

WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE  
OF THE  
MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
DILLON

Apr. 7, 1982

Dear Ivan,

Time to be responding to yours of March 4. First about myself as a CCC source. My thesis on the first year of the Corps, written in '34 and '35, was suggested by the late Prof. Paul Phillips, partly I think because he foresaw a lack of on-scene studies. We saw it as being more Poli Sci than History. Parts of it read like a bitter complaint about the program, but the intention was to expose the propaganda that made up so much of the publicity, official and otherwise.

As with so many New Deal set-ups, there was split control and responsibilities. At the work sites, direction was by concerned agencies like USFS and Natl Park Service. (The 2 big ones around here.) I guess Reclamation had some, and Soil Conservation, Resettlement and various forerunners of the BLM. (That dates from 1946.)

Military handled everything else: feeding, housing, medical, transportation, finances, education, recreation and discipline. This was nearly 100% Army, but a few Navy medical officers got some experience too. (Occasionally a Navy officer would stop by the Commissary, to be growled at by the Captain's bulldog, who noticed the different uniform.)

This arrangement fitted in with the multiple goals. Boys from poor families would benefit from good care and would learn work skills; conservation would be pushed by tree-planting; stream-bank erosion would be checked; the parks would get new walks and parking lots at scenic spots. There would be secondary benefits: contracts for supplies would stimulate local business, while the purchase of vehicles and equipment would help industry. The boys got \$17 per mo. to send home, relieving the welfare burden in cities.

From my brief service and extended observation, I came to distrust multiple-purpose programs. A point of my thesis is that the Army publicity stressed the gains in tree-planting, while the Forest Service reported on the benefits to the boys. (They all gained weight, not too rare among adolescents.) Each agency was conceding that, given their share of the funds, they could have accomplished more without mingling their activities. The boys could have been rehabilitated closer to home, and the FS could have hired more effective workers.

My own hitch was only from June to Nov. 1933, but this put me in right at the outset, and at the Ft. Missoula headquarters, in the Quartermaster Dept. We (that's along with a Captain, 2 Sgts and about 5 other enrollees) supplied food to some 30 camps, using convoys from our central warehouses for the non-perishables, and making contracts for spot delivery of milk, fresh meat, baked stuff. I drove a typewriter 8 hrs a day, original and 7 carbons, on orders, contracts, ration accounts, corresp.

Not a bad vantage point, as officers came in frequently on related business, always with some anecdotes about the troops. Also, a lot



of the early trains unloaded at the Fort's RR spur, so we saw the recruits fresh from Buffalo and Joisy City, and heard their comments; got to know a number, as they lingered in the staging area, getting shots, drawing equipment, or just waiting for field facilities to be ready.

At 22, with all my MA work done except the thesis, I was a bit older than most enrollees, including the Commissary gang. The story of our being recruited sheds some light. Regulations called for only welfare cases, with a small quota of "local woodsmen" (that term had to come from the banks of the Potomac; probably Eleanor R.) These were meant to be foremen on the projects, but the concept was stretched to provide help at Headquarters beyond what the 4th Inf. could provide. (Why couldn't it have been the 7th Cavalry? So I could have bragged.)

A Capt. who had been my ROTC rifle team coach was detailed to scare up some clerks, he knowing the U. and Missoula scene. Said he was desperate, as the eastern kids they had tried in the offices "couldn't draw a straight line with a ruler." They had other disabilities in the areas of typing, accounting and mail-routing. Like couldn't read. Rest of our crew was a UM senior from Bonner-Milltown and 3 Msla. Hi dropouts from that area. There were perhaps 25 other such "local woodspersons" staffing the other CCC functions in the Fort offices.

Let me end my own barren chronicle and turn to a tabulation of items which may steer you toward something more useful.

1. As we watched several long passenger trains unloading the eastern kids, we noticed that many stood staring at Lolo Peak, commonplace to us but prominent on that skyline and obviously a novelty. I've been told by flatlanders that a looming peak or range (not that Lolo does much looming) seems scary, an unaccustomed shadow, something precarious and about to topple this way.

2. On the platform, a series of fistfights erupted, probably long-postponed grudges that had to wait till the train stopped. They seemed to square off at any provocation, and no one interfered. We were surprised at the frequency of knock-downs; most of us (Bonner and East Helena again) had been in plenty of fights but weren't used to casual sackings, being trained to stay on our feet no matter what. As time passed, some of our kids deliberately got into scraps with them, almost as boxing bouts rather than fights. They reported that it was a shame to pick on most of them, no stamina nor strength, and that the deckings had been genuine. But a few were trained boxers, able to give the Bonner/Milltown delegation a battle. (The E.H. member was too dignified and senior for fisticuffs, an early case of having to deplore one's age. It looked like fun.)

3. Several, at least more than one or two, were <sup>heard</sup> to cry out when stepping off the train, "Whew's Custeh?" Can't account for this, even to happen once. Unknowingly, they were quoting such greats as Gen. Terry and Major Reno, both of whom asked that same question.

MILLERS FALLS  
ERASE  
COTTON CONTENT



4. Partly because so few local boys went into the CCC, and partly because it's so long ago, I don't personally know any right now. But by inquiry I have located 2 prospects you may wish to contact or talk with.

First one is Stanley Larum, of Charlo, father of the Texas editor who reviewed THOS with the one syllable, "Great!" Glen has told me of his Dad's being in the Cs, and assures me the old man is approachable and would like to talk about it. But again, his service was in the first years; and I don't know if he went out on any fires.

Second, even more indirect, a cousin of a WMC colleague, who worked as an instructor, for some time I think, in the camps. His name is Willard Bruns (sic) of Philipsburg. He may have known a lot of C-boys.

Will keep an ear out for other possibilities.

5. A tidbit which I think got left out of my thesis. In the 30's the movie theaters used to stage "pal nights", when one 25¢ ticket would admit bearer and one companion. Those same years, West Front Street just off Higgins Ave. accommodated the ladies known to frontier journalists as "soiled doves". Seems their business was slow during the depression, so they adopted "pal night" Monday thru Fri, especially aimed at the CCCs. Ticket was 50¢ and bring all your friends, so the road to Missoula (then 5 miles from the Fort) saw a lot of evening traffic.

6. I think I know where to look for my thesis notes, and who knows what there might be in that box? Also, having other reasons to look at Mont. newspapers for the period, I'll watch for any gems which might provide color or a clue about the situation. There should be a carbon of my opus around, and if it shows up, will send so you can look at it at leisure rather than using up valuable scarce field-time.

7. This story comes back to me--- the eastern kid, on a fire, uses his shovel to stun a 3-ft rattler, then carries it to his foreman, "Lookit da green woim!"

8. Sorry I can't do much on the specific areas you asked about. I slept out at the Fort only a few nights, always catching a ride in at quitting time, and rising at 5 to hike back out and be on the job at 8. Town offered tennis, even a chance to play City League baseball, much else. Out in the camps, there was a lot of baseball (the hard, real kind), the diamonds being in evidence at most locations. The newspapers will help you on this, as I think they reported CCC sports, inc. boxing, basketball etc. all winter.

Most camps fed real well, some using FS cooks, I think. At the Fort we suffered from straight army chow; a shortage of mess sgts led to assignments of just anybody. I ate just noon meals there, but remember one session when a cavalryman, with a specialty in mules, was in charge of the mess. For a beverage, he used to pour bottles of flavoring extract into a water dispenser, instead of using powdered fruit drink. Rest of the meal was to match, so some of us took our plates to our bosses, and we soon got a better set of cooks. I think we ate with regulation mess gear, the aluminum trays with indentations; don't think we had mess kits, with the snap lids, but I do have one in my possession, from somewhere... Partly I'm mixed up with Navy boot camp, I guess.

More as it occurs to me. It's now eve. of 4/7, temp is 18° F, six inches of recent snow.

*Stan D.*



17 April '82

Dear Stan--

Some lovely stuff in your letter on the CCC. I think I can particularly use the scene of the fistfights breaking out when the train stops. Thanks immensely for going to the trouble you did.

Will be back in touch. This is just a quick note, preparatory to getting things off my desk before I go to Boise this next week, to talk to a conference of English teachers. But I did want to say thanks and to get this book back to you; got some good details out of it, too.

all best



4 March '82

Dear Stan--

Our last correspondence did indeed cross in the mail--the way the Postal Service sometimes operates I guess we're lucky they didn't actually collide.

Thanks for repeating the Yap anecdote to me, and ~~clarifying~~ clarifying my mysterious note to myself. I read once of a joke played on an inveterate note-jotter like me--a friend slipping into his pocket a nonsense note reading something like "Juanita--Hotel Roosevelt, 6 p.m." and watching the guy go half-crazy trying to remember what it meant. Maybe I'm not quite that badly off.

No, I wasn't aware of your CCC thesis--just knew of your own term in the Corps--but will look it up when I get to Missoula this summer. I'm finally out of the Alaska novel that has occupied me the past year and a half, and thinking toward the Montana 1939 novel, and I believe a detail I'd like to have would be a CCC crew called onto a forest fire. Last summer I found in the Gt. Falls Tribune several instances of that happening, in the '39 fire season. Did you ever have that kind of experience? If you did, I'd be glad to have any details you can provide--what did the CCC lads do on the fireline, what kind of equipment were you given, what did you eat, where'd you sleep, and so on.

Even if you weren't called onto a fire, I could stand some everyday stuff about camp life--what the meals were (and how good or bad they were), how you were fed (cafeteria-style, i.e. chow line, or something else?), how you were rousted out in the mornings (bugler?), did you have regular calisthenics and/or athletics and if so, what sort. Also, anything about any of the Eastern kids--non-westerners, that is--you may have encountered. For instance, I was once on Air Force KP with a kid from Brooklyn who, when told to cut the grapefruit in half for the morning mess, did so by slicing them all down the core instead of across it; any tomfoolery of that sort, and it needn't be just greenhorn Easterner, would interest me.

Well, enough. Don't rush or inconvenience yourself on any of this, I'll be pecking away at 1939 background all spring. Hope you've wintered okay. I was deep in the Alaska novel all the time, but did notice it's rained a lot. Saw Mike Malone out here late last fall, but nobody else from the Montana scene. By the way, I will get back to the Fred Carpenter book you loaned me--as far as I've gone, the details have been good.

all best



Dillon, Feb. 5, 1982

Dear Ivan,

Your card and my note to you must have met, about at Spokane. Yours came a few minutes ago, and I'm gonna answer it right now. It's so easy for things to slip out of sight under something else, especially on my correspondence stack.

Probably at Helena I did tell that as a child of 10 or 11, our vacant-lot games of war did involve the Japs, not our recent foes in Europe. We did pile up an ash dump into a redoubt and crouched behind it on the east side, hurling our missiles toward the Japs invading from the west. The US was badly at odds with them, c. 1921, over our right to anchor a cable on the island of Yap, their protectorate after W.War I.

Feeling must have been pretty strong, to have perked down to us kids, serving in the Saturday-morning militia in the alleys of East Helena. I think there was a general belief that war was possible, partly from strong anti-Oriental feeling all along the Coast, over job competition, land-owning in California, and just plain racial animosity. As I came to know later, Japan felt short-changed in the treaties, and was defensive about the islands they did get. Based on a lot of reading since, I have come to believe they were nearly ready to jump us in 1923, when the Lord sent an earthquake to flatten Tokyo and their war machine. Of course, we had to rush over with ship-loads of equipment to help them rebuild and re-arm, so they were ready to resume aggression in the '30s and attack us in 1941.

My own memories and impressions aren't the most reliable, but have been suilt up by extensive reading in the back-files of papers and magazines of the 'twenties, such as the Literary Digest, the U.S. News of that day. Strangely, WMC's library has long runs of the periodicals of that time, thanks to some long-forgotten person who had them bound all those years ago. When we are inspected by experts from Helena, they tell us to clean out all that stale material and replace it with 1982 paperbacks, but we have always staved them off.

You're right about the weather-- the rest of the country is having an old Smith River winter. We've missed most of it, but did get -20° each of the past two nights, and have a little snow. I always scan the weather list in the paper, thinking for each town of the people I know there, so pause at Seattle for a minister at Renton, cousins in S.Seattle, my Korean son (by sponsorship) and yourselves.

To the extent that I can be useful, will be flattered to help with any insights from my memory or data from the files of WMC. So feel free to plug into my think-tank, and we'll see what is on some of the old tapes.

*Sincerely,  
Stan D.*



Dillon, Feb. 1, 1982

Dear Carol & Ivan,

This is partly a belated thank-you for the greeting back at the holidays, also an acceptance of your thought that I might have something to tell about the CCC. I'm guessing you've made contact with my thesis at Missoula. It contains part of what I know, but lots was left out. Will gladly share anything useful. So much that was written at the time is slathered with sentiment and emotion. Then War II cut it off about at the time when serious studies could be made. Too bad, because a lot would have been learned and preserved.

Have felt guilty at not doing better on the range-rider assignment, not enough to deserve the time I took up. My contact with two old riders was spoiled by their fore-knowledge of my errand - "one of them college fellers, writing a book." I'd have preferred a casual approach.

Again about your Christmas card, it was the only thing in my box that day, and I had been feeling kinda "down", so it brought a most cheerful lift. We never know when we may be doing a big kindness.

Sincerely,

Stan Davison



WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE  
DILLON, MONTANA 59725

May 10 '82

Dear Ivan, These clippings, resting in my CCC file for some 48 years, are of no further use to me, but might provide you with some insights, phrases or clues. I won't need them back.

More to the point, I have found my copy of the thesis, and have it ready to send. But first, is your mailbox OK to receive a thick 9x12 envelope? Mine is now, but once had one which required folding & still left things exposed to rain. I address things to my Texas editor-friend at his shop, where they have a big P.O. drawer.

Our bad weather, keeping me in the house, lets me do some of the sorting and disposing I had planned to do all winter. But only a little writing. Hope you are doing better than that.

Stanley A.

P.S. (over)



15 May '82

Dear Stan--

The CCC clips are a help. You just knew you were saving them for some reason, right? Thanks immensely for passing them along. Will credit you duly, in the far future when this book gets itself done.

Yes, my mailbox can cope with the thesis. I'd be grateful to see it, and will certainly reimburse you for the postage (and insurance, in case it goes astray and we'd have to photocopy the one in Missoula as replacement?).

All is well but damn busy here. Will get back to you when the thesis comes and I've delved into it. All best, and again, my appreciation.

P.S. Note that the adobe clippings are from towns getting less benefit from CCC money. In winter, built lots of houses and only a few NY birds, liked the crops. P

Had a acknowledge return of the Carpenter book? Had it used of interest. And hope the Boise trip was nice.



8 Feb. '84

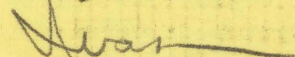
Dear Stan--

I guess I must be done with this latest book: I'm overcome with the urge to clear its research apparatus out of my files and off my desk.

So your CCC thesis is enclosed, along with my thanks for leaning it for so long. I never did manage to do much with the CCC in this book--the damn manuscript had a life of its own, persistently leading me back to sheep ranching and small-town life, stuff I actually know--except to have some crews working in my fictional national forest, and eventually some CCs in a forest fire crew. But it seems to me useful just to have them there in the background.

My next shot at getting to Montana likely will be this fall, when this book--evidently titled ENGLISH CREEK--reaches the stores. Maybe I'll finally manage to see you and Rex on your home ground. In the meantime, I hope you're wintering okay.

best,





WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE

DILLON, MONTANA 59725

Feb. 14, '84

Dear Ivan,

A note to acknowledge receipt of the CCC stuff, and also to say sincere thanks for the Christmas card. My "take" of cards was slim this Christmas, probably deserved for my own lack of energy in sending some out, but all that came were much appreciated.

Also glad to learn that the new book is safely on its way-- hope we can count on seeing you, maybe at an autograph party.

My own attempts have foundered from poor health and too easy distraction. I've sadly looked over my file of unfinished projects-- one or two big things, lots of small things, mostly just things. I should have acquired a "protege" along the way, to be a literary heir and finish up what could be salvaged. This windy and cold weather gives incentive to stay in the house and do something productive. Maybe I'll try that. In any case, will be glad to see you when back this way.

Sincerely,  
Stan R.



WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE

DILLON, MONTANA 59725

June 19, 1981

Dear Ivan,

Herewith a sheet, on both sides, with my preliminary thoughts on the matters of your current interest. I'm sure I can expand and improve on them, especially if <sup>we</sup> can have a session at Helena when you can sharpen my aim a little.

I have errands in Helena to justify a run over there, will plan on 25th, and will contact the Hist. Soc. on arrival. Not sure I can accept your offer of lunch, not having earned more than a thin sandwich. And don't feel guilty about asking me a few questions, as these are areas of interest to me and I enjoy occasions to dig into them.

Will either show on the 25th or phone in, and you can let me know if that isn't a convenient day for you.

Till then,

*Stan Davison*



Usually involved sizeable areas of land leased from Forest Service or later BLM, by an Association made up of several stockmen.

Duties-- patrolling the area to check on condition of the animals; note signs of trespassers or predators and take appropriate action; distribute salt.

Pay-- seasonal contract, with pay by the month; a cabin supplied, often on land owned by the Assoc. and used as a winter ground, also with holding pens. In contrast to the sheepherders who had supplies brought to them during the work season, the rider would remain based at his cabin, near enough to town for him to make trips for his needs.\* Part of his pay might be year 'round occupancy of the cabin.

The rider probably would not own any of the stock on the range. He generally supplied his own horses, usually being an old guy who had several and was glad of a chance and an excuse to use them.

\* Am trying to recall what kind of a vehicle such men might be using. The pickup as we know it was in existence, but few of them would be old enough to have become available in the back rows of used-car lots. I can think of several ranch hands, not necessarily riders, around East Helena in those days, who had rather ancient passenger cars, some with the back section removed to make a de facto pickup; a platform perhaps to hold sacks, bales, blocks of salt. My thinking may be running a bit too early, like 1925-30, but in those years the cars would not have been Model T's or A's, nor Chevs; more likely big old Studebakers, Buicks, Nashes & Hudsons that had all seen better days but could still climb mountains and seemed unbreakable.

Otherwise, my data thus far applies more to your target years, and stems from local area of Big Hole, Horse Prairie, Grass-hopper. Best potential informant is away from his place, but I hope to nail him before long. No one has been able to say what the cost would be, per animal, but hope to find that out.

(See over for comment on late '39 and Peral Harbor.)



## Thoughts on 1939

As early as 1933 (when I was in the CCC at Ft. Missoula and around Army people) there was general belief that Hitler, then taking power, would bring on a war to reverse the 1918 decision. He was saying as much, out loud. We were all somewhat of the opinion that the CCC was designed partly as a rehearsal for mobilization, and I still believe that this was the best result that came out of it. The slide into WWII was so gradual over those 6 years that it seemed to be expected when it did erupt.

I had spent the summer of 1938 at U.of Wash. and 1939 in Seattle on a Civ. Service job; was sent to a training session in Wash.DC just as Hitler marched on Poland, and was there into December. For the first time there was a feeling that the Depression was over, and an atmosphere in the Capital of activity and excitement. The Peace and Neutrality people were in full retreat, and we were starting to re-arm and even to mobilize.

After the initial flurry in Poland, that war stagnated, and all eyes were on Russia vs. Finland, where our sympathies were with the little underdog, awkward because Germany was backing the Finns. But we still rooted for them.

In the 2 years -39 to -41, we switched to a near-war economy and operated the draft. I doubt if the public expected us to get into it, but were willing to if necessary. The collapse of France and Norway made it almost certain, before long.

Few were watching Japan, which probably encouraged them to pull their rash stunt at Pearl Harbor. I was back in Missoula then, running the Soc. Security Office for W. Mont. When the news came that Sunday, it was so skimpy we didn't react much; several days later, the extent of our losses in people and ships began to leak out, and everybody got mad: We'll wipe those little yellow jerks offa the map before Christmas. About the time the details of Manila, and the sinking of the British battleships, were known, the mood reversed-- some defeatism, much pessimism, predictions of a ten-year war with the outcome in doubt. This began to reverse by Midway and the Coral Sea, and an intelligent confidence was maintained the rest of the way.

I was in the Navy by Feb. 1942, but can report on the few weeks up to then. My own diary, and one kept by my Mother, reveal little disruption of people's lives. Social events went on, pretty much business-as-usual even tho' the draft was taking everybody (I was 31 and not fully recovered from polio, but no matter), the car factories were stopping production, and rationing was on. Officially, a lot of anti-Jap scare, such as the maintenance people in the Fed. Bldg. nailing my transoms shut, and boards over the windows of my office; don't know what that was supposed to accomplish.



## Amoco drills in Oil Hills

LIVINGSTON (AP) — Amoco Production Co., a subsidiary of Standard Oil of Indiana, has begun drilling an exploratory well in an area north of Wilsall known as "Oil Hills."

Amoco geologist John Rakowski. Rakowski said the effort will cost the company between \$1.5 and \$2 million, even if tests prove the area is a "dry hole."

MONTANA COLLEGE  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
DILLON

June 4, 1981

Dear Ivan,

This is a hasty acknowledgment and partial answer to your welcome letter of May 29-- hasty because I want to reach you before you'd be leaving to head in this direction, and because I'm in a sort of time bind for the next few days. By the middle of next week, around the 10th, I should be free for awhile from obligations at the College and be back from a short business trip which will take me out of town briefly.

Getting to your two concerns-- I know next to nothing about range associations and their riders (except back in the time of Granville Stuart and Teddy Roosevelt) but I've located a couple of old-timers here who have worked at that, one especially who is around 80 after a lifetime in that or related work. I don't know him well enough to be sure of his co-operation, but mutual friends tell me that he is quite approachable and both articulate and coherent, not always the case with some of us old coots. Am pondering the strategy but hope to have a visit with him next week. My first thought was to try to have you make the contact, but I note that you wish some preliminary info before meeting your similar man in Helena, so I'll move ahead. Also have a friend about my own age (70) who has a background in ranches in the Big Hole and Horse Prairie, and will probably see him today or tomorrow. (I have the final meeting tonight with an extension class at Warm Springs, and must turn their grades in before leaving town Saturday, but can see this man today and find out how much he can tell us.)

I can safely promise you some material on the impact of the Pearl Harbor news, and the outbreak of Hitler's war, both on myself and on the communities where I was living at the two occasions. In 1939 I was in the process of leaving my Seattle job with Railroad Retirement Board and switching to Soc. Sec. office in Butte, which involved a 2-mo training stint in Wash. D.C. I kept a sort of diary in these years, will dig out the pertinent one from the jumble of my archives; also family journal kept by my mother. Together they should shed some light, and furnish me clues for further remembering; I'll plan on pondering those days while I drive to Warm Spgs. and back tonight. By Dec. 1941 I was back in Missoula, at the Soc. Sec. office, and will have those weeks covered by diaries too. Of course I do remember a lot of things from then, but find that some on-the-spot documentation can help. Sometimes I remember things that never happened.

I spoke to Rex Myers about possibly needing his help on an oral history interview (a specialty with him) but he is moving into the Division chairmanship at WMC and is swamped with administration duties, almost no free time. For reaching me, my best address is home, 828 South Pacific, 59725; phone is (406) 683-4448. At Helena, I think Bill Lang can make his "hot line" available, and I generally can use one from here to the Hist. Soc. However, I have several Helena errands accumulating, and should plan on a day or two there later this month. So with all these possibilities, we should be able to keep in contact and I surely hope, get to meet on this project.

Till next time,

*Stanley D.*



Big Furniture Store

75 EAST  
PARK PLAZA

USE  
YOUR  
CREDIT

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Till next time,

Stanley D.



11 June '81

Dear Stanley--

Thanks for the letter, and for the effort you're going to. I hope it's not an inconvenient amount of effort, in fact; please don't stint your own work on my account, or I'll be chagrined.

I intend to be working at the Historical Society in Helena on the mornings of June 24, 25, and 26; maybe in the afternoons as well, although more likely I'll be out seeing people. If we happen to coincide in Helena any of those days, I'll happily buy you lunch. If we don't, I'll try get in touch with you by phone. Carol and I will be staying with Bill Lang the first two of those days--and the early part of that week, Mike Malone will know our whereabouts in Bozeman, if you need to get in touch with me before I try you. Okay? Looking forward to talking with you, one way or another. And many thanks.

best



WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE  
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MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
DILLON

I finished reading a great book by Ivan Doig, about growing up around White Sulphur Springs and Dupuyer.

Jan. 19, 1981

Dear Dr. Doig,

The above may be the shortest review of THoS, but it's real, clipped in its entirety from a Christmas card. It's from a perceptive young friend who edits the "Pioneer" at Fort Stockton, TX. His background is Malta, Charlo and WM College.

I appreciated your card after the Billings meeting; I had hoped to stop by for a handshake, but no suitable time developed. I did enjoy being in the audience.

Somewhere back in middle years, I made a list of things to do or to avoid in old age, based on my observation of the irritating traits of my elders. The list got mislaid for a few decades, but surfaced awhile ago. First item on it was to refrain from making lists and mislaying them. Second point was to remember that one's counsel and even their presence may not be welcome at all times and to all people. I do know that the elderly can be tiresome. So I often hang back to avoid intruding, unless an excuse occurs to me. This time, it's the one-line review above: "great".

Also, as your interest turns toward Montana, I would be glad to volunteer a hand if you should need a quick check on a name or date or such-like. Besides my own collection of books and notes, I have access to Western's reference room, with much more.

Sincerely, and with every good wish,

Dear Stanley--

The Christmas card review, as you recognized, is the best I can ever get. Thanks for troubling to share it.

Whenever I pull my head out of the novel I'm at work on these days--not all that often, unfortunately--I remind myself that the next book is to be a Montana novel, and Carol and I intend a summer journey to Montana as a start toward that work. I hope we'll get to Dillon, and say hello to you, sometime during that excursion. I greatly appreciate your offer to share lore, and you'll likely find yourself taken up on it.

Until then, all best regards.



May 29, '81

Dear Stanley--

I'm at last trying to look ahead to the Montana trip which Carol and I intend, leaving here about mid-June and staying on for maybe a month. Since Dillon is off the path I need to take--you may have heard that before--I thought I'd drop you a line to enlist a bit of help from you, if I may. If we can manage to make it down to Dillon on our way home, we will; but as we'll be wrestling a deadline when we need to be back here in Seattle, I can't say for sure we'll make it.

Anyway: I'm thinking toward a novel, possibly set in the summer of 1939 or 1941, about a forest ranger and his son, wife, friends and so on. One character is to be the "Association rider," the cowboy hired by various ranchers to herd their stock on the summer range. I have an old fellow in Helena who was an association rider about that time, but I don't yet know a thing about associations themselves. (Except, as I savvy it, ranchers in a shared watershed or valley would form one, to share the summer stock-tending-expense.) If you can suggest anything on these associations--local ones, and the smaller the ranches involved the better--I'd be glad to hear it. I need to know details: how much per head each rancher would be assessed for membership, for instance; how they arranged ~~camp~~-tending for the rider, etc. I may find some of this out at the Historical Society in Helena, but I thought I'd see if you could give me a running start.

The second matter is that if you'd care to, I'd be glad to have your memories of where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor and, if you can recall a probably less obtrusive event, the same about the start of the war in Europe, September of '39. I'll be asking various people about these, to see if I can make a blend of some sort in the novel. Again, details are what I'm after. (The more surprising, the better. My own moment-to-remember of this sort is the assassination of JFK. Friends who know I was a newspaperman at the time assume I was in the city room, bulletin balls ringing, wirecopy flying... Actually, like a good newspaperman I was having lunch in a bar with my cronies.)

Please don't go to great effort on either of these, but I'd welcome you expertise if these happen to coincide with your interests. Will hope to see you this summer.

best



former director, Montana  
his'l soc.; now history prof.

WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE

DILLON, MONTANA 59725

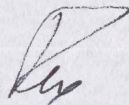
October 27, 1980

Ivan Doig  
17021 10th Ave. NW  
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Ivan:

Just a short personal note to say how much I appreciated your participating in the recent Montana History Conference. The writers session and your luncheon address were highpoints of the conference as far as I was concerned. I started on WINTER BROTHERS last night and enjoyed the few pages my kids permitted me to read. I hope it does as well as HOUSE OF SKY. Likewise, good luck on the novel.

Again, many thanks for your participation.



Rex C. Myers



WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE  
OF THE  
MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
DILLON

Oct. 14, 1980

Dear Dr. Doig,

Only rarely do I write a fan letter, but that is about what this is, so if you don't read them..... But myself having written little and published less, it has always been a bit gratifying to get a response from an appreciative reader, and especially as in this case, where no reply is expected.

This past summer, my semi-retirement was punctured by an invitation to give a course called "Montana Authors", in response to interest expressed by several graduate students. It turned out to be a small but dedicated seminar group, providing the most enjoyable teaching experience in my career. True to our title, we concentrated more on the writers than on their style or technique; this group of teachers were plainly curious as to why certain people become writers. I think they were thinking of Mrs. Tidyman, and wondering if they might be overlooking the occasional student who had the potential to amount to something.

So my class turned often to the question, why do some people feel an urge to write, and what is it that distinguishes the few who succeed? Is there something about them which can be recognized early by teachers and parents? A lady from Butte had become interested in the novels of Myron Brinig, who seems to have been fairly popular in the 'twenties-thirties, writing on Butte themes. She learned that he is still alive, a very old man living somewhat secluded in New York City. He responded to her letter, including her question about how he happened to become a novelist, coming from a family with no literary background and growing up in a community not noted for its encouragement of scholars. The best answer he could give was that he had always thought of himself as looking at life differently than others. That wasn't much help, yet I think he was correct.

Having known literally thousands of people, in a lifetime covering years of teaching, several government jobs, a wartime Navy hitch, college at Missoula, Seattle and Berkeley, playing and coaching Legion baseball-- I'm convinced that only a handful would ever have been able to write a novel, or a play, or a poem or a thoughtful essay, and least of all, a significant autobiography. The thing that is lacking is simply awareness, of the people and things around them, and of their own reactions to such surroundings. In 1978 I attended my class' 50- yr. reunion at Helena High. Most of the sixty or so engaged in bragging about their grandchildren, smugly boasting of their careers, or at best chatting about their retirement hobbies. A few of us got more fun out of remembering, recalling names and incidents, teachers and classmates. I would contend that the majority had hardly been aware of what was going on around them 50 years earlier, or much since.



Looking back over the preceding paragraph reminds me of a conversation I had many years ago with another graduate student. We were agreeing about our superiority over most of our associates, when he broke in to wonder, if we're so smart, how come we're so damned poor? He went on to become a District Judge, so our opinions were at least partly redeemed.

But let me touch up my idea just a bit more. All the classmates you ever had, and fellow-workers, who have never written a book about the life they seemed to be sharing with you-- they weren't really sharing it at all. So many people seem to be moving about in a dream, or worse, as if stunned. Barely remembering a parent whom they may have lost early, no recollection of early school or vacation trips, no memory of bits of conversation, no appreciation of unusual people met along the way. I've heard so many individuals trying to tell something of their pasts, maybe for the benefit of their children: we used to live near Havre, then I went to school in Great Falls and got a job there but I don't remember much about it. Well, enough of that.

When I learned that you were taking part in the convention at Billings, I obtained your address from the Historical Society, so you have them to thank for this intrusion on your time. If weather and health permit, I plan to attend from Friday noon, and am looking forward to your sessions.

I promised a fan letter, so let me add that part, by thanking you for an account which brought hours of enjoyable reading and pleasant contemplation. I feel more confirmed and re-inforced in my feeling for the part of the world where we both grew up. And I must quote the lady in the class who said she had never before read an autobiography which led her to like the person who wrote it.

Sincerely,

*Stanley Davison*

Stanley R. Davison  
Emeritus Prof. of History  
18 Nov. '80

Dr. Davison--

I hoped our paths might cross at the Montana History Conference in Dillon, but they didn't--although I did see Rex Meyers, so I didn't strike out on Dillon people altogether. I very much appreciated your letter about House of Sky. I intend more writing about Montana, after a coastal novel I'm at work on now. Perhaps our paths will cross as I come to the state for research now and again. In any event, it's quite moving to me that the influence of Frances Tidyman goes on.

all the best



WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE

DILLON, MONTANA 59725

Apr. 18, '85

Dear Ivan,

I was half-way through a real letter, determined to get it to you by the weekend, then ran into all kinds of interruptions, so will substitute this note. Nothing of an emergency, except being so slow in replying to yours of 3rd. So I want to acknowledge it, promise to have a full-length response on its way in a few days.

Also, owe you a receipt for card back at Christmas, which was much appreciated. Then you invited me to send a few columns from local paper, will grab a recent one and inclose it.

Mail dispatch goes out in a few minutes, hence all the rush.

Till an early next time,

*Stan L.*



Dillon May 19, '85

Dear Ivan,

Before filing any additional resumes on my claims as an authority on the Homestead Era, maybe I should get a ballpark idea of the years involved. After I wrote, it occurred to me that my best coverage would be near the end, if not after the real homestead time. But a lot of the benchland around E. Helena, and even some of the valley, was still occupied by survivors of the boom times into the years I can remember.

But by then, c. 1919, rural life had already been much changed by the arrival of the automobile. Even that early, most farmers had a car of some kind, usually but not always a Model T. Trucks were not nearly as common, so horses were still used for most hauling. The first pickups I can recall were used in town, by grocery stores, bakeries, service shops and such. When farm trucks did become more numerous, they were likely to be re-makes of old passenger cars, (usually big ones like Buicks, Studebakers) with back sections removed and home-made wooden cargo boxes stuck on.

Also, in my time, agriculture had been greatly affected by World War I, chiefly by the emphasis on wheat-growing, and the expansion of tillage into original grazing land. It might be said that a lot of ranchers had become farmers, just recently, and the adjustments were not complete.

One thing that lingered from the beginnings would be the buildings. Except for the most prosperous, the house would still be the original one, built onto, and extended, but with its ancestry as a shack or cabin still visible. The same applied to outbuildings, where primitive sheds and pens still existed along with modern barns and shelters for machinery. Much depended on how near the place was to available wood for building. Where timber was near, old buildings were more likely to be replaced, with the scrap wood used for fuel. Further out on the prairies, structures were kept longer, often serving as the core of an enlarged one, and if torn down, the material was used one way or another, for construction or repairs, to the last board foot.

My own schedule for June appears un-encumbered, so if you do find enough errands to bring you this way, I'll be glad to visit in whatever time you have available. But again, I hope not to have advertised more than I can deliver on early days in Old Montana.

Dear Stan-- This is a quickie, in response to your wondering what the homestead era I'm interested in. 1890-1920, which I guess is really at least two eras, huh? My main characters will take up land in 1890, but they'll spectate, maybe even be locaters, during the homestead boom 1910+. I am interested in that transition from horses to autos; in fact, your letter had a lot of good stuff for me. Anything about how people lived there at the tag end of WWI (or before) is grist for me. OK?

As to the other topic I mentioned to you, Montana characteristics for my centennial novel, they can be of any time. I pretty much can stand to hear anything you think is interesting about the state and its inmates.

best--will be in touch.

*Meanwhile  
Every good wish,  
Stan Harrison*



Ellen, Nov. 12 '84

Dear "Jick," It was afternoon when the mailman brought EC, and I was well into it by evening. Slept that night in a bedroll, not far from Roman Reef. Have been up that way much of the time since, at rodeos, haying and fire fighting. Not that I knew the country real well before, mostly what one sees from the road to Glacier, and having a generation of friends in Valier. Must say I go along with Stegner's comments on the jacket, and am the more impressed because his praise is not easily won.

Besides the big, overall excellence there are little extras, like the map. I flipped back to it three or four times, had it memorized rest of the way. How many novels I've read which would have gained from a little help with the geography. A particular appeal to me is the way you maintained "unity of place"; as our Lit. teachers used to call it. Vital in a short story, it strengthens a novel too. I like to settle in and watch developments in an area of a few hours on foot or horseback.

Since I do a column for local weekly, I'll try a review on the editor. Previous one was cool to review on Hugo's murder mystery, but think new man will go along. Should be a big readership in this area for EC.

Your note on flyleaf and internal mention were most generous, as is the book itself. As someone has said, a gift is not less appreciated just because it is undeserved. I'm glad to note the jacket's promise of more on the McC's.

Gratefully,

Stan D.

Radio brings news of Dorothy Johnson's obit. Her short things especially were gems.



Dear Stan--Your weather column was terrific. Send a few more of your favorites, would you?

English Creek has been my best seller yet, and reviews (except Missoulian's!) have been dandy. First full week in Jan., I start on the homesteader novel.

If we possibly can, Carol and I hope to spend some leisurely time in Montana, come summer. We'd like to see some of the Dillon country; will alert you if we're on our way. Meanwhile, our best wishes for '85--and do more writing of your own, dammit!





## WESTERN MONTANA COLLEGE OF THE MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Dear Ivan,

Sunday morning seems a good time to write the letter I promised the other day.

Thanks for the info on Myron Brinig. Sort of an old story there-- a few summers ago, in my Mont. Authors class at WMC, we noted H.G. Merriam's praise of B. in Burlingame & Toole. A student from Butte, a Mrs. Rice, knew the neighborhood where he had lived and became interested. On her own, she tracked and back-tracked, located the old man in NY, got into correspondence with him, all in time to share with our class. He was gracious about being remembered, having lived in obscurity so long, seemingly forgotten. Mrs. Rice gave some publicity to the matter, I think including a story on B. in the Butte paper's Sunday supplement.

This must have given the UM prof. the clue, as he re-traced some of her steps, and proclaimed that it was he who had found B., and had restored interest in him and his writings. Mrs. Rice would be justified in feeling annoyed, as I tend to be too. A few years back, someone published a finding that in a ranking of dis-honorable professions, college profs. are surpassed only by protestant ministers. Nevertheless, I am grateful for your tip on the additional work about B., altho' I don't have plans for my own work in that area.

Your own project to collect some Montana lore naturally attracts my interest, but I have one big handicap. Most of my life has been spent in a sort of quadrangle with corners at E. Helena, Msl., Hamilton and Dillon, with only brief excursions to the East Coast, California, Seattle and the Solomon Islands. So I have little means of judging what is unique around here; much that seems routine and normal may really be quite regional, provincial, quaint, and even scary. There is a story of a little green pea, still in its pod, who had no way to know that the rest of the world was not green. However, I'm starting a list of items that seem similar to the samples you furnished, and will have some of them ready before long. Having my awareness stimulated should be good for the brain.

Time outside the Northern Rockies has supplied a related kind of insights-- the pre-formed impressions and expectations of people in other areas when meeting a Montanan. I recall comments and questions in that connection, in the Navy, UC at Berkeley, Wash.D.C., Boston, Seoul, even around Puget Sound. Maybe some of these can be turned around to yield what you have in mind. Will come up with some possibilities by the time of, or before, your visit to MT.

Altho' you didn't solicit any bits about the book currently in production, I might have some material which could be put to use. Able to remember back to c.1916, and having known lots of oldsters whose years ran from c.1860 to my own time, I was at least exposed to a lot of info about how things were. I have Gold Rush ancestors on the paternal side, and Scotch-Irish immigrants (1888) on my mother's, and as a child heard their reminiscences.

Really happy at the award from Cowboy Hall of Fame, which I regard as a genuine outfit. Those people can recognize real presentations of our West, whether in words, pictures or other. Can't say as much for the reviewer in Missoulian, nor for Harrison Lane. Would like to argue with both, on points where they seemed least happy.

You asked how I've wintered-- as local ranchers say, I made it through to grass. Glad you both did, too.

*Stan L.*

DILLON



April 29, '85

Dear Stan--

I don't know what in the hell I was thinking of, or not thinking of, in overlooking you as a source on this homestead novel. Must have you pegged in my mind as an East Helena city slicker, huh? Anyway, yes, I'd much like to talk to you on the homestead era, as well as the stuff I've been writing you about. Let me try figure out a day, maybe in the last week of June, when I can get to Dillon. This'll take a while to become definite, as there's a yet-to-be-determined day of that week that I have to be in Missoula. But I'll get in touch with you as soon as the sbhedule clarifies itself.

I think your mention of what people outside of Montana expected a Montanan to be is very much the kind of thing I'm after for my centennial novel. Will be glad to hear whatever tales you have on that.

This is just a quick line--I'm trying to get underway on the homesteaders again today, after 2 weeks away from them. But I did want to say you're thinking along valuable lines for me; so keep thinking, okay?

best regards





January 2, 1985

Ivan Doig  
17021 Tenth Ave, N.W.  
Seattle, Washington 98177

Dear Ivan:

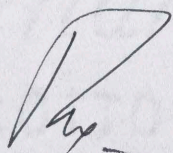
My delay in writing to thank you for the copy of ENGLISH CREEK comes not from a lack of gratitude, but from a personal commitment to have the book read before I wrote. This "deaning" is much like hard work and has taken more of my reading time than I care to admit. Top of the list of good things to do during Christmas vacation was get back to reading and ENGLISH CREEK topped that list.

Sooooo, first -- thanks; next -- congratulations for a community well crafted and people well met. Isak's role fit well and it was a pleasure to encounter him like meeting a previous acquaintance on the street and to share his story briefly again. Your presentation at the Montana History Conference had the same impact -- the feeling that I'd visited Gros Ventre before, wandering its streets with a visual image doubly wrought. Two scenes stand out with particular clarity as I think back on the story. The first is the Fourth of July picnic, enriched by similar events I've attended, including the July 4, 1976 shindig at Townsend, where I was the key speaker. The other event now clear in my mind is the forest fire; enhanced, perhaps, by my personal experiences as a National Guard cook, but vivid on their own through the narrative. I hope the book does well for you and that the next two fit together with ease.

Everything you have heard or read about Montana's winter to date is true, except for the Deaverhead. Our temperatures have stayed mild and if had not been for a strong snow effort mid-December, Christmas would not have been white. My family is in Denver visiting relatives, so I have had the time and solitude to read and cross country ski -- the latter best done in the Helena area. I did a wonderful 10 mile trek yesterday with friends and then stayed in Helena to watch UW take the Orange Bowl. Today in Dillon promises to be a little slow for lack of sleep, but well worth it.

Best wishes for the coming year, and by all means plan to use our spare room as headquarters if you're going to wander this country in 1985.

Sincerely yours,

  
Rex Myers



3 April '85

Dear Stan--

Carol and I made a quick trip to Missoula last week, and I heard a bit of information I wanted to pass along to you. You mentioned once your interest in Myron Brynig (?) my spelling is unsure here), the Butte author. A friend of mine in the UM dept. of English says Earl Ganz of that faculty is also interested in Brynig's work, and indeed interviewed him in New York not too many years ago. If you're going to write anything about him, I thought you should know the existence of those tapes in Missoula.

I've been intending too to seek suggestions from you on another topic. I'm at work now on my homesteader novel, about Jick's grandfather coming from Scotland, but am also trying to think ahead to the third novel of the trilogy, which will return to Jick and take place during Montana's centennial celebrations of 1989. What I want to try in that centennial novel is to mention some of Montana's smaller and pungent historical distinctions. The white crosses that mark highway fatalities, for instance. Maybe the pickup and cars clustered at a roadhead where kids have come from several ranches to catch the schoolbus. The number of bars named The Stockman or The Mint. The propensity for North Dakota jokes. In short, little cultural or historical glitters that catch the eye and tell a person, yeah, you're in Montana now. What I've wanted to ask you is any candidates you might have for this list; any distinctions, oddities, quirks, habits that seem particularly Montanan to you. I'd like to load that centennial book up with a feel of the state, as you mentioned the feel of the country you got from English Creek: any nominees?

I hope you've wintered well. We had our longest coldest one in the 20 years we've been on Puget Sound. Missoula looked yearnful for spring, too. But all is well with us. English Creek has just won the Western Heritage Award as best work of fiction in 1984, from the Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City, so I'm gratified by that.

all best wishes



STAN DAVISON MSS ADDITION 1

University of Montana  
Maureen & Mike Mansfield Library  
Collection # 156



## INVENTORY

### General Correspondence

- 1 - 1 Stan Davison 1956-1982
- 2 Davison to Alex Blewett July 26, 1965
- 3 Stan Davison to Bob Gilluly Feb. 17, 1968
- 4 George Bruffey from James George Feb. 11, 1897
- 5 Bob Gilluly 1967, 1968
- 6 Bertie Lord from Frank Dooley 1952
- 7 Bertie Lord from Sears, Roebuck & Co.
- 8 Bessie K. Monroe 1955, 1956
- 9 Miscellaneous 1898, 1919

### Speeches and Writings

- 10 The Fur Trade
- 11 Lewis & Clark in Northwestern Montana
- 12 Missions

### Subject Files

- 13 1st National Bank, Letters & Papers, Davison & Harry
- 14 Bessie K. Monroe, Battle of the Big Hole
- 15 Bertie Lord, B. Lord's Diary 1886-1889
- 16 Bertie Lord, E. Lord's Diary 1882
- 17 Bertie Lord, E. Lord's Diary 1891-1899
- 18 Bertie Lord, Bertie Lord
- 19 Bertie Lord, The Story of Bertie Lord
- 20 Bertie Lord, Bill of Sale, Hertbert Lord & Stan Davison
- 21 Bertie Lord, Got his first Camera 1889
- 22 Bertie Lord, Names of Creeks
- 23 Bertie Lord, Early Recollections
- 24 Bertie Lord, Envelopes from Fur Companies
- 25 Bertie Lord, 1st Election Upper Bitter Root
- 26 Bertie Lord, Records of Fur Sales 1886-1927
- 27 Bertie Lord, Records of Fur Sales 1929-1947
- 28 Bertie Lord, Fur Tags & Regulations
- 29 Bertie Lord, Lord items left with Bill Lang 7/13/82
- 30 Bertie Lord, Map
- 31 Bertie Lord, Development of Medicine Hot Springs
- 32 Bertie Lord, The Medicine Tree
- 33 Bertie Lord, Early History of Ross Hole, by Mrs. Jake Wetzsteon
- 34 Bertie Lord, Clippings-Birthday Salute July 17, 1958
- 35 Guido Ilges, A Twinkling Star of Success
- 36 Post Office, Tentative Sketch 1865-1870
- 37 Post Office, Complaints on VC Mail, 1866
- 38 Post Office, Bannack Mail 1863
- 39 Post Office, Stage Coach
- 40 Post Office, VC Chronology
- 41 Post Office, Stage Coach Era 1863-1875



### Clippings

- 1 - 42 Bertie Lord  
43 The Centennial's Product is in Great Demand 8/13/05  
44 The Mine and the Smelter of the Pittsmont 8/13/05  
45 Story of the New Process and its Application 8/13/05  
46 The Noblest Red-Man of Them All by Allan Dickinger  
47 Rare Schnitzmeyer Photos are found at Polson 10/28/60

### Miscellany

- 48 Annual Report-County of Jefferson, Dec. 12, 1903  
49 Big Hole Battlefield  
50 Stan Davison receives Award  
51 Index to Fletcher, Free Grass to Fences.  
52 Freight Bill 1919  
53 Howard's Campaign  
54 Interim notes 3/1969  
55 Lewis & Clark Portage of the Great Falls of the Mis-  
souri  
56 List  
57 Material in State Hist. Lt. 1955  
58 Money Orders to Germany 1894  
59 Smith, Eli A. Noted U.S. Mail Carrier and Musher  
60 U of M Agricultural Experiment Station 8/1919  
61 WMC's Russell & Paxson  
62 Colored Map of Exposition Grounds, St. Louis World's  
Fair 1904



Separation Sheet

Books

To Maps:

Rand, McNally & Co's; Pocket Atlas of the World, 1889  
Doan's Directory of the United States

Special Collection:

Campbell's New Revised Complete Guide and Descriptive  
Book of the Yellowstone Park, 1913  
Eighty-one Years in the West George A. Bruffey 1925  
50-Year History: Montana State Board of Health, 1901-  
1951

Others:

History of the Oldest House, Saint Augustine, Florida;  
Under Four Flags 1950  
Simplified Surgery: For use by the General Practitioner  
1913

Photos Transferred to Photo Archives.

Bertie Lord Photos

Transferred to Exhibit Artifacts

1904 Boulder Drug Co. Calender







## Stan Davison

- homesteads: ranchers became farmers
- how many homesteaders made it?
- why'd they try it?
- WWI mood?
- flu epidemic - wd have been better if cold weather; plague

foreigners: Slavic & Balkan, subsistence