community could have", added the Independant. In view of such testimony from his contemporaries it would be a pity if Bozeman should completely forget this enterprising, warm-hearted pioneer citizen who did so much for the town's early development.