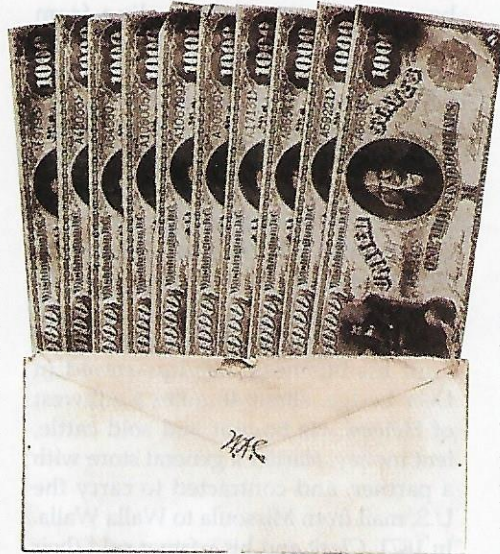


Americans have a soft spot in their hearts for many of the robber barons of the 19th century. These rags-to-riches characters lived lavishly, giving us the American dream of wealth and ease. Although they lived those lives at the expense of underpaid, overworked laborers, we tend to look back on them as somewhat unruly but likeable boys. The exception is William Andrews Clark, a cold, lecherous, corrupt, and self-centered copper king of the late 19th century.

Clark belongs to Montana, although he was born on a farm near Connellsville, Pennsylvania, on January 8, 1839, one of 11 children. He grew into a small man, standing five-foot-seven and weighing 140 pounds, with red hair, sharp, humorless eyes, and a beard that hid a mouth some described as cruel. "His heart is



In 1899, William Andrews Clark bribed state legislators in a bid for the U.S. Senate. Clark's initials are on the envelope containing the bribe money.

between Missoula in western Montana and Walla Walla in eastern Washington, he first rode the route himself, alone, to establish provisioning stations — this at a time when Indians were increasingly intolerant of white invaders. In later years, he would ride alone from mining camp to mining camp buying gold dust for his bank. He often carried \$25,000 to \$30,000 in gold, and never took a bodyguard with him.

frozen and his instincts are those of the fox: there is craft in his stereotyped smile and icicles in his handshake. He is about as magnetic as last year's bird's nest," wrote one man who knew Clark in later life, but no one could deny his intelligence or determination.

Nor did anyone deny his courage. When he contracted to carry the U.S. mail

In one of the most corrupt elections in the United States, 19th-century copper king

William Andrews Clark gave Montana a political black eye that took years to heal.

ONE FOR THE MONEY

BY SHARON ELAINE THOMPSON

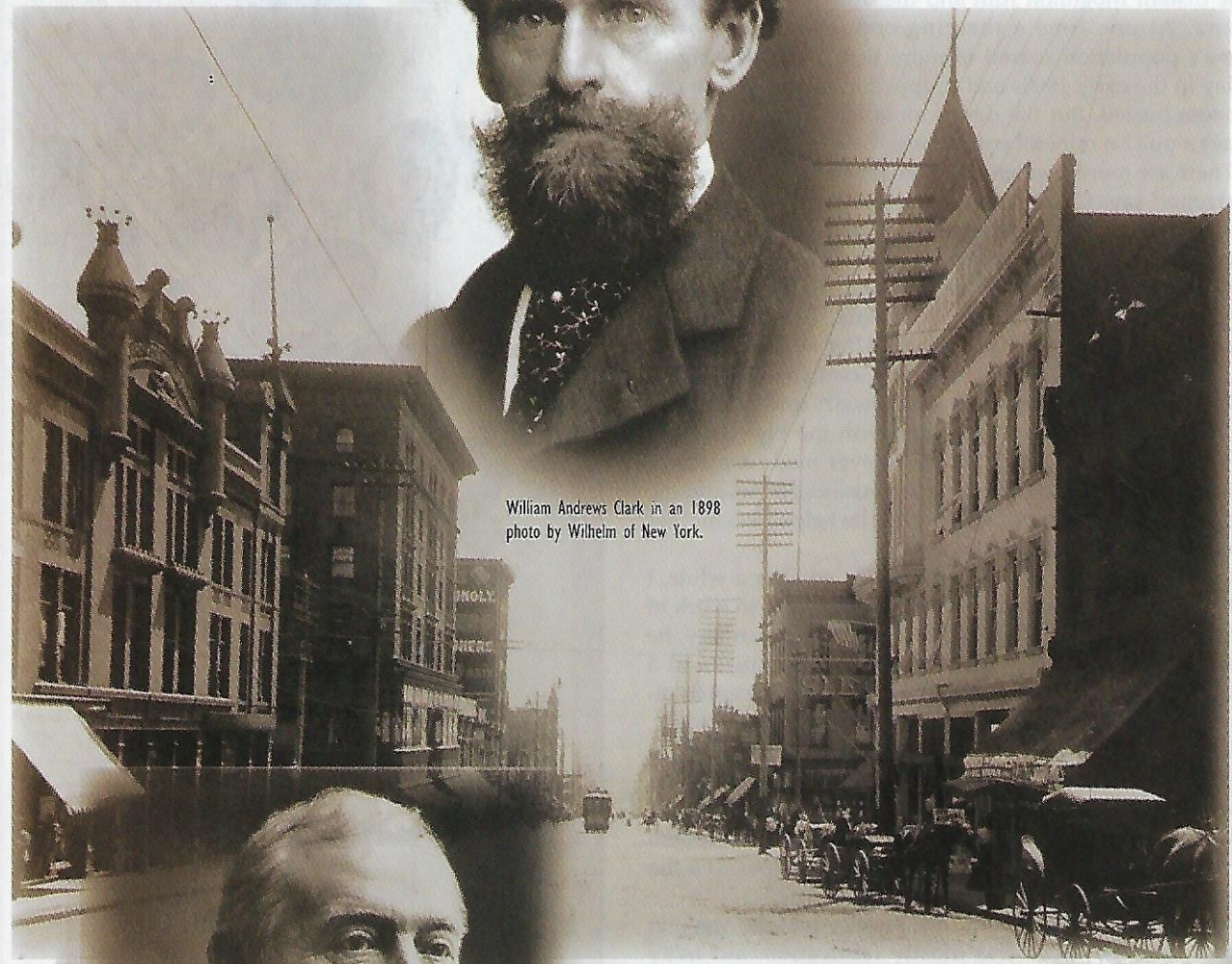
The Anaconda Standard

ANACONDA, MONTANA, WEDNESDAY MORNING, JANUARY 11, 1899.

CLARK BRIBERS CAUGHT AT IT RED HANDED

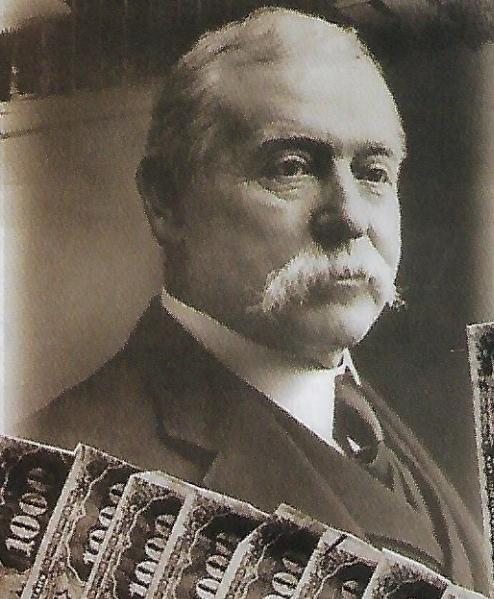
the corrupt methods that were practiced at that time. Also in the senatorial fight of 1896, and when I was elected to the senate last fall, I determined, if possible, to expose any one who should attempt such practices in

Butte, Montana, was a booming mining town after the largest deposit of copper sulfide ever found was discovered in the area. View of Main Street toward the corner of Granite and Main.



William Andrews Clark in an 1898 photo by Wilhelm of New York.

Photos courtesy of the Montana Historical Society, Helena



Marcus Daly, in a photo taken by W.H. Hoover, New York, was a rival copper baron and Clark's chief nemesis in his bid for the U.S. Senate.



One for the Money . . .

Clark was not known, however, for generosity, charity, kindness, conviviality — the common touch. In fact, he abhorred the thought of being one of the common men. He wanted social recognition and acceptance. He wanted to be known for his culture and breeding.

An extremely vain man, Clark became fastidious, almost foppish in his dress as he became wealthy. He traveled frequently to France, buying art in his bid for cultural acceptance. He built an enormous mansion in New York that was timbered with wood imported from Sherwood Forest, and floored with marble from his own quarries. No matter what he did, though, Clark could never shake the image of Western rough, a man who had arrived in Montana with his coat-tails burned from backing too close to a campfire.

LOOKING FOR GOLD. In 1862, at the age of 23, Clark joined the flood of hopeful miners moving west to Colorado for gold. He stayed in Colorado only a short while before moving on to Bannack in Idaho territory, where he and a partner staked a claim about a day's ride from Bannack.

The partners worked their claim six days a week, hauling their dirt to a sluice box a half-mile away. While his partner played cards in camp on Sundays, Clark was fond of saying, he roamed the hills looking for gold-bearing quartz or reading one of the three books he had with him: poems of Robert Burns, Hitchcock's *Elements of Geology*, and *Parsons on Contracts*. The partners did well. They paid off their debts and had about \$2,000 each as they went into winter.

Clark had no intention of wasting the winter gambling and drinking like most of the other miners. Buying a wagon and team, he and his partner went to Salt Lake City for supplies they knew would be in demand during the cold months. Returning in November, they had to fight their way through snow-blocked passes. The cold was ferocious. Clark wrote that "several cattle in the moving train [froze] to death in the yoke and [went] right down upon the ground." The partners survived, however, and turned a tidy profit. They even sold several dozen frozen eggs for use in the miners' Tom and Jerry drinks.

Clark worked his claim just one

more year before selling it. The trip to Salt Lake City had shown him there were easier ways to make money. He became a merchant, traveling from camp to camp selling supplies. He had a talent for taking advantage of shortages. In 1866, tobacco in the mining community ran out when the steamer carrying the camps' supply sank. Clark rode to Boise, 250 miles away, bought a wagon and all the tobacco he could carry, returned to Montana in 20°F temperatures, and made a profit of 300 percent.

Over the next several years, Clark built his business, headquartered in Deer Lodge, about 40 miles southwest of Helena. He bought and sold cattle, lent money, started a general store with a partner, and contracted to carry the U.S. mail from Missoula to Walla Walla. In 1871, Clark and his partner sold their general store and started a bank. In 1872, 10 years after his ventures as a miner, Clark went back into mining, this time on the money-making end.

Forty miles southeast of Deer

Lodge was Butte, a small mining camp established in 1864. After producing about \$9 million in gold in 12 years, the easily mined placers had about played out. The remaining gold was embedded in quartz. Miners did not have the technology available to crush and smelt the ore, and shipping it to distant smelters was prohibitively expensive. By 1870, there were only 241 people left in town.

Clark knew quartz deposits could be richer than placers. He bought up what he thought were promising mines, collected ore samples, and went back to Deer Lodge — but he didn't stop there. He went east to study at the Columbia School of Mines. Assaying his own samples, he realized that the ore was rich enough for him to be able to ship it to smelters and make a profit — once rail transportation got close enough to Butte. He simply had to wait: the railroad was already heading toward Butte.

Clark wasn't the only one interested in Butte's potential. One experi-

In the Family Way

As if political corruption were not enough, William Andrews Clark managed to get a little personal scandal into his life as well. In 1893, Katherine, his wife of 24 years, died. Not long afterward, when Clark was in his mid 50s, he became the guardian of a Butte teenager named Anna LaChapelle. According to Clark biographer William Mangam, LaChapelle was looking for a wealthy man to pay for her education.

Clark had an eye for the ladies, which was apparently well known in Butte. Mangam writes that LaChapelle first approached a banker, who declined her request but sent her to Clark as a potential sponsor. Clark first enrolled Anna in a boarding school in Deer Lodge, then he sent her to France with a chaperone.

The chaperone was obviously to protect Anna from other suitors, not from Clark. In 1901, having "responded to the opportunities offered by [Clark's] sojourns abroad," according to Mangam, Anna became pregnant and had their first daughter, Andree. In 1902, she had another child, a boy who died at birth.

During this time, Anna talked Clark into legitimizing her children. In 1904, Clark announced his "marriage" to Anna to shocked family and business associates. He claimed he had married Anna in France in 1901. However, Mangam writes that no marriage documents were ever produced. A second daughter was born to Anna in 1906.

Although Anna lived in Clark's New York mansion at the time of his death, she did not inherit it. She was forced to move out three years later when the house and furnishings were sold. The proceeds were distributed among the children. After 21 years of union, Clark left Anna \$2.5 million, a large sum of money to be sure, but a very small portion of his \$150 million estate. —SET

enced miner named Bill Farlin struck a large silver deposit there in 1875. Farlin built a mill to crush the ore, borrowing \$30,000 from Clark's bank. When the debt was due, Farlin couldn't pay it off. According to Clark biographer William Mangam, who once worked for the Clarks, Farlin "turned over his mining properties [to the bank] as security, with the understanding that . . . Clark should handle them to the best advantage until Farlin's indebtedness was paid off." Unfortunately for Farlin, the mines did not prosper under Clark's management, and the bank foreclosed.

Once Clark had Farlin's mines and mill in his possession, however, they did start to make money. "It was said by some that Clark deliberately worked the unpromising part of the claims until the properties became his," wrote Mangam. Within a year, "Clark was making enormous profits at the Dexter [mill], charging high rates for milling custom ore."

ARRIVAL OF A RIVAL. About the time Farlin was trying to figure out what had happened to him, another man arrived in Butte who would become William Clark's nemesis: Marcus Daly. Daly knew mines, having

worked all kinds from California placers to Utah quartz mines. He came to Butte to evaluate the Alice mine for Walker Bros., bankers in Salt Lake City. He recommended they buy it; they gave him an interest in the mine and made him manager.

In 1880, the Walkers asked Daly to look over the Anaconda, a silver mine. Although Daly recommended it, the bankers declined to buy it. Daly thought it was too good to pass up and sold his \$30,000 interest in the Alice to sink that and everything else he had into buying the Anaconda. For the funds to work the mine, he went to former employers in San Francisco. In 1881, they formed the Anaconda Silver Mining Company.

At first it looked like Daly might have erred. At about 300 feet, the silver began to play out. Near the end of the silver, however, was a narrow seam of copper. When they followed it, the seam opened into a vein 50 feet wide. It was the largest deposit of copper sulfide ever found. Almost overnight, Butte forgot silver, and copper boomed.

As Daly concentrated on the Anaconda, Clark diversified. He was vice president in the Colorado and Montana Smelting Co., so he got a discount on the smelting of his ores as

well as a percentage of the profits from the smelting of the ores of all the other mines in Butte, including those of the Anaconda. (Later, Clark built his own smelter; he disliked having partners and was sole owner or controlling partner in all his ventures.) He invested in utilities: water, electric, even streetcar lines. He bought real estate, a farm and a refinery in California, a plantation in Mexico. And he bought mines — in Idaho, Utah, Montana, and Arizona.

In 1884, at the New Orleans Exposition, Clark saw samples of ore from the United Verde Mine in Jerome, Arizona, and realized its copper potential. In short order, he acquired control of the company. At its peak of production, the United Verde brought Clark \$10 million a year. It was said that he once turned down an offer of \$100 million for it. By 1890, Clark was the greatest independent mine owner in the world; his wealth was estimated at about \$50 million.

The desire for wealth was not the only thing that drove Clark, however. He wanted power and prestige — specifically, he wanted to be a United States senator. In the 1880s, Montana began its move toward statehood, and Clark began his move toward the

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One for the Money . . .

Senate. He had not planned on Marcus Daly getting in his way.

For years there had been growing animosity between the two copper kings. No one seems to know exactly what started the feud. Mangam claims that Clark began trying to poison Daly's backers against him in the early days. Historian Michael Malone says that it may have begun with Clark's racist remarks about Daly's partner and close friend, James Ben Ali Haggin, whose mother was Turkish. Whatever had started it, in 1888 the feud blew into war, ripped Montana politics to shreds, and gave the state a reputation for corruption that clung to it for years.

Now nearing 50, Clark, a Democrat, was nominated to represent Montana territory in Congress. Democrats controlled state politics, and Clark was expected to win hands down. But Daly, also a Democrat, threw his support to the Republican candidate Thomas Carter. Shift bosses at the Anaconda were told to make sure the miners voted for Carter. "Thousands of ballots with Carter's name pasted over Clark's" were turned in for counting, writes Malone. Clark lost, and the humiliation infuriated him.

Montana became a state in 1889, and the issue of choosing its two U.S. senators arose. (Before 1913, state legislatures chose U.S. senators; they were not elected by popular vote.) Montana's legislature was split evenly between Republicans and Democrats, and in the end, each party appointed two senators. When the four men — including Clark for the Democrats — arrived in Washington, the Republican majority in the Senate accepted the claim of the Republicans; the embarrassed Democrats were sent home.

Clark had not given up, of course, and when in 1893 one of Montana's senators was required to stand for election again, Clark made another bid for the coveted position. This time Daly backed another Democratic hopeful, thereby splitting the party. "The 1893 legislature took on the appearance of a bazaar," writes Malone. "Mining money and intrigue now began to appear openly in the lawmaking arenas." Day after day, the legislators voted, but none of the candidates could get a majority. Daly Democrats offered to support another Democrat if Clark's name was withdrawn. Clark refused. When the final ballot was taken on March 2, 1893, no one had been elected. Montana was left with only one U.S. senator.

THE 1899 ELECTION. For a few years, state government in Montana proceeded with little contention between Daly and Clark, but then came the senatorial election of 1899. (There had been no election in 1896.) According to Malone, Clark "determined that this time, regardless of the monetary or moral costs, he would be elected to the U.S. Senate. . . . Thus began one of the most remarkable, most sordid political spectacles in the history of the United States."

To win the senatorial appointment, Clark had to control the legislature being elected in 1898. He began to spend copious amounts of money toward that end. He may have been willing to do more. During ballot counting in one Daly-controlled precinct, armed men broke in, and one of the election judges was killed. "No one ever learned whether they were after money or ballots," writes Malone, though "people suspected the worst."

Daly's candidates won the election, but Clark did not give up. Rumors abounded that Clark was willing to spend \$1 million dollars to be elected, and that legislators could

Continued on page 72

earn as much as \$10,000 each for their support. The attempts at bribery were so rampant, the legislature was forced to investigate.

The night before voting was to start, the investigating committee heard from four men, including state senator Fred Whiteside. Whiteside claimed that John Wellcome, Clark's attorney, had given him \$30,000 to buy Whiteside's vote and those of two other state senators. He even produced the money.

The next day, the investigating committee gave its report to the joint legislature. Daly's newspaper, the *Anaconda Standard*, was gleeful. Clark's newspaper, the *Butte Miner*, charged Daly with providing the \$30,000 to Whiteside. A grand jury was convened to investigate.

Balloting for the senatorship began. At the first ballot for senator, Clark received only seven votes. As the days passed and none of the candidates won a clear majority of votes, Clark's money began to tell; he was rumored to be paying as much as \$50,000 a vote. His tally went up. Then the grand jury, also accused of accepting Clark money, came back clearing Clark of the bribery charges. By the

end of the month, Clark had managed to buy all the votes he needed to get his majority. He had "won" the election — at a cost of about \$431,000.

Clark went to Washington, but Daly pressed for an investigation of the election by the U.S. Senate. When the dust settled, the Senate committee declared that Clark's election was "null and void on account of briberies, attempted briberies, and corrupt practices." Clark was forced to resign.

A new legislature was to be elected in 1900, and this time things would be different. Marcus Daly was dying. His Anaconda was now under the control of the Amalgamated Copper Company, run by the same men who ran Standard Oil. With Daly out of the picture, his machine faltered. The men loyal to Daly were suspicious of Amalgamated. The "alien" corporation could not control the election. A legislature friendly to Clark was elected in November, and Clark became senator for the state of Montana. Clark served only one term. He wanted only the title of senator; the duties did not interest him.

Clark died in 1925. His vast holdings, including the United Verde, which he considered the jewel in his

business crown, were gradually sold off by his family. His art collection, which filled four galleries in his New York home, became the property of the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C.

Clark left no legacy of affection — even today, people in Montana seem half embarrassed by him — yet biographers agree that Clark seemed to crave the public's love. Perhaps this was what underlay much of his rivalry with Marcus Daly. "Clark was respected by the miners for his wealth, his keen mind, and the courage he showed in walking the streets without a bodyguard when trouble was afoot," wrote Mangam. "But Daly talked the language of the miners and his generosity was legendary."

Shrewd as he was, William Andrews Clark never realized that there really are things that money cannot buy. ♦

For more information on William Andrews Clark and his family, see The Clarks: An American Phenomenon, by William D. Mangam. For an excellent history of Butte and an objective view of the struggle between the copper kings, see The Battle for Butte: Mining and Politics on the Northern Frontier, 1864-1906 by Michael P. Malone. For more information about Jerome and the United Verde, see Ghosts of Cleopatra Hill and They Came to Jerome, both by Herbert V. Young.

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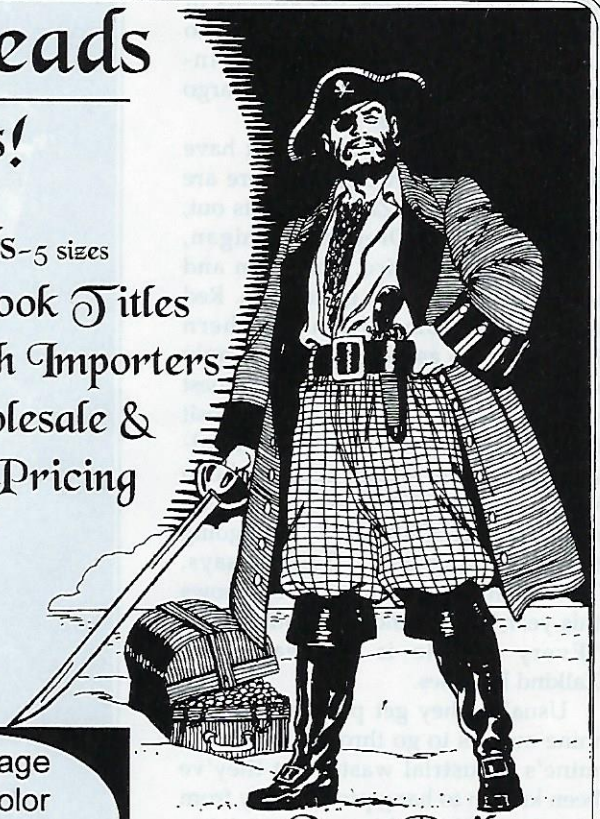
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