



Land use and landscape evolution in the West : a case study of Red Lodge, Montana, 1884-1995
by Meredith Nelson Wiltsie

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in
Earth Sciences

Montana State University

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Abstract:

During the last 100 years, Red Lodge, Montana has evolved from a tiny prospectors' camp into a substantial mining community and finally into a center for amenity-based recreational tourism and rural in migration. This process has been tangibly . preserved on the landscape and, in essence, exemplifies a case study in the evolution of capitalism. Indeed, Red Lodge owes its origins to the industrial era of productive capitalism and has evolved into an economy based on a postindustrial era of consumption capitalism.

This study reconstructs changes in land use and landscape in the Red Lodge area through these eras and interprets how these changes illustrate broader processes of deindustrialization and the changing nature of capitalism in the American West. This research also identifies how local citizens' own sense of place has both shaped and been shaped by these broader economic and cultural shifts. As a case study, Red Lodge is representative of a shift in land use and landscape occurring in many mountainous communities in the nonmetropolitan West.

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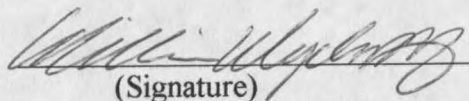
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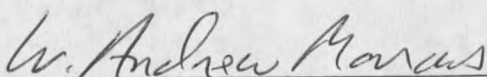
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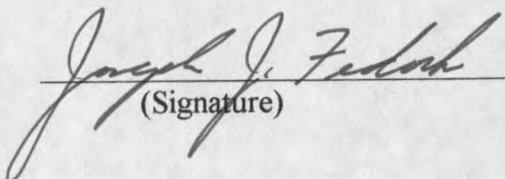
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ABSTRACT

During the last 100 years, Red Lodge, Montana has evolved from a tiny prospectors' camp into a substantial mining community and finally into a center for amenity-based recreational tourism and rural in migration. This process has been tangibly preserved on the landscape and, in essence, exemplifies a case study in the evolution of capitalism. Indeed, Red Lodge owes its origins to the industrial era of productive capitalism and has evolved into an economy based on a postindustrial era of consumption capitalism.

This study reconstructs changes in land use and landscape in the Red Lodge area through these eras and interprets how these changes illustrate broader processes of deindustrialization and the changing nature of capitalism in the American West. This research also identifies how local citizens' own sense of place has both shaped and been shaped by these broader economic and cultural shifts. As a case study, Red Lodge is representative of a shift in land use and landscape occurring in many mountainous communities in the nonmetropolitan West.

MIRACLE OUT OF COAL DUST

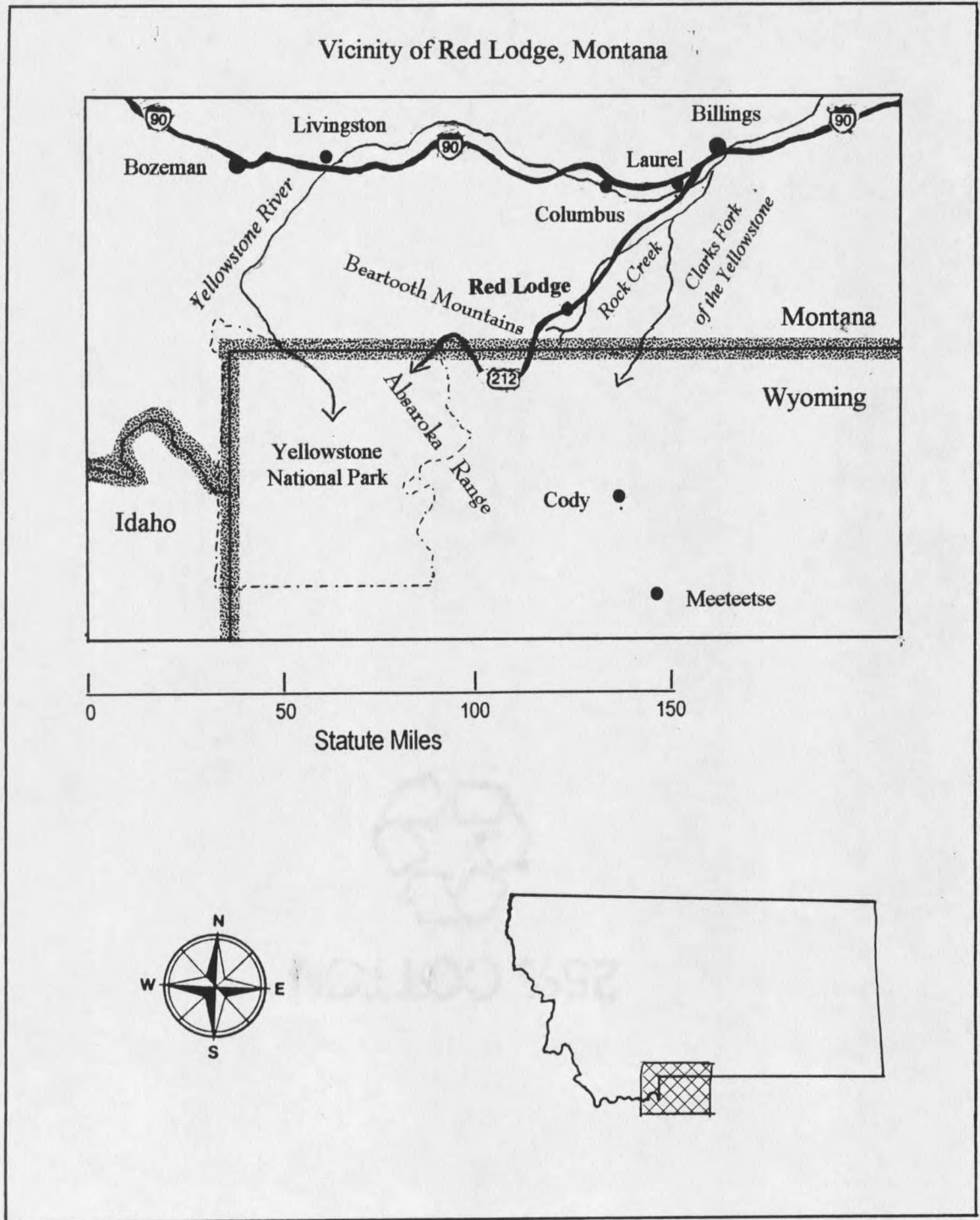
Introduction

Located sixty miles southwest of Billings in south-central Montana, the small town of Red Lodge lies at the juncture of the high plains and the Rocky Mountains. With the dramatic Beartooth Mountains as a backdrop, Red Lodge is set amongst sparsely vegetated rolling foothills. Tree lined coulees and creek bottoms snake down out of the mountain canyons. Yellowstone National Park's high alpine landscape lies just sixty-four miles away over the Beartooth Highway.

Rich in natural resources, spectacular in scenic beauty and radiating a deep sense of history and community, Red Lodge, Montana is the quintessential mountain town of the American West. Nestled at the base of the Beartooth Mountains' eastern escarpment, just northwest of Yellowstone National Park, Red Lodge's brick storefronts and gingerbread-laced Victorian homes speak of another era, one in which coal was king (Fig. 1). Much of the black ore that powered the settlement and industrialization of the country's North and Midwest regions was scraped out of Red Lodge's gently rolling coulees. Over time, however, as technology, economic forces and shifting cultural values on the national level intertwined, the community changed. The solid coal mining foundation dissolved and years of uncertainty, privation and searching ensued.

Gradually, Red Lodge found a new identity as a center for recreational tourism. Today, at the end of the twentieth century, Red Lodge has traded lost coal dollars for

Figure 1. Red Lodge Area Locator Map



Map by author

income generated by backcountry outfitting, ski tickets and affluent second home construction. This 100-year process is not unique to Red Lodge, but is the story behind many mountainous communities in the nonmetropolitan West. By tracing Red Lodge's evolution, we can define patterns and paradigms potentially applicable to other places. As a case study, Red Lodge is illuminating, but it is the unusually spirited interplay between residents and environment that make Red Lodge's story particularly appealing.

Objectives

My purpose in undertaking this study is to reconstruct and understand the progression of changes in landscape and land use patterns as Red Lodge shifted from an identity based on industrial coal production to one as an amenity-rich mountain community in the postindustrial era. By looking at the tangible landscape evidence of this shift, I am offering an important case study of a process which is now underway in many communities across the American West.

The critical focus of my research relates to the dramatic changes in perception and use of Red Lodge's natural resources over the course of the last century. In the early years the town was sustained by coal extraction and export, but within a few decades, aesthetic natural beauty, open space and restored historic districts became the sustaining "natural resources." My focus is on how and why the relationship between people and place altered so completely. By tracing the interaction of broad cultural forces as well as the local influences in Red Lodge, I hope to get at the roots of this changing interaction.

As a cultural geographer, I document this shift by presenting evidence of physical changes, both in Red Lodge's landscape and its land use patterns over the last 100 years.

Though 100 years seems a short time for such dramatic change, the amount of evidence can become unwieldy. In order to make this more manageable, and in order to identify the processes driving the changes I observed, I divided the century into two time periods. The first era, spanning the years 1882-1932, is characterized by the development of Red Lodge's industrial production infrastructure, including both the coal mines as well as the transportation connections necessary for export. In contrast, the second period, between 1917-1995, is characterized by the development of tourist-related businesses and, most recently, by the influx of new residents into the area. In this era the community's emphasis lies less with commodity production than with providing services that facilitate a visitor's enjoyment or "consumption" of area amenities such as beautiful scenery or outdoor recreation activities. As the dates reveal, there was an overlap period during which the modern era begins before the first has ended. These years reveal the incipient beginnings of Red Lodge's postindustrial shift even before the coal mines were closed.

Dividing the time span into periods was useful for organizing the historical data, but for the purpose of documenting geographic change, I turned to landscape reconstruction. In order to understand the interaction between Red Lodge residents and their lands, I wanted to document what the place looked like, how it was used and where important nodes of activity were located. By doing this for both periods, I hoped to contrast the differences between them.

The purpose of the thesis is to reconstruct evolving landscape and land use patterns throughout these eras not only to detail patterns of historical geographical change, but also to analyze some of the underlying forces which explain these changing geographies.

Sources and Methods

Because the first task was to understand the history of Red Lodge, I turned to the archives of the Carbon County Historical Society. Here, useful sources included bound copies of Red Lodge's old newspapers, phone directories, maps, correspondence, photo collections and numerous files regarding the push toward establishing the town as a National Historic Site. All of these documents provided invaluable background material. Not only did they provide a foundation for structuring Red Lodge's story, but from these I was able to begin to piece together bits of historical geographic information about the town and surrounding area. I began to put Red Lodge together as it had been in 1889, 1900 and 1920. I visualized the downtown intersection of Broadway and 16th Avenue as a cluster of shacks. I pictured the East Bench as a complex of mining equipment and the depot bustling with freight and passengers. From tiny bits of local information scattered throughout my sources, I began to reconstruct period land use maps and see the spatial layout of Red Lodge in its infancy.

One particular source deserves special recognition. Red Lodge: Saga of a Western Area (Zupan and Owens 1979) is an invaluable compilation of local history, stories and family backgrounds, without which I would have faced hours more travel and

research. Privately published by the Carbon County Historical Society, this book is a tangible example of the very kind of attachment and devotion to place that sparked my interest in Red Lodge and its residents from the beginning.

The Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, located both in the Carbon County Historical Society archives and on microfiche at Montana State University Bozeman's Special Collections, were particularly helpful in reconstructing the overall layout and development of the town. In addition, the State Historical Society library in Helena contained a copy of the original 1889 plat drawn by the Rocky Fork Coal Company. Manuscript census data from MSU Special Collections were also helpful in understanding the importance of ethnic diversity in the town's early composition. Though I ultimately did not directly incorporate this information, it helped set the social context for those early years. Unfortunately, census data from that period did not include any occupational information, but I was able to use the 1920 Polk phone directory to assess some of this material. Because these old directories listed each individual's occupation, they proved invaluable in providing base data for reconstructing the occupational composition of the town for the industrial period.

Interestingly, the middle years of the century proved hardest to reconstruct. After the close of the mines in the 1920s and 1930s, the town lost its identity for a period. Less has been written about Red Lodge during this time and fewer original materials were saved. Fortunately, memoirs and the beginnings of promotional documents for area dude ranches proved extremely helpful in understanding the initial steps toward creating a new identity. The Montana room at MSU Billings offered an extensive collection of bulletins and brochures from the early years of travel promotion by both the Northern Pacific

Railroad as well as the state of Montana. I also found early promotional materials about the Beartooth Highway in the Montana Room. Publications and collections of pictures produced by WPA artists proved helpful in understanding Red Lodge through the depression years, particularly the impact of New Deal dollars on the town's incipient tourist infrastructure. At the Western Heritage Center in Billings I discovered a large collection of period photographs from Red Lodge, Cooke City and the Beartooth Highway, useful for landscape reconstruction. I found additional early promotional materials about the Beartooth Highway in Special Collections at MSU Bozeman. Telephone directories reaching back into the 1930s at the State Historical Society gave me not only the names of commercial enterprises but also their physical addresses. These materials assisted in the reconstruction of a land use map for these middle years.

As my research reached closer to the present, more sources became available, including on site investigation. Recent telephone directories proved useful as did modern promotional materials published by the State Tourism Department, Red Lodge Mountain and other local businesses. A few recently produced documents also provided perspective as well as detailed information on recent changes in landscape and land use patterns. These included the town's draft Master Plan, Red Lodge Mountain's Expansion Plan and the ongoing reportage in the *Carbon County News*, *Cornerstones* (the Historical Society's newsletter) and the *Montana Free Press*. I also spoke with a few local government officials and business people for their insights on Red Lodge's current situation.

In order to research the insiders' perspective, I developed two questionnaires with which to interview Red Lodge residents (Appendices A and B). The first was designed

for natives and the second for residents who had lived only part of their lives in the area.

Using the "snowball sampling method" for reaching a diverse group of interviewees, I probed for a variety of residents' sense of place. I was particularly interested in finding out if this sense of place differed between people dependent upon the length of time they had lived in the area. Though the formal questionnaires were useful, their greatest value lay in inspiring lengthy discussions and afternoons of story telling about the area.

Numerous unplanned conversations in Red Lodge provided enormous additional background and insight into the community. No matter what the circumstances, residents never seemed too busy to offer information or opinions about their town, even on hot summer afternoons by the side of the road.

As challenging as evidence gathering had been, summarizing it into a coherent body of work was equally demanding. Initially I focused on sketching out reconstructions of land use maps for the entire study period. This sequence revealed the changing patterns and gave direction to the interpretative part of the analysis. In the final presentation, I condensed the number of land use pattern maps to two, one for each major era, encapsulated in 1920 and 1995. Complementary to compiling the land use data was the ongoing task of assembling relevant landscape information over time. This was a long, steady process of gathering details from oral histories and from viewing photo collections. Once I had visual representations (maps and photos) of the actual land use and landscape changes over time, I analyzed the process using the evolution of capitalism as a structural framework. This perspective allowed me to interpret and understand why the patterns had evolved in the way they had and provided underlying themes for the narrative.

Synthesizing the material for the insiders' perspective was an entirely different kind of challenge. This involved collating interviews, conversations and stacks of recently published clippings into a coherent picture illustrating not only what Red Lodge is today in the eyes of its residents, but also how they have experienced recent changes and how they feel about the current state of affairs. As difficult as the earlier work compiling land use and landscape data had been, in retrospect, it was simple and straightforward in comparison to immersing myself in the insiders' perspective. At the same time, both are valuable components to the overall project, and I hope I have succeeded in communicating enough from both viewpoints to enable the reader to develop his or her own perspective on Red Lodge as well as its counterparts across the American West.

Conceptual Framework

The reconstruction of Red Lodge's landscape history reveals the making of a unique community. Yet, on a broader stage, the shifts in the area's land use patterns and cultural landscapes illustrate a case study in the evolution of capitalism. This study reconstructs these variations over the last 100 years and suggests how these changes exemplify broad processes of deindustrialization and the transforming nature of capitalism in the American West. This gradual, not always graceful, shift from coal mining boom town to center for outdoor recreation also reflects an underlying evolution in cultural perceptions of the value and meaning of natural resources and landscape, not only in Red Lodge but elsewhere in the American West.

This research also explores a supplementary but related question focused on local citizens' own sense of place and how their distinct perceptions have both shaped and been shaped by broader economic and cultural shifts. Such perceptions clearly have been instrumental in Red Lodge's development and studying their evolution and complexity adds to our understanding of the interplay between people and environment.

At the heart of this project is the concept of landscape analysis; the notion that there is value in looking at both land use and landscape as measures and clues to cultural and economic change (Jackson 1951, Meinig 1979). As Peirce Lewis argues, "culture is unintentionally reflected in its ordinary vernacular landscape" (1979, 150). Clues on the landscape can come in many forms, revealing, for example, shifts in economic activity by the number of motels opened or banks closed during a given year. Defining ethnic neighborhoods or class-differentiated residential districts divulges a place's social geography. Cultural values can also be explored by examining changes in land use. For example, in Red Lodge the tipples, refuse piles and head frames of the mining landscape denote competitiveness, material prosperity and control over nature. This picture provides a strikingly different portrait than the subsequent era's motels, backpacking stores and sprawling residential neighborhoods. These features point to a changed cultural attitude toward the local environment and the use of its resources. Interestingly, because landscape is a multi-layered palimpsest, it can be used to study both historical land uses and current adaptations (Conzen 1990).

Working with the tools of landscape analysis, this paper uses two fundamental approaches through which to interpret the story of Red Lodge. Each theme comes from a

separate heritage of literature and scholarship, but both are necessary to understand the community's social and physical evolution. The first focuses on processes of economic change, particularly the evolution of capitalism, in concert with shifting cultural belief systems regarding the use of natural resources, work and leisure. The second theme concentrates on the significance of community efforts aimed at promoting and marketing place for outsiders as well as the intertwining of landscape, memory and sense of place that can be called the insiders' perspective.

Economic and Cultural Change

The development of Red Lodge's mining infrastructure, its subsequent decline, and then its rebirth as a center for recreation-based tourism must be seen within the changing context of capitalism. But capitalism is more than an economic system, it also incorporates many other factors, including cultural values, perceptions and identities. In tracing Red Lodge's history and geographic change, it is imperative to acknowledge both the forces of economic and cultural change as they are integrally related. As Rudzitis (1996, 134) notes, "Economics assumes no commitment and culture assumes an attachment that goes beyond economics, yet they are often linked together." By tracing both economic and cultural change, we achieve a much more complete portrait of any place, and by incorporating the larger perspective of capitalism, the study of Red Lodge becomes a true case history of larger changes in the West within the last century.

Until the late nineteenth century the surrounding landscape, and most of the Rocky Mountain West as well, had been left to the domain of Native Americans, trappers and a

few intrepid travelers. Except for furs and pelts, the promise and potential of the West's natural resources, particularly veins of concentrated minerals, lay virtually untouched; their value as commodities not yet appreciated. Suddenly, a distant and rapidly industrializing society developed the technologies necessary for their extraction and created the requisite linkages to connect remote western settings with the world beyond. This process shaped the cultural geography of the American West in lasting ways, including the establishment of many new urban centers with landscapes oriented around the export of raw materials (Wyckoff and Dilsaver 1995).

The importance of Red Lodge and other isolated urban centers such as Aspen, Colorado or Butte, Montana, was defined by their proximity to mineral resources and the availability of investment capital and a labor force to extract them. Such places had been created in the midst of wilderness, their birthright and fortune solely based upon some valuable commodity such as gold, silver or coal. The value of these new localities was perceived and measured specifically by their ability to export coveted assets, usually for the benefit of a distant corporate entity. But even the mine laborers themselves, relocated in dramatic physical landscapes, perceived their new environments not in terms of how they resembled former homes, or for their long term potential, but for their immediate promise of jobs. As one Colorado miner in the early 1870s wrote home, "the chief interest to the world of all this is not the unspeakable grandeur...but rather that these are veins of crystalline rock, each one full of wealth." (Smith 1983, 95).

Founded specifically to extract and export ore, these places evolved into landscapes of production (Wyckoff 1995). Some grew and matured into satellite centers

of power and wealth, tangible creations of the Industrial Revolution (Robbins 1986). Mining companies became major shapers of these new cultural landscapes. They cut timber stands, built milling facilities and diverted creek beds. They built structures to facilitate extraction including head frames, tipples, powerhouses, rail car tracks and washing plants (Francaviglia 1991). They also constructed bridges, milling and processing facilities and often were closely associated with investments in transportation infrastructure. Indeed, in their quest to facilitate ore extraction, mining companies fundamentally altered the natural landscape. In addition, both mine owners and mine laborers shaped the cultural landscapes of houses, churches and businesses in such settlements (Marsh 1987). Pathways between home and work became streets and picnic sites became parks. Landscape change by both companies and individuals intensified as demand for precious metals and coal increased with the expansion of transportation industries, smelters and domestic trade within the northern Rockies and Midwest regions (Chadwick 1973).

Such outposts of industrial capitalism were never isolated from the larger global economy (Cox and Mair 1988). As elaborate and seemingly permanent as these urban centers of production became, their continued existence always depended upon the value of their extractive assets to a larger society. Unfortunately, just as new technology had enabled the initial wave of settlement and extraction, so even newer innovations facilitated cheaper methods less dependent upon a large labor force stationed near high quality ore veins. Often, it was this new wave of technology, or falling mine company profits, or simply the depletion of local mineral deposits, that led to many a mining town's decline

(Marsh 1987). This painful economic transition was common across much of the American West. Some mining centers managed to develop a new economic base and survived. Examples include Aspen, Colorado, Park City, Utah or Butte, Montana. Other towns, such as Randsburg, California, Helper, Utah or Central Point, Oregon did not find a new purpose and withered away.

At the same time that these hinterland mining communities were facing dramatic changes, other national influences were taking shape. Until this time, prevailing wisdom had viewed natural resources as inexhaustible. In the early to mid 1800s, most Americans believed that the worth of wilderness lands and their natural resources lay exclusively in the economic benefit of extracted ore or timber. "Industry is always to be preferred to scenic beauty," as a dredge boat superintendent noted (Smith 1983, 105). This perspective emerged even during the debate regarding national park formation. As Senator John Conness described Yosemite in 1864, "[these are] lands that for all public purposes are worthless, but which constitute perhaps some of the greatest wonders of the world." (Allin 1982, 25-26).

Toward the mid to late nineteenth century, this notion of Utilitarianism was challenged, among others, by conservationists Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot. They called for stewardship and for responsible development of natural resources to preserve them for the benefit of many, not merely for the profit of a few (Culhane 1981). This school of thought, then labeled Progressive Conservation, was bolstered by scientists George Perkins Marsh, Carl Schurz and John Wesley Powell, who called for governmental intervention to protect and manage natural resources (Nash 1976, Kamieniecki 1986, 41).

Though this influence didn't yet challenge land use practices dramatically, it was indicative of a major shift underway.

The preservation movement also flowered during this period. Inspired by nineteenth century Romantic writers such as Thoreau and Muir, as well as artists George Catlin and Frederic Remington, Americans' view of nature and natural resources was gaining an added dimension. Some people began to envision nature as a place of transcendental experience; where wild things were valuable not just for their exchange value, but in their own right (Culhane 1981). This perspective also drew from deeper roots defining the relationship between people and place. Anthropologist Victor Turner and historian Susan Rhodes Neel describe tourism as a new form of ritualized encounter common to many cultures often expressed in pilgrimage activities (Neel 1996, 521-522).

By the early twentieth century, the country's thriving economy provided many Americans with both higher incomes and increased leisure time. Both passenger trains and the newly-introduced automobile facilitated much greater mobility to those with increased free time and spending money and this combination fueled the growth of tourism. Inspired by the Romantics' vision, and a rapidly growing tourist industry, many travelers toured with a fresh awareness of the outdoors. A new kind of appreciation for preserved natural history and wilderness scenery developed and tourists began to seek out such places as travel destinations. Suddenly, the preservation movement and the aesthetic appreciation of scenery revealed an economic dimension. Many of the West's major railroads took notice of these novel business interests (Runte 1990). With their own coffers set to benefit from tourism dollars, for example, the Northern Pacific Railroad was one of the

major lobbying forces for the establishment of Yellowstone National Park (Huth 1972, 223 n. 12; Sax 1980, 6).

Once tourists were inspired to travel through the Rocky Mountain West based on romantic visions of beautiful wilderness lands, they found the natural attractions appealing, but insufficient to provide for their needs. Demand for lodging, comfortable transportation, and expanded recreational facilities led to the gradual creation of new cultural landscapes, all oriented around the consumption of western outdoor amenities (Mathison and Wall 1982). This perspective was reflected in planning and land use practices emphasizing outdoor recreational activities, viewsheds and open space appreciation, as well as new construction of visitor centers, resort lodges and restaurants. These changes facilitated access to -- and experiences of -- the landscape and local culture. Indeed, the growth of tourism can be "seen as just one part of the two-century-old shift in the economy from goods to services, which tend to be labor intensive rather than raw material or goods intensive" (Power 1996, 215). With this shift we see place(s) acquiring value based on the opportunities for pleasurable, leisure-based experiences rather than the amount of ore available for extraction.

Gradually, as both the economy and culture evolved toward consumptive capitalism, and new types of technology such as jet travel, fax machines and modems became commonplace, the amenity-rich West has witnessed its own significant population growth in the past 25 years. The possibility for many people to electronically "commute" to work without ever leaving home opened up whole new areas to residential relocation for the newly professionally mobile (Robbins 1996). When these new job descriptions and

technologies combined with the modern interest in amenity-rich locations, scenic areas such as Red Lodge began to see an influx of new residents, many of whom had initially visited the area as tourists. Statistics show income from distant companies as well as "non-labor income" to be growing sectors of local economies throughout the rural West. These new residents live on dollars from distant commute-based jobs or from retirement pensions or other investments. In turn, they bolster the service economies and bring their own changes to isolated areas. New homes and additional commercial areas sprout up to further alter the cultural landscape. Unlike tourists, however, new permanent residents bring a slower, steadier type of growth, often adding an element of stability to the boom-bust cycle common in other western settings (Power 1996, 213-216). At the same time, the arrival of these new monied residents does not necessarily alter the economic polarization and inequalities that have existed since the days of mine owners and laborers (Robbins 1996, 70). Other historic patterns persist as well. Even the new amenity economy does not eliminate the possibility of economic fluctuations in rural Western settings. The potential for boom and bust vacillations remains an ever-present reality.

Community Efforts/Insiders' Perspective

Although national economic and cultural trends are important, they cannot reveal many other dimensions of geographical change in localities such as Red Lodge. It is also necessary to examine the perceptions and beliefs of local insiders to reconstruct how the community evolved and how residents reacted to the town's changing economy and culture. Communities themselves tend to develop a unified identity, especially when

confronted by economic adversity. City fathers and local entrepreneurs turn to civic boosterism to define their community and position it for prosperity (Logan and Molotch 1987, 54). Towns that began life as a hodge-podge of people frequently evolve into cohesive marketing entities in themselves simply to preserve their security and way of life. In addition, many residents develop deep, long-term attachments to their home areas and these connections create a distinct "insiders' sense of place" that becomes a defining element in the evolving character of any locale.

Between its birth and apex as mining center, Red Lodge's community of residents was growing, diversifying and quickly knitting together into a social fabric of clubs, organizations, committees and unions. Strong cultural and class stratification was also revealed. During this period ethnic identities were clearly inscribed on the landscape through distinctive neighborhoods, architecture, types of businesses and even religious institutions (Conzen 1976).

It wasn't until the mines were closing and Red Lodge faced economic privation that the need arose for intervention by community leaders. Rooted in a way of life and strongly bonded to a sense of place in what Cox and Mair (1988) call a "traditional" form of dependence, Red Lodge residents grappled with reconstructing their economy towards new opportunities. This entrepreneurial spirit often combined civic boosterism with private investment to try to promote fresh images of these communities for external consumption. Struggling with deindustrialization, towns like Red Lodge searched for innovative definitions of economic value which would provide a stable future. One solution was to move beyond selling commodities that could be dug from the ground and

instead market certain places or experiences, such as parades, events or conferences as commodities in themselves (MacCannell 1976, 23). In essence, these communities were struggling to make the transition from industrial to postindustrial, from places "associated with the past and the old, work, pollution and the world of production" to places associated with the "new, the future, the unpolluted, consumption and exchange, the world of leisure as opposed to work" (Short, Benton, Luce and Walton 1993, 208). If successful, tourism as an experiential commodity replaces extractive industry as a viable alternative in the postindustrial era.

For such communities struggling to find a new postindustrial economic niche, these entrepreneurial efforts often reinforce their special sense of attachment to their locale. Working to promote ones' town often generates a feeling of social solidarity, civic pride and even enhances a sense of loyalty to place (Harvey 1989, 14). This sense of solidarity is often accentuated by strong ethnic population identities. In turn, ethnic characteristics can themselves become marketable commodities, as in the promotion of distinct architecture, festivals or ways of life.

The reworking of older facilities into new uses is one facet of this maturation process. In recent years, for example, Red Lodge's rail depot became an art gallery and the Labor Temple became a home for the Carbon County Historical Society. The center's identity as a once prosperous mining town is used today as a powerful symbol and attraction for tourists. Tourist facilities take advantage of this mining theme in promotional events, advertising and even architecture (Francaviglia 1991). In these ways a landscape of production is gradually transformed into a landscape of consumption.

In the study of any place, however, it must be understood that the landscape is more than a physical manifestation of cultural clues that can be identified, quantified and presented as data. Though this process is valuable, this "outsiders' view" represents only half the story of place. Landscape has another dimension beyond tangible grids, contours and artifacts. If looked at from an "insiders' view," it has a dimension of experiences, memories and meanings which has been called the "invisible landscape" (Marsh 1987, Ryden 1993). Any place is sustained "not only by timber, concrete and highways, but also by the quality of human awareness" (Tuan 1975, 165). Though this dimension is more difficult to map, inhabitants' perceptions are just as valuable to understanding a place's history and evolution. Often, it is only the insiders' perspective that adequately can explain certain community trends or social phenomena (Marsh 1987, Hugill 1995). In fact, because insiders' stories often interweave seemingly conflicting land use predilections -- mining with recreational hiking, for example -- it is only through their perceptions that we can hope to see beyond the dry structure of economics to understand the creation and evolution of a place. "While the woods and the mining camp may seem on the surface to be quite different places, the stories that people tell about what has happened *in them* reveal common themes, common understandings of and feelings toward the area, common ways in which the local geography has worked its way into the identities of the storytellers--common elements, that is, of a shared local sense of place" (Ryden 1993, 121-122).

CREATING A LANDSCAPE OF PRODUCTION, 1882-1932

Settings and Background (Pre 1882)

A turbulent geologic and climatological history is responsible for both the breathtaking beauty and rich natural resources that characterize the area of Red Lodge, Montana today. Millions of years ago, long before people lived at the foot of the Beartooth Mountains, huge swampy areas developed amid the region's warm, moist climate and its abundant vegetation. Over time, as masses of plants died, decaying matter was deposited along with layers of mud and sand. As these layers were buried deeper and deeper, the forces of heat and pressure changed and compressed the plant matter into peat, lignite and eventually higher grades of coal.

When crustal disturbances formed the Rocky Mountains, these buried layers of coal were further heated, folded and uplifted, making the coal in the western, more mountainous part of the state a particularly rich, bituminous grade. It was also blessed with low quantities of pyrite, meaning low-sulphur content (Chadwick, 1973). Indeed, one of Montana's richest beds of bituminous coal lay under and around what we know today as the Red Lodge Valley and that resource saw extensive development between 1882 and 1920 (Fig. 1).

But these same forces of geologic uplifting created much more than subsurface coal beds; they also thrust rocks skyward, forming a striking mountain range now known as the Beartooth Mountains. Subsequent eras of glaciation and warming as well as varied erosional processes sculpted the range into a diverse collection of summits, aretes, cirques, tarns, and narrow stream valleys, an amenity-rich setting high in scenic beauty. By the late twentieth century this proved to be just as marketable a resource as the rich coal beds.

The earliest records of intermittent human habitation in this landscape date from approximately 12,000 years ago (Mulloy 1943). According to archaeological evidence, more recent Native American tribes settled in the Yellowstone Valley possibly as early as the mid-sixteenth century, having migrated from the Canadian Plains. The Crow, otherwise known as the Apsaalooke ("Big-Bird-People") were a hunting and gathering society and eventually divided into two groups. The River Crows lived north of the Yellowstone River, and the Mountain Crows to the south in the vicinity of what we know today as Red Lodge (Malone 1991, 17). Material artifacts of the Mountain Crow abound, including arrowheads, stone tools, tepee rings and several medicine wheels.

The region's diverse natural environment offered many resources to its Native American inhabitants. Arapooish, a Crow medicine man in the mid 1800s described his tribe's lands,

"The Crow Country is exactly in the right place," he said. "It has snowy mountains and sunny plains, all kinds of climates and good things for every season. When the summer heats scorch the prairies, you can draw up under the mountains where the air is sweet and cool, the grass fresh and the bright

streams come tumbling out of the snow banks. There you can hunt the elk, the deer and the antelope when their skins are fit for dressing. In the autumn when your horses are fat and strong from the mountain pastures, you can go down into the plains and hunt the buffalo, or trap beaver on the streams. And when the winter comes on, you can take shelter in the woody bottoms along the rivers where you'll find buffalo meat for yourselves and cottonwood bark for your horses" (Zupan and Owens 1979, 4).

Accelerating Anglo American contacts after 1860 presaged more dramatic human landscape changes late in the nineteenth century. Despite stipulations in the Fort Laramie treaty of 1851 and its 1868 revision that prohibited trespassing on Crow lands, gold prospector "Yankee Jim" George ventured across their territory and was probably the first to recognize coal outcroppings near Red Lodge in 1866. Eventually, it was his discovery that led Bozeman businessmen, Walter Cooper and N.B. Black, to claim these deposits and seek capital investors for development. By the mid 1880s demand for coal was rising and the promise of mineral wealth acted as a catalyst to open up the Crow lands.

Unlike the mining claim owners, cattle ranchers were not biding their time. Taking advantage of Red Lodge's vast grasslands, by the early 1880s cattle ranching was the area's primary economic enterprise. Ranches with far-flung operations paid minimal lease fees to the Crow, allowing free-ranging herds to roam over Native American grounds. Western beef was in growing demand. Rising east coast urban populations created a ready market and popular Montana meat was even exported to Britain as early as the 1870s (Malone 1991, 157). These destinations were made even more accessible with the 1882 arrival of the Northern Pacific Railroad in nearby Billings, 60 miles away. Soon, Laurel, only 40 miles distant, offered an even more convenient railhead for beef shipments

from the Red Lodge Valley. Newly-invented refrigerated cars provided an extra assurance of freshness and demand for meat swelled. The booming business attracted direct investment by large east coast and foreign corporations. Early in the decade, the Dilworth Cattle Company, headquartered slightly southeast of today's Red Lodge, was the largest cattle establishment, running up to 10,000 head at a time. But within a few years the Dilworth operation was dwarfed by the English-owned Picture Frame outfit. By then the larger ranches ran as many as 250,000 head and the area from just north of Red Lodge south to the Wyoming border supported nearly a million cattle.

An August 26, 1976 retrospective in the *Carbon County News* recounted how W.B. Nutting, an early homesteader had described the setting: "the country at that time was covered with grass as high as a horse's knees and very much resembled a grain field. There were a few Indian tepees here and there. No wagon trails could be seen." Though Mr. Nutting did not recall wagon trails, Red Lodge's intraregional transportation linkages were slowly improving. Because of the growing demand from cattle ranchers, homesteaders and nearby trading posts for mail and freight, the U.S. Army built a trail to traverse the 100 miles between Billings and Meeteetse, Wyoming. Portions of the Meeteetse Trail are still in use today. Horse-drawn wagons and yokes of oxen dragged supplies over this route directly through the future site of Red Lodge.

Despite the growing numbers of range-fed cattle, in the end, dollar-hungry mining entrepreneurs and eager homesteaders had a greater influence on the opening of more lands near Red Lodge. In 1882, and then again in 1892, the U.S. Government pushed

back the boundaries of the Crow Reservation and released much of the Beartooth Front's eastern slope to prospecting and settlement.

Beginnings (1882-1889)

The combination of the railroad's arrival in Red Lodge and initial opening of Crow lands created a crucial turning point for the Red Lodge area. Suddenly the land and its resources were available for intensive development during a boom period in the late nineteenth century American economy. High grade coal was increasingly in demand both within and beyond the region. Homesteaders were also interested in fertile agricultural land and many were poised to stake their claims in the area. Both forces coalesced in the Red Lodge area in the mid 1880s, producing dramatic accelerations in land use and landscape change.

Developments at Red Lodge as a center for natural resource extraction paralleled the pattern in many western mining towns. In its earliest phase the town was a disheveled camp, evolving slowly into a mature urban center complete with industrial infrastructure, multi-story brick mercantile buildings and gracious Victorian homes (Francaviglia 1991). Like many other mining towns, Red Lodge's camp phase was brief and hectic, spanning the years between 1882 and 1889. It encompassed the settlement's initial, scrambling birth pangs, including the struggle to establish its systems of production, transportation and communication. Without benefit of a formal survey, or even a proper plat for several years, the town took shape haphazardly. Links to the outside world were sparse and area

residents grappled with isolation. Mail delivery for area ranchers and homesteaders came via random travelers along the nearby Meeteetse Trail. Grocery shopping required a multi-day journey.

Conditions for these hardy souls were lonely and difficult, as expressed in a report published in the *Livingston Enterprise* on January 17, 1886:

Snow knee-deep and cold. Have no idea how cold it is, as we have no thermometer. There are about a dozen of us ranchers and a few sheep men in this isolated part of Gallatin County [at that time]. Most of us seem to have located here to avoid being disturbed on close neighbors and tramps. Don't know whether farming will be a success in this locality or not, as no one has tried to raise anything except stock, but those who do not get discouraged and leave in the spring will probably plant a few potatoes and some oats. As we are forty miles from the railroad, we cannot expect to market grain for some time yet.

Red Lodge's initial cultural landscape suggested its raw frontier character. Though timber was readily available, early town settlers were both too rushed and uncertain of their situation to take the time to construct solid, permanent structures. Instead, Red Lodge, like other young mining camps, was comprised predominantly of tents and crude huts made of mud and canvas. When wood was employed, it was in hasty, unbraced single-wall construction.

Red Lodge was officially designated a town with the opening of a U.S. Post Office at the junction of the Meeteetse Trail and Rock Creek on December 9, 1884. A mud-chinked log cabin, the outpost probably took its name from tales of a famous local Crow tepee, an unusual buffalo and elk skin lodge swabbed red with clay from the Beartooth foothills. Eleven homesteading families up Red Lodge Creek and several nearby cattle

ranchers petitioned for mail service and the fledgling postal center, indeed, provided a focal point for homesteaders, cowboys and prospectors.

Gradually, as Bozeman investors Cooper and Black dispatched men to begin mine construction on their coal lands, a handful of tradesmen, merchants and particularly saloon owners moved in to supply the mine crews (Fig. 2). The town's lone family, headed by miner Carl Edick, built their homestead near the present Carbon County Memorial Hospital, effectively claiming lands that would thwart later mining company plans. An amusement parlor, the Cowpunchers' Retreat, opened in late 1886, providing an important social gathering place for food, drink and poker through the harsh winter of '86-'87. A young homesteader at the time remembered the town as all "make-shift saloons, but not one pound of coffee or a sack of flour to be had. There was plenty of liquor, but for food we had to go to Laurel, Park City or Billings." (Zupan and Owens 1979, 22).

Unfortunately, the infamous winter was too harsh for the homesteading families up Red Lodge Creek, and records show that they moved or disappeared.

Compelled by potential coal profits from regional industrialization, increasing demand from the Butte smelters and voracious new coal-fired steam engines, financiers Cooper and Black sought outside investment. They envisioned coal production in Red Lodge at a whole new scale, but funds were needed to finance additional infrastructure as well as address the lack of an efficient transportation system. The lack of railroad connections meant all supplies still had to travel the 60 miles from Billings via ten-yoke ox cart. Coal bound for market had to be dragged out the same way. Heavy loads required a week's travel one way. Both Cooper and Black realized that these poor connections and

