

Chapter 17

Copper wars and 500-year plans

The news that the Anaconda Company, a huge multinational mining and metals processing company, would step up to take over the Harvey Machine Co.'s aluminum plans for the Flathead Valley should not have been a surprise for anyone in Montana. The Anaconda Copper Mining Co., or ACM, had been a dominating presence in Montana for about 70 years – they had scientists and engineers, rolling mills and fabricating plants, and loads of cash to invest. When Anaconda officially made its announcement, reactions ran the gamut from harsh political epithets, to acceptance out of necessity, to reluctant support. By 1950, Montanans had become used to Anaconda's vast influence over the state's economy, newspapers and legislature, and it was nicknamed the "Copper Collar." But the company had in many ways grown out of Montana, with copper mines in Chile and Mexico, investments in other metals and a corporate headquarters in far away New York City. Getting into aluminum made sense now that World War II was over and the world's consumer market was poised to take off.

For Rep. Mike Mansfield, the Anaconda story started on Oct. 16, 1951, when he received a telephone call at his Washington, D.C. office from P.G. Spilsbury, a consulting and research engineer with the Anaconda Company. Spilsbury told Mansfield that Anaconda Company Vice President Frank Case wanted to meet with Mansfield to discuss aluminum projects. Spilsbury said Case and Anaconda Chairman Con Kelley had been considering aluminum plans, and Case "wants to get it cleared with you first." Mansfield agreed to meet with Case the next day.¹ That same day, Mansfield and his wife Maureen met for lunch with Anaconda Vice President Roy Glover. According to a memo that Mansfield drafted later, Glover brought up the subject of the Harvey Machine Co.'s interest in an aluminum plant in the Flathead Valley. Glover said he had talked to Kelley and was told a man named "Smith" had come to Kelley with the goal of getting money from Anaconda for an aluminum plant in the Flathead. Mansfield asked Glover if Anaconda was in with "Smith." Glover said no and asked Mansfield whether a meeting between Glover and Jess Larson, head of the General Services Administration, "would create any suspicions." Mansfield replied, "Not any more than has been created already" because some people in the Flathead already believed Anaconda was in with "Smith."²

Filling the Harvey void

“Smith,” it turned out, was the A.J. Smith Engineering Co. of Kalispell, Mont. On Sept. 26, 1951, James Rowe Jr., an attorney in Washington, D.C. who grew up in Butte, Mont., and had spent more than a decade in government service, wrote to GSA Administrator Larson, Defense Mobilizer Charles Wilson, Defense Production Administration Administrator Manly Fleischmann, Reconstruction Finance Corporation Administrator Stuart Symington and Interior Secretary Oscar Chapman to introduce the Kalispell company and its plans to build a 55,000 ton-per-year aluminum smelter in the Flathead Valley. Smith’s group of investors planned to put up \$15 million in equity capital and finance the rest of the construction costs if the U.S. government would furnish reasonable guarantees, Rowe said. Smith was an accomplished engineer with connections in industry but no connections with other aluminum or metallurgy companies – they were primarily a Flathead Valley group, Rowe said.³ Rowe provided more information on the A.J. Smith Engineering Co. in an Oct. 31, 1951, letter to Mansfield with information about plans to build an aluminum smelter in the Flathead Valley. Rowe, who personally knew Mansfield, said he represented Smith along with the Apex and Climax metal and mining companies. The group had considered building an aluminum smelter in the Flathead but had decided against it for reasons Rowe presented in his three-page letter.⁴

The Apex Smelting Co. was not new to the aluminum rumor mill. On Sept. 22, 1950, Don Treloar and J.G. Edmiston, active promoters of an aluminum plant in the Flathead Valley, cited Apex in a talk to the Flathead Industrial Council in Columbia Falls as one of five companies interested in acquiring World War II-surplus aluminum plant equipment.⁵ On Nov. 22, 1950, M.E. Darkenwald, assistant to the president of the Harvey Machine Co., told Treloar that he had recently returned from Washington, D.C., where he learned that the National Security Board had increased its production goal for aluminum from 750,000 tons to 1.2 million tons, to be divided between Alcoa at 30%, Kaiser at 30%, Reynolds at 30% and Harvey together with newcomer Apex at 10%.⁶ Founded in 1923, Apex produced 70,000 tons of secondary aluminum per year in Chicago and Cleveland. In 1951, Apex obtained a letter of intent to supply aluminum to the government along with a certificate of necessity to build aluminum producing facilities in the Texas Gulf area.⁷

Apex intended to build a smelter with a capacity of 54,000 tons, an alumina refinery with a capacity of 125,000 tons and a gas-fired electrical generating plant. Apex’s plan continued right up to the final contract stages when it decided to abandon the entire project.⁸ The Climax Molybdenum Co. operated a large metal mine in Colorado. The two companies didn’t become aluminum producers for more than a decade. In 1957,

Climax merged with the American Metal Co. to form a new company known as Amax. In 1962, Amax, a long-time U.S. copper producer, entered the U.S. aluminum fabrication industry by acquiring Kawneer Co. and Apex. Both Kaiser and Alcan had tried to acquire Apex but had been halted by the U.S. Justice Department. Amax then acquired Hunter Engineering Co., a major producer of wrought products, in 1963 and the Johnston Foil Co. in 1965. Amax finally turned to primary aluminum production with its new division, Alumax, starting with a smelter in Ferndale, Wash., in 1966.⁹

Rowe told Mansfield that Smith, Apex and Climax had planned to purchase alumina from Reynolds at \$64 per ton, including freight costs to the Flathead, once Reynolds had obtained federal funds to expand capacity at its alumina refinery. The group hoped to get the cost of alumina down to \$60 per ton with assistance from Larson at the General Services Administration, but after crunching the numbers they found that even if the cost dropped to \$58, they couldn't pay off the \$50 million loan for the new smelter for 50 years, based on current aluminum prices. "We found that, to an amazing extent, the cheap power rate was canceled out by the exorbitant freight rates," Rowe said. The tax amortization certificate provided by the government would be of little help because the group couldn't make sufficient profits in the first five years to utilize the federal benefit. But the same situation might not apply to Olin Industries, "a closely held family corporation of great wealth," Rowe said. Olin had recently set up a \$35 million plant to manufacture cellophane, Rowe told Mansfield, and they made huge profits that either could go to taxes or to an investment. Olin could make good use of a five-year tax amortization benefit to pay off its investment in a new aluminum smelter and keep the profits. "Of course, the Anaconda Company could do the same thing," Rowe noted.¹⁰

Rowe said he and Smith went to talk with Olin and Billiton – the Dutch-based company that would sell Dutch Guianese bauxite to Olin. "Everyone assumes that the Harveys are out, and by everyone I mean both the government and the industry," he said. Rowe summed up several points to Mansfield – 1) cheap power was not enough, 2) "Montana must lick its freight rate problem, which is a tough hard-boiled struggle which will take some years," and 3) Larson must be made to give concessions to the small independents. Rowe said both Climax and Apex were concerned about competing with the Big 3 aluminum producers – Alcoa, Reynolds and Kaiser. The independents faced an unfair disadvantage – for every dollar they put up to build a new plant, the Big 3 got war-surplus plants for 18 cents. Rowe said his group could have worked out a favorable deal to enter the U.S. aluminum industry if Larson had offered a seven-year contract instead of five, or if Larson forced Reynolds to provide cheaper alumina. He noted that the Justice Department's Anti-Trust Division had been pushing Larson to do exactly those things. Instead, Larson had been giving the Big 3 "most favored nation" clauses,

and the Anti-Trust Division attorneys “were astounded because they said Larson had promised them he would not.”¹¹

Mansfield, however, was suspicious of the A.J. Smith Engineering Co. proposal, as evidenced by his questioning of Glover on Oct. 16, 1951. Four days earlier, the Hungry Horse News had published an article by publisher Mel Ruder about the Kalispell-based company. Ruder reported that James Murphy, president of the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce, had joined Treloar on Oct. 11, 1951, in publicly denouncing Smith, saying the company’s actions confused local efforts to promote construction of an aluminum plant in the valley. According to Murphy and Treloar, Smith had made applications to the Defense Production Administration and the Defense Metals Procurement Agency for permission to build a 55,000 ton-per-year smelter using Hungry Horse Dam power. Murphy and Treloar argued that Smith was known to locals as a promoter who once promised to build a large hotel in Kalispell but never did and was merely obstructing efforts by the Harvey Machine Co. The two men also accused Smith of secretly working for either the Big 3 aluminum companies or western power utilities companies that wanted to steal away power generated from the Hungry Horse Dam.¹²

Rowe, however, was a few days ahead of the Hungry Horse News. On Oct. 5, 1951, he wrote to Larson to dispel two rumors about the A.J. Smith Engineering Co. Smith was not working for the Anaconda Company, Rowe told Larson, and Smith was not financially irresponsible. Rowe provided the names of nine bankers, attorneys and businessmen who could vouch for Smith, including Gray Edmiston, president of the Conrad National Bank in Kalispell, and James Murphy, an attorney and president of the Kalispell Chamber of Commerce.¹³ Mansfield must have noticed that Murphy was being cited by both sides on Smith. To make matters more confusing, Mansfield received conflicting information from Interior Secretary Oscar Chapman during an October 1951 phone call. “I think it is a good group,” Chapman said about Smith Engineering. “I would support it very strongly. They seem to have the know-how, they got the money, and I trust them and I would recommend them.” Attached to the transcript for this phone call in Mansfield’s files was a note card with no author’s name or date that stated: “Roy Glover stated that Mr. Kelley had agreed to privately finance Mr. Smith, then after about 4 years Smith could default and Anaconda would come in then and buy him out.”

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Mansfield shared some of the information he had learned during his Oct. 16, 1951, luncheon with his wife Maureen and Anaconda Vice President Roy Glover. Harvey had talked to Anaconda about doing business together in 1950, Glover said, but Anaconda “could not see their way clear to do business with him.” Anaconda would be interested in an aluminum plant in the Flathead if Harvey was turned down, Glover added.

Mansfield noted that Kennecott Copper, Curtiss-Wright and Olin Industries were also interested and ready to go in the Flathead on a cash basis. That drew a response from Glover – if Kennecott was interested, then Anaconda “would be more interested.” Anaconda would finance a smelter in the Flathead with its own money and use fabricating facilities in Great Falls for the aluminum metal, providing year-round work, Glover said. Anaconda had \$130 million available for the project, he added. Mansfield said he wanted to wait for the outcome of Rep. Porter Hardy’s subcommittee investigation of Harvey’s federal loan application before providing support. Glover noted that Paul Raver, the administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration, had told him Harvey had a 20-year firm commitment for power, and if Harvey was turned down on the federal loan, Harvey could be subject to a lawsuit by the BPA.¹⁵

The next day, Mansfield met with Spilsbury and Case to discuss aluminum projects. Mansfield later wrote that he explained the Harvey Machine Co. case to date and concluded, “Harvey is in until he is out.” He also told the Anaconda men about other companies interested in aluminum projects in Montana, including the Smith group, Kennecott Copper, Curtiss-Wright and Olin Industries. Case asked Mansfield if he thought it would be all right for him to meet with Larson about their plans. Mansfield said it was all right as far as he was concerned, but “even if it wasn’t all right, they would anyway.” Case said no, they wanted Mansfield’s approval. Mansfield said Anaconda had as much right to go see Larson as Smith.¹⁶ Later that day, Don Treloar, as president of the Flathead Valley Citizens Committee, spoke with Mansfield over the phone about Harvey’s plans for the Flathead Valley. “I think the Anaconda Company is interested in this project as I see it on their own,” Mansfield said. “Representatives were down here today to see me. I told them as far as I am concerned, Harvey was in until he was out.” Mansfield also asked Treloar to come to Washington, D.C. to help with the House investigation of Harvey’s \$46 million RFC loan.¹⁷

The ‘copper collar’

Rowe wrote to Mansfield on Nov. 4, 1951, about reports that Anaconda was teaming up with Harvey to build an aluminum plant in Flathead County. Mansfield was in Paris at the time for a United Nations summit. “When you get back from Paris, I want you to wrap up that copper collar you gave me and mail it to your friend Don Treloar,” Rowe commented. He then referred to the fight Mansfield had with the Montana Power Co., which was controlled by Anaconda, when Mansfield tried to get the Hungry Horse Dam built. “All the work that you did to build Hungry Horse now goes to the Anaconda crowd that fought you for five years. Also, they have convinced the government that you are in favor of this project.” Rowe closed his letter strongly. “It makes me slightly ill, and I hope it does you, too.”¹⁸

The Anaconda Copper Mining Company publicly announced that it had purchased 95% of the Harvey Machine Company's interest in plans to build an aluminum plant near Columbia Falls on Nov. 5, 1951. The original plan, according to Con Kelley, the Anaconda chairman, called for a \$45 million plant.¹⁹ In November 1951, according to Standard and Poor's, the Anaconda Company's assets were twice those of Kaiser and Reynolds combined and substantially larger than those of Alcoa. Anaconda's assets totaled \$698.6 million, while Alcoa's totaled \$575.3 million.²⁰ On Nov. 6, 1951, an editorial in the Hungry Horse News noted, "At least ACM, curse them if you will, is not afraid to invest in Montana."²¹

Nationally-syndicated columnist Drew Pearson was no fan of the Anaconda Company, and he dug into the copper company once it became known that it would take over Harvey's aluminum project in the Flathead. On Nov. 4, 1951, Pearson commented on the need for aluminum for defense purposes. "The aluminum shortage is so bad that the government is planning to import thousands of tons of aluminum from Japan," Pearson said. "Incidentally, the Harvey Machine Company, whose war record I once called attention to, has a far, far better record than the Anaconda Copper Company, now reported entering the aluminum business. Anaconda was convicted and given a suspended sentence for concealing war frauds against the Army and Navy."²² One week later, Pearson accused the Truman administration of awarding cheap federal power from the Hungry Horse Dam to Anaconda "despite vigorous objections by Truman's own justice department that the contract violates the principle of the Sherman anti-trust act." Pearson went on to claim that the Anaconda Wire and Cable Company had been convicted twice of fraud during World War II for selling defective wire. Pearson noted that Harvey's record "was saintlike compared to Anaconda's." The popular columnist went on to claim that Harvey had resisted Anaconda's offers at first, but then the government served notice that it would take back all the priorities given to Harvey for materials and power from the Hungry Horse Dam. That's when Harvey agreed to be Anaconda's junior partner and get "swallowed up," Pearson claimed. He also claimed the decision by the government to go with Anaconda was made by Manly Fleischmann, the Defense Production Administration chief whose right-hand man was an Anaconda-paid official.²³

Ruder continued his editorializing about Anaconda on Nov. 9, 1951. "For 18 months here in the Flathead, we've had our hopes raised skyward, and then smashed down when it came to creating a sizeable year-around local industry," he said. Harvey didn't possess enough finances of its own and had planned all along to use federal money to get the plant started, Ruder explained. Harvey employed lobbyists in Washington, D.C., but their public relations efforts were "extremely shabby" in the Flathead Valley, he noted. "Yet we wanted Harvey. They seemed the best bet toward giving this valley a

good industrial payroll that wouldn't be just a war plant. It was in again, out again, and Harvey never seemed able to make the grade," Ruder wrote. Harvey had lined up a commitment for 111 megawatts of electrical power from the BPA along with some possible tax write-offs from the federal government, and these assets were used by Harvey when it bargained with Anaconda for a share in the plant. Anaconda offered the Flathead a whole new prospect. The company had sufficient capital to finance the project on its own, and it could use the aluminum it produced in the Flathead at its own fabricating plants. Ruder praised the economic benefits brought by Anaconda to Great Falls but pointed out the potential problems from having so large a corporation in the Flathead Valley. "A year ago our thought might have been, let's have another large corporation here, there's enough ACM in Montana," Ruder said. "After 18 months of in again, out again, Harvey, we're glad to see ACM come. It is fashionable to cuss big business, but a little fellow ordinarily doesn't operate an industry that provides stable steady jobs. That's what we want here."²⁴

The Hungry Horse News reported that same day that Anaconda was seeking final approval from the federal government for construction of a \$40 million 3-potline aluminum smelter with a capacity of 54,000 tons per year using the company's own financing. Harvey's commitments for electrical equipment from the Westinghouse Electric Corp., for steel from the Bethlehem Steel Company and for 111 megawatts of electrical power from the BPA were all bargaining chips for a share in the new plant. Under the agreement between the two companies, Harvey would have the opportunity to purchase aluminum from the Anaconda smelter for the life of the plant. Anaconda would take over most or all of Harvey's contracts and then finance, build and operate the plant. Glover told the newspaper that Anaconda was using a considerable amount of aluminum in its fabricating plants already and was interested in developing its own supply. The new plant, Glover assured the public, would not be a "war baby" and would operate in peace time as well. Anaconda's extensive worldwide network of sales, its history of successful manufacturing and its access to technical know-how were all considered important assets to entering the aluminum industry. The newspaper also reported that the Rose Crossing site near Kalispell would probably not be used by Anaconda because of poor drainage and a high water table.²⁵ Construction would start as soon as necessary clearances were available from Washington for critical materials, Kelley said.²⁶ By mid-November 1951, there was talk that natural gas from Alberta might be brought into the Flathead Valley to generate power for the new plant. The Glacier Gas Company, a subsidiary of the Montana Power Co., had terminated a plan to run a pipeline from the Pincher Creek natural gas fields in Alberta through the Flathead Valley to Spokane.²⁷

The International Union of Mine, Mill & Smelter Workers in Butte quickly followed up with a telegram to Washington in support of the proposed smelter, saying, "This plant is badly needed in western Montana both to utilize power to be developed by Montana water in Montana and to afford employment in the area involved, which so depends upon seasonal industries, and to produce badly needed metal for our domestic economy and for defense." The telegram went on to say that Anaconda's organization and plants around Montana "will ensure that the proposed plant will continue to operate for the benefit of the American economy, the state of Montana and the workers of Montana and elsewhere in the years to come." The plant "will not have the status of a war baby and fold up after the emergency, as would undoubtedly occur if the plant were in the hands of some company without such facilities as fortunately Anaconda has," the telegram concluded.²⁸

Animosity toward Anaconda soon turned into negative rumors. By mid-November 1951, stories were circulating in Columbia Falls that the Anaconda Company might relocate its proposed aluminum smelter to the town of Anaconda instead of the Flathead Valley. On Nov. 21, 1951, Glover reported that he was aware of the rumors and wanted to emphatically refute them – the company planned to build the new plant in the Flathead Valley, he said. The deciding factor was inexpensive electrical power from the nearby Hungry Horse Dam. Meanwhile that same day in Washington, the Defense Production Administration was awaiting word from the Federal Trade Commission of its concerns about Anaconda's move into the aluminum industry. The FTC worried about the impact on the economy of having one of the top three copper producers becoming a big aluminum producer. But by that time, a representative from a large construction firm based in Butte already had visited the Flathead to inquire about the availability of cement finishers, iron workers and laborers, as well as the prevailing wages in the area.

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Mansfield was asked for his opinion of Anaconda on Nov. 14, 1951, while he was in Paris at a United Nations summit. Fred Klein, a Time-Life staff correspondent, wanted to know if Mansfield was "first pro-Harvey, then violently anti-Harvey following Drew Pearson's disclosure of skullduggery at Harvey's Los Angeles plant during World War II," and would Mansfield now support the Anaconda-Harvey deal. Mansfield provided Klein with a four-page answer providing all the details he had accumulated over the past few months about Harvey's application for a federal loan. He noted that Harvey was the first company to show interest in power from the Hungry Horse Dam and the first to get a firm power deal from the BPA. Mansfield explained that he had met with Defense Mobilizer Wilson and Interior Secretary Chapman in August 1951 and urged them to close the Harvey loan request, and he urged them to put all the cards on the table. He said he was very much disturbed by Pearson's allegations about fraud during World War

II and later Rep. John Saylor's allegations. Mansfield also referred to an eight-part series he had entered in the Congressional Record about the aluminum industry in Montana. He said his main interest all along was to promote industry in Montana and that he was never anti-Harvey.³⁰

Sen. James Murray weighed in on the matter on Nov. 29, 1951, when he informed the Hungry Horse News that Anaconda's effort to win approval for a new aluminum plant in the Flathead Valley needed more local support. He encouraged unions, service clubs and other organizations in the valley to send telegrams and letters to Washington. Opposition to the company's plan to use public power from Hungry Horse Dam was growing and included Interior Secretary Chapman and former Interior Secretary Harold Ickes. Furthermore, the Justice Department had informed DPA Administrator Fleischmann that Anaconda's move into the aluminum industry violated anti-trust laws. The anti-trust argument was considered weak by some, Murray said. Complicating matters was Sen. Murray's long history of opposition to Anaconda, but his son Charles Murray noted that his father recognized that Anaconda offered the best chance for getting an aluminum plant built and operating in Montana.³¹

Newsweek reported on the federal government's anti-trust concerns over Anaconda on Nov. 11, 1951. The Justice Department had "demanded" a newcomer to compete with the Big 3. According to Assistant Attorney General H. Graham Morrison, "The golden opportunity to get some competition, while the defense program is in full swing, may not come again." The Anaconda Copper Mining Company might not be the best fit for anti-trust purposes, but any company seeking to enter the aluminum industry would need a lot of money, and ACM had that, the article concluded. On Nov. 19, 1951, Defense Mobilizer Charles Wilson said the government was looking for a small company to get into the aluminum production business and increase competition, but "I haven't found any small company with \$100 million willing to go into business."³² On Nov. 23, 1951, Jess Larson, by then head of the Defense Procurement Agency, explained to Mansfield's office that the Justice Department "appears to have some reservations as to the desirability" of Anaconda teaming up with Harvey to build an aluminum plant in the Flathead. Larson said he understood that Anaconda would buy up the majority interest in the new plant, but he also expected the issues would be resolved soon.³³ On Dec. 6, 1951, however, Morrison wrote to Larson stating that he was misinformed about the Justice Department's position on a proposed joint Harvey-Anaconda aluminum plant. There were anti-trust issues and an investigation was ongoing, Morrison said.³⁴

Headlines in Flathead newspapers announced on Nov. 30, 1951, that conspiracy charges were being made against the Anaconda Company regarding its aluminum plant plans. Interior Secretary Oscar Chapman and members of the Justice Department reportedly

were recommending against the company's move into the aluminum industry on anti-trust grounds.³⁵ The next day, a group of 79 local men met in Columbia Falls to show their support for Anaconda's plans. Many of the men hoped to get jobs at the plant once it was running. A letter-writing campaign began shortly afterwards, addressed to President Truman and other officials in Washington. A Dec. 7, 1951, editorial in the Hungry Horse News included portions of a letter sent by Robert Wilz, a former Navy machinist who had worked on the Hungry Horse Dam and hoped to find a job at a new aluminum plant.³⁶

The final decision on whether Anaconda could use public power from the Hungry Horse Dam for an aluminum plant would come from President Harry Truman, the Hungry Horse News reported on Dec. 6, 1951. Truman would base his decision on advice from Defense Mobilizer Wilson and DPA Administrator Fleischmann. According to a memo written by Newell A. Clapp, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Anti-trust Division, "It would appear that Anaconda would be interested in preserving its position in copper rather than in furnishing the competition which is badly needed in the present three-producer, extremely concentrated primary aluminum industry." Word from Sen. Murray was that the Justice Department's case against Anaconda was weak, and that the company's entry into the aluminum industry could actually increase competition. Interior Secretary Chapman reportedly questioned whether he had the legal authority to transfer a commitment of 111 megawatts of BPA power from Harvey to Anaconda.³⁷

From the beginning, Chapman had supported using Hungry Horse Dam power for an aluminum smelter in the Flathead, but his position changed once Anaconda entered the picture. It was suggested that his opposition to Anaconda grew out of the Montana Power Co.'s heated opposition to construction of the Hungry Horse Dam. Chapman saw a company that opposed building the dam now reaping benefits from the dam's completion. In an effort to get the aluminum plant built and have Anaconda pushed aside, forces in Washington reportedly were trying to coax the Olin Corp. into building the plant. Olin had run an aluminum smelter in Tacoma during World War II and was actively seeking to re-enter the aluminum industry, albeit in Texas using natural gas-fired generators. Meanwhile, President Truman was vacationing in Key West, Fla., where a "flood" of telegrams from Flathead Valley residents backing Anaconda had arrived.³⁸

Anaconda gets the nod

On Dec. 13, 1951, word reached the Flathead that President Truman and Fleischmann at the Defense Production Administration had approved Anaconda's application for the

construction of a \$45 million aluminum smelter in the Flathead Valley. DPA was the top federal agency for approval of such plants, but Anaconda still needed a large power contract with the BPA.³⁹ Fleischmann said he considered both the Justice Department's anti-trust arguments against Anaconda and the Interior Department's legal problems in transferring electrical power from Harvey to Anaconda to be weak. That afternoon, Mansfield received a letter from President Truman which said, "The contract for the aluminum plant has been approved and will be carried through to a proper confirmation." News of the approval spread quickly throughout the Flathead, and many of the residents who had participated in a letter-writing campaign in support of Anaconda felt like a part of the new industry. Reports from Washington were that the letter-writing campaign had been noticed in the White House.⁴⁰

Ruder discussed the political and economic ramifications of Anaconda's plans in a Dec. 21, 1951, editorial. Ruder pointed out how the company's leaders "jealously guard their interests during legislative sessions at Helena," adding that "we would think more of them if they didn't own five daily newspapers." Overall, however, Ruder was glad that Anaconda took on the responsibility to get the plant built.⁴¹ One week later, Treloar wrote to Mansfield about Anaconda's plans. "While some of us are disappointed that Anaconda is moving into this area, it appears that we have no other company in Montana which can meet the challenge," he said. "I am personally content with the arrangement that has been worked out, and I feel that Anaconda has a great opportunity to demonstrate its integrity and ability in the metals field for the good of the people of this area and the entire state."⁴² Ruder followed up on that thought on Jan. 4, 1952, with an editorial titled "Valley with Wasted Hours." As the Flathead Valley settled into the depths of winter, 2,000 unemployed workers sat out the season. While Anaconda's new aluminum plant would make a difference, Ruder also blamed the local chambers of commerce, labor unions, businessmen and citizens for "lack of enterprise and vision. Of course it is easy to blame it on the weather, but that doesn't help a man eat."⁴³

By late-December 1951, as the Flathead economy slowed down for winter, information about Anaconda's plans grew scarce. The latest word was that the smelter would be built at Rose Crossing, a site close to Kalispell chosen earlier by Harvey, while others believed the plant would be relocated to a more suitable industrial site.⁴⁴ But the Rose Crossing site was not settled business. In mid-January 1952, engineers from companies interested in bidding on the plant's construction were seen looking over two possible sites – below Teakettle Mountain and in Coram. Altogether, four sites were still possible. Land-purchase options for 600 acres of land in Coram had already been secured, and Harvey still had options to purchase land on a flat below Teakettle Mountain. A new site was on F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Company land north of its mill

at Half Moon. W.C. Rae, an Anaconda land and tax commissioner, said the sites would be tested for subsoil drainage and other characteristics once weather improved.⁴⁵ On Jan. 25, 1952, Rae said he had no idea where the new plant might be located and that the decision would likely be made by engineers. Wherever it went, Rae said, the valley would benefit from property tax revenue and a large new payroll, he noted.⁴⁶

No evidence of construction was seen for several long months. On Feb. 26, 1952, Glover wrote to Mansfield to inform him that ACM was still working on the plant's design and negotiating with Reynolds Metals Co. for an alumina contract.⁴⁷ On June 24, 1952, Glover told Mansfield over the phone that ACM was still waiting to sign an alumina supply contract with Reynolds Metals. Glover added that in a recent conversation with Lewis Reynolds, he learned that Reynolds Metals was interested in joining 23 other companies to build a 220,000 ton-per-year aluminum smelter in West Virginia near coal deposits. Reynolds asked Glover if Anaconda was interested in abandoning their Montana project and joining the West Virginia project, but Anaconda turned them down, Glover said.⁴⁸ Then on Aug. 30, 1952, Anaconda announced it would build its new smelter at the foot of Teakettle Mountain. The land purchased for the plant included 280 acres owned by Henry Larkin and Mrs. Marion Hellen, 160 acres owned by Bernard S. Tracey, 238 acres owned by Pat Kelly, and 70 acres owned by Edwin Johnson. Prices ranged from \$10 to \$25 per acre with remuneration for buildings. The land consisted primarily of second-growth timber and a few small fields. According to the Hungry Horse News, the land was not supporting a single family.⁴⁹

Anaconda Chairman Con Kelley explained the choice in an Aug. 30, 1952, press release. "The site originally acquired by the Harvey Machine Company was located in the center of the agricultural area of the Flathead valley, and considerable apprehension was expressed by some residents of the area as to possible crop or livestock damage as a result of emanations from the plant," Kelley said. "These feelings of concern were without foundation, as it is the intention that the plant shall be completely modern in design, so that no damage of any kind will result from its operation. However, in order to completely satisfy these apprehensions, even though unfounded, it was concluded to move the plant location to the Columbia Falls area." The aluminum plant would sit on a bench high above the Flathead River and adjacent to the Great Northern Railroad main line. Owners of the 750-acre site where the new plant would be built had been notified. The company had secured options on the land in January 1952, but these options would expire on Sept. 9 and 10, 1952.⁵⁰ Kelley pointed out that a supply of alumina had been located for the new plant – the Reynolds Metals Company would supply alumina from its refinery at Corpus Christi, Texas. He also said steps were underway to change the name of the Montana-based company that would build, own and operate the plant to the Anaconda Aluminum Company.⁵¹

On Oct. 1, 1952, the Montana Secretary of State's office authorized the Harvey Machine Company of Montana to change its name and place of business to the Anaconda Aluminum Company of Butte. The firm was cleared to issue 500,000 shares of capital stock. Assets purchased by Anaconda from Harvey included ownership in part and options on 1,000 acres of land at Rose Crossing, which had been put up for sale by October 1952. Meanwhile, six homes for Anaconda staff members were slated for construction on land owned by the Hoerner brothers in Columbia Falls.⁵²

Anaconda in the Flathead

Cornelius Francis Kelley, chairman of the board of the Anaconda Company, had long ties to the Flathead Valley. He described his connections to Northwest Montana in Nov. 6 and 7, 1951, telegrams to Glover while commenting on the conclusion of negotiations between Anaconda and the Harvey. "You know the deep and abiding interest which I have had for more than 40 years in Kalispell and the Flathead Valley, where I have made my home, and I know how earnestly the people of the valley and Kalispell have welcomed the idea of establishing a growing industry in that community, and how long they have eagerly awaited the outcome of the negotiations between Harvey Machine Company and the government for the establishment of an aluminum plant in connection with the development of the Hungry Horse dam," he said.⁵³ Kelley was staying at his home on Swan Lake on Aug. 30, 1952, when Anaconda announced its decision about the Teakettle Mountain site. He sent a messenger to a crossroads in Creston, halfway to Columbia Falls, to meet with Ruder and provide the news.⁵⁴

Kelley first came to Montana in 1883 when his father, Jeremiah C. Kelley, brought the family from San Francisco to Butte, where he worked as a mine developer and associate of Marcus Daly, the founder of the Anaconda Company.⁵⁵ Cornelius "Con" Kelley graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1898. Three years later, he joined Anaconda's legal department. In 1918, Kelley was elected president of the company, a position he held for more than 20 years.⁵⁶ Kelley was acquainted with Daly, who had tried to talk Kelley out of law school and had offered Kelley an all-expenses-paid education at the Columbia School of Mines. Kelley learned much about mining while working in Anaconda's engineering department before moving to the legal department. By 1908, he became chief counsel for the company. After 1920, as president, Kelley helped Anaconda expand into Chile and Mexico as well as diversify into manganese, zinc, aluminum, uranium and silver.⁵⁷

In 1904, after conducting numerous court cases for Anaconda while maintaining a private practice, including litigation against Augustus Heinze, one of the three Copper Kings, Kelley was hired on a full-time basis by the company's president, William Scallon.

That same year, Scallon resigned and was replaced by John D. Ryan.⁵⁸ Kelley, who was exposed to the world of high finance by Ryan, was appointed secretary of the Anaconda Company in 1905. To the miners of Butte, Kelley represented the last tenuous ties to the old Marcus Daly regime, and while the trust between miners and Kelley at times could be strained, the miners generally trusted Kelley. He hobnobbed with the miners and filled his listeners with Irish “blarney” at social functions, even dancing an Irish jig and singing “Has Anybody Here Seen Kelley?” In his new position, Kelley continued his legal responsibilities for the company, including handling the Smoke Cases in 1905 to 1909. Kelley was elected vice president of all Western operations in 1911.⁵⁹

Kelley’s ties to the Flathead went back to 1906 when Lewis Orvis Evans visited Swan Lake for the first time. Evans and Kelley were Anaconda’s top lawyers. Evans was on a fishing trip and celebrating Anaconda’s legal victory in the last of the so-called Copper Wars. A few years later, he and Kelley took up joint interest in 137 acres of land at the north end of the lake where it drained into the Swan River. By 1911, Kelley was vice-president and Evans had become chief counsel for both Anaconda and the Montana Power Co.⁶⁰ From 1910 to 1930, Kelley and Evans built a 14,000-square-foot lodge and numerous guest cabins on the north side of Johnson Creek using nearby cedar and larch trees. The main lodge had five bedrooms, a reception area, a library and smoking room and a grand hall. The lodge was designed by Kirtland Cutter, the architect who had designed the Lake McDonald Lodge in Glacier Park and the Conrad Mansion in Kalispell. Electric power was provided by a generator using water power from Johnson Creek. While there, Kelley often rode his \$5,000 thoroughbred named Midnight, which reputedly nobody else could tame. Other guests rode to nearby Horseshoe or Loon lakes, which Evans had regularly stocked with fish. At its height, Kootenai Camp had grown to 2,700 acres, including accommodations for 50 guests, a 30-stall barn, a six-car garage, a polo field, two tennis courts and a children’s play area.⁶¹

The Anaconda Company had other ties to the Flathead. The company held timber lands across the state to provide lumber for its huge underground mines. Over the years, it also had acquired farmland. In September 1913, the company announced plans to sell all the farmland it owned in Flathead and Lincoln counties. The intention was to sell the land to settlers who would put the land to use, not speculation. The Blackfoot Farm Development Co. would handle all the sales, a local newspaper reported. The land would not be listed for sale – settlers would have to come forward with plans to use the land. Anaconda was expected to hold title to any land with heavy timber. Thousands of acres of land good for raising stock would no longer be idle, the newspaper reported.⁶²

Kelley became president of Anaconda and moved to New York City in 1918, but Evans declined such a position so he could remain in Montana. In its early years, the Swan

Lake property was a rustic fishing camp with log cabins. Travel to the site from Butte was difficult and involved a train ride to Ravalli, a stagecoach ride across the Flathead Indian Reservation to Polson, a steamboat trip up Flathead Lake to Bigfork, followed by a wagon ride on logging trails that followed the Swan River upstream to Swan Lake. Over time, the property was developed into what was called the Kootenai Lodge and travel to the site improved. By June 1920, visitors traveled in Kelley's private railroad car, The Anacondan, to Whitefish where chauffeur-driven automobiles met the guests and hired help. Servants at the lodge included a British butler and a French maid, along with a parlor maid, cook, pastry cook, nursemaid and porter. Two trucks accompanied the automobiles carrying dozens of suitcases, steamer trunks and a large silver chest containing a place setting for 50 people. As many as 70 people worked at the Kootenai Lodge, including two woodcutters who also fetched ice for the coolers, several gardeners who tended 32 acres of lawn, vegetable gardens and greenhouses, three stable hands, a watchman and two full-time chauffeurs. The Kootenai Lodge motor pool at one time included a \$5,000 yellow Pierce Arrow limousine, a black Packard with a built-in bar and a 1918 Pierce Arrow roadster.⁶³

Guests at the lodge typically wore formal attire at all times, including evening gowns and tweed business suits. Boat rides on the lake took place in the late afternoon in expensive and powerful Chris Crafts that Kelley bought at New York boat shows. Rumors about the lodge became local legends over the years. Guests were said to include Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands, Charles Lindbergh, John D. Rockefeller and Will Rogers. Evans' daughter Elizabeth Stadler later denied those accounts, but she did confirm that Charlie Russell was a frequent guest, and film actresses Dorothy McGuire and Jane Wyatt had visited the lodge. Evans once organized a trip to Lindbergh Lake in the Mission Range for Charles Lindbergh shortly after he completed his solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927.⁶⁴ Locals provided the Anaconda officials and their guests with fruit, berries, vegetables, poultry, eggs, cream and milk.⁶⁵

Evans died at the age of 51 in 1931. Kelley and his wife Mary continued to visit the lodge into the 1950s. She died in 1955. In 1968, the Kootenai Lodge and its 2,400 acres were sold by the Kelley heirs to the Stoltze Land & Lumber Co. for \$650,000. Stoltze harvested the prime timber from the land and then divided the property into building lots. At the time the property was sold, it included a main lodge built of logs with a high-ceilinged 50-foot by 75-foot lounge and six 25-foot square bedrooms with individual fireplaces. There were numerous cabins with accommodations for 50 guests. All told, there were 33 bathrooms on the property. The main barn had 31 stalls, and the garage could hold 10 vehicles. There were also a greenhouse and cottages for the manager and his staff.⁶⁶ The lodge was put on the National Historical Register in the 1980s. By early 2005, plans were in the works to build 57 condominium units at the historical site.⁶⁷

John Ryan died on Feb. 10, 1933, and Kelley assumed a “patriarchal position” at the Anaconda Company. Kelley became chairman of the board on April 30, 1940.⁶⁸ Kelley held the post until 1955, as he became known as “Mr. Anaconda.”⁶⁹ Kelley announced his retirement during the annual stockholders meeting in the town of Anaconda on May 18, 1955. The company was 60 years old by then and had grown from \$30 million in capitalization to having \$673 million in assets.⁷⁰ Kelley remained head of Anaconda’s executive committee. Over his 39 years as the top executive at Anaconda, he had led the company from its beginnings as a Montana operation to a world-wide corporation with investments across the U.S. and in South America.⁷¹ Although Kelley was credited with helping the company grow strong after the Great Depression and through World War II, he was also criticized for clinging to the “old ways,” the so-called “iron-fisted political methods.” Kelley’s experiment in block caving for low-grade copper ore in Butte was considered a failure, and eventually the company turned to open-pit mining. Kelley’s death marked the end of the era of the Copper Kings.⁷² He died at 82 on May 12, 1957, in New York City. A solemn requiem mass was held at St. Patrick’s Cathedral on May 14, 1957.⁷³ In 1957, the supervisor of the Flathead National Forest proposed that a prominent 7,000-foot mountain near Swan Lake be named Con Kelley Mountain. In June 1960, the Board of Geographic Names approved the naming.⁷⁴

The Anaconda myth

Through the first half of the 20th century, Anaconda’s scientific and technological skills had enabled it to make “500-year plans” for developing mineral discoveries all over the world, according to a January 1972 Forbes article, but the company’s management never followed through on many of those plans.⁷⁵ One involved aluminum production in the Flathead. The Anaconda Company first became interested in the production of alumina and eventually aluminum in 1914. The company’s top metallurgist, Frederick Laist, working with his associate, Russel B. Caples, looked into the possibility of producing alumina from slime flotation tailings produced as a waste product at the company’s huge reduction works at the town of Anaconda.⁷⁶ Laist had joined the Anaconda Company in 1904. He graduated from the College of Chemistry at the University of California in 1901 and taught chemistry at the University of Utah in 1903. From his first job at Anaconda in the laboratory and testing department, he rose to chief chemist, blast furnace superintendent, general superintendent, metallurgical manager for all Montana plants, general manager at Anaconda and Great Falls, general metallurgical manager for all Anaconda Company properties, and finally vice-president in charge of metallurgical operations.⁷⁷

Laist and Caples’ investigation was delayed by World War I and in the end proved infeasible, but the knowledge gained from the investigation led to new ideas about

producing alumina from clays mined near Spokane, Wash. The new process was tested at a pilot plant erected in Anaconda in 1915 through 1920. The results of the tests led to the belief that if sufficient alumina could be produced, electric power could be generated in Flathead County to power an aluminum smelting plant. The whole plan was abandoned when the cost of producing alumina from the Washington clays was compared with the lower cost of producing alumina from bauxite mined in Arkansas. The investigation of clays found near Moscow, Idaho, with higher concentrations of aluminum than the clays located near Spokane revived the plan for an alumina refinery in Montana in 1955 after the new smelter in Columbia Falls had begun operating. Plans were made for another pilot plant to be built in Anaconda in 1957 to test a process for producing alumina from the Idaho clays.⁷⁸

The Anaconda Company story of dominance over Montana eventually moved from the realm of rumor and legend to established history. In the mid-1940s, John Gunther wrote in his book "Inside America" that "Anaconda, a company aptly named, certainly has a constrictor-like grip on much that goes on, and Montana is the nearest to a 'colony' of any American state, Delaware alone possibly excepted."⁷⁹ The top academic Anaconda critic was K. Ross Toole, who by 1972 was the A.B. Hammond Professor of History at the University of Montana in Missoula and a well-known personality across the state. Toole viewed Montana's past as a morality play with a populist citizenry fighting against large out-of-state corporations that ruled the state like a colony. Toole argued that the character and the irrepressible optimism of Montanans kept the government from giving in completely to these corporate forces. The connection between the land and the citizens was essential. Toole's arguments influenced many Montanans at a time when significant changes were taking place in the social, economic and political structure of the state.⁸⁰

According to Montana historian Michael Malone, the prevailing historical interpretation of Montana politics and economics was propelled by men like Toole and Joseph Kinsey Howard. Both described Montana as a beautiful and "uncommon" land that had been "cruelly exploited by predatory capitalists in a highly unique fashion." According to Malone, the result was a Montana mindset that was conservative while at the same time environmentalist and anti-corporate. A typical metaphor for the state was a colony controlled by outsider interests. Malone saw fallacies in this argument, beginning with the lack of good historical research and reliance on anecdotes. He also argued that Montana history needed to be compared with that of other Western states, where large business interests also took control of legislatures and the media.⁸¹ Malone, writing in 1976, disagreed with the extent to which Anaconda controlled the state, arguing that the company "shared and contested power with other interest groups, and, like any other corporation, it changed with the changing times."⁸²

The Anaconda Company's history can be traced back to 1866 when the Irish prospector Mickey Hickey came to Montana to look for gold. On Oct. 19, 1875, he staked out a claim on the great outcrop atop Butte Hill. The name he came up with for his new mine came from an editorial in the New York Tribune that he had read during the Civil War. Written by Horace Greeley, the editorial had predicted that General Ulysses S. Grant's Union forces would crush Gen. Robert E. Lee's Confederate forces "like a giant anaconda." The word caught Hickey's fancy and he named his mining claim the Anaconda.⁸³ Kelley cited this story at the Aug. 15, 1955, dedication of the new Anaconda Aluminum Co. smelter in Columbia Falls.⁸⁴ Certain parallel economic developments helped promote copper production in Butte – in 1876, applications of electricity were shown at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia; in 1880, Edison patented the incandescent light bulb; in 1882, the first electric generating plant was running in New York City, hard-drawn copper wire became a commercial product, and electric lights were appearing in Newark, N.J., and in Philadelphia; and by 1881, copper production in both Great Britain and Chile had dropped significantly.⁸⁵

Marcus Daly is often considered Anaconda's founding father. In 1862, after emigrating to the U.S. from Ireland, Daly found himself in Virginia City, Nev., where he worked on the Comstock Mine and befriended Mark Twain. By the late 1860s, he moved on to Mineral Hill, Nev., where he worked for the Haggin-Tevis-Hearst syndicate. Hearst bought the Ontario Mine near Mineral Hill on Daly's recommendation. By 1870, Daly moved to Utah, where he helped develop the state's first commercial mine, the Emma. His next move took him to Butte, where he worked for the Walker Brothers to develop the Alice Mine.⁸⁶ The Walker Brothers, a mining and banking firm in Salt Lake City, were investigating silver mining properties in Butte. Together they bought the Alice Mine, and Daly served as general superintendent until he sold his interest in 1880.⁸⁷ With \$30,000 in his pocket from the sale of his interests in the Alice Mine, Daly ran into Hickey, who needed help with his Anaconda Mine. Daly took an interest in the claim and paid \$15,000 for a one-third stake. Daly then left for Salt Lake City to get in touch with backers to help finance the Anaconda Mine – particularly the Haggin-Hearst-Tevis syndicate.⁸⁸ Over time, Daly asked George Hearst for additional support, and Hearst bought one-quarter of the new company's stock without visiting the site.⁸⁹

The Haggin-Hearst-Tevis syndicate originated in 1850 in the Sacramento law offices of Ben Ali Haggin and Lloyd Tevis. In 1853, the two moved their office to San Francisco, where they continued to invest in gold properties and met George Hearst. The three worked together through 1899, with Tevis arranging credit, Haggin watching expenditures and Hearst finding investment properties. Haggin was the most influential of the three and believed in spending money to make money. At the height of their career, the syndicate owned or controlled 100 gold, silver and copper mines from Alaska

to Chile, including the world's greatest silver mine, the Ontario near Mineral Hill, Nevada, the world's greatest gold mine, the Homestake in the Black Hills of South Dakota, and the world's greatest copper mine, the Anaconda in Butte. Hearst not only found mines but successfully ran for U.S. Senator in California, and his son, William Randolph Hearst, used money from the mines to build a newspaper empire.⁹⁰

In 1881, Daly persuaded the Haggin-Tevis-Hearst syndicate to invest \$70,000 in the Anaconda Mine, leaving Daly with a one-quarter interest. Daly took over as general manager and leased the Dexter Mill in Butte from William A. Clark, one of the other "Copper Kings." The miners soon found chalcocite in the Anaconda Mine, solid copper at a glance, but none of the syndicate members had any experience with copper or any other metals other than gold and silver. There was a limited copper market at the time, and the copper mines in the Lake Superior district had higher quality ore deposits. Undeterred, Daly continued developing the mine. In 1883, he shipped part of the Anaconda output to Swansea, Wales, for smelting. The copper men in Swansea had never seen such high quality ore and suspected the ore had already been partially processed.⁹¹ As copper increasingly became the mine's main product, Daly decided to build his own smelter. He located a suitable property 26 miles away at Warm Springs Creek and platted the new town of Anaconda in October 1883. Over the next decade, he built several mills and reduction works and even an experimental electrolytic refinery.⁹² With \$4 million from Haggin and Hearst, Daly built and began operating the world's largest copper smelting plant at Anaconda. Toole described the event as the moment that "the political and economic history of Montana was born."⁹³

Within a month of platting, 1,500 residents were busy in the new city of Anaconda's brickyards, lumberyards, sawmills, shop and other businesses. Over the next 15 years, three smelters were built in the Warm Springs valley. The first, the Upper Works, could handle 500 tons per day and was situated well up the valley. The second, the Lower Works, could handle 3,000 tons per day and was built closer to the mouth of the valley where it intersected with Deer Lodge Valley.⁹⁴ Daly suggested the name Copperolis for his new smelter town, but apparently another town already had that name, so the postmaster chose Anaconda. The Upper Works was operational in 1883 but, facing stiff competition from the Lake Superior mines, Daly began building another smelter. The Anaconda Reduction Works went into operation in September 1884.⁹⁵ Over the next few decades, Daly and his backers consolidated most of the mines in Butte and overwhelmed the Michigan copper mining companies led by Calumet & Hecla in what became known as the first of the Copper Wars. In 1891, one mining expert described Anaconda's operations in Montana as "the most extensive mining property in the world."⁹⁶ In time, Butte became one of the most prosperous cities in the U.S. The Anaconda mine was the largest copper-producing mine in the world from 1892 through

1903. In its lifetime to the 1980s, the Anaconda Company produced \$300 billion worth of metal.⁹⁷

As Anaconda's operations expanded, the company acquired more assets. Needing as much as 50 million board-feet of timber every year for the Butte mines, Anaconda invested in timberlands and lumber mills across the state. In the late 1880s, Daly bought 6 million board-feet of standing timber in Northwest Montana. The company built lumber mills in Hamilton and St. Regis, Mont. and in Hope, Idaho and eventually founded the Blackfoot Land & Developing Company near Missoula. The company purchased coal properties in the Belt Mountains of Montana and acquired the Butte City Water Co. from William Clark in 1891. The Butte, Anaconda & Pacific Railroad, built and owned by the Anaconda Company, began operating between Butte and Anaconda on Jan. 1, 1894. When the Upper Works and Lower Works in Anaconda were found inadequate to handle the quantity of ore coming from Butte by the late 1890s, the company invested millions of dollars and built a new smelter on the other side of Warm Springs Creek – the largest reduction operation in the world. In 1891, Haggin, Tevis, Hearst and Daly incorporated the Anaconda Mining Company for a term of 20 years with 500,000 shares at \$25 apiece. Eleven months later the capital stock had increased to \$25 million.⁹⁸ The company included four groups of mines. All profits were reinvested in building additional facilities instead of paying dividends. From 1891 to 1895, Anaconda began consolidating its services and raw materials. In 1895, the company was reorganized again as the Anaconda Copper Mining Company.⁹⁹

The copper wars

The first of the Copper Wars was against the Michigan mines. The second began in 1889 when the Rothschilds attempted to control the world's copper market. In 1892, the French branch of the Rothschilds began negotiations to buy the Anaconda Mine. In mid-October 1895, the French and British branches bought one quarter of the stock in Anaconda for \$7.5 million. By the late 1890s, the Rothschilds may have controlled as much as 40% of the world's copper production. It took outside money to stand up to the Rothschilds. In 1899, two directors of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Co. teamed up with Daly to create the Amalgamated Copper Mining Company, one of the largest trusts at the turn of the century. By 1899, Amalgamated Copper had acquired a majority stock holding in the Anaconda Copper Company, and the Rothschilds apparently had no further role in the company. Daly became president of the \$75 million holding company in 1900, but he died that year. Rockefeller himself reportedly played no role in the Butte-based copper company.¹⁰⁰

The third and fourth of the Copper Wars involved the Copper Kings. William Andrews Clark became the first of the Copper Kings in 1876 as he acquired mining properties when loans defaulted. Over the next 24 years, he and Daly, the second Copper King, turned Butte into the world's largest copper producer, as they bought up mines and smelters and fought each other for control over copper deposits. After Daly's death in 1900, Clark joined with Fritz Augustus Heinze, the third Copper King, to continue to battle the Anaconda Company. In 1906, Heinze lost his bid to take control of Butte's copper deposits and sold out.¹⁰¹ With the demise of Heinze, the Anaconda Copper Mining Company became a publicly owned corporation for the first time.¹⁰² Clark had served as president of Montana's constitutional conventions in 1884 and 1889, and his attempt to win a seat in the U.S. Senate during this time by buying off Montana legislators with vast sums of money – in what has been characterized as the most expensive per capita election in U.S. history – and his opposition to the Anaconda Company has been written about extensively. The U.S. Senate refused to seat Clark after he won election in 1899, but he was seated for one term in 1901. Some experts believe Clark's political manipulations may have led to the adoption of the Seventeenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1913, which took the election of U.S. senators away from state legislatures and put it in the hands of the people in a popular vote.¹⁰³

Montana's history could have gone an entirely different direction as a result of Anaconda's takeover by Standard Oil, but anti-trust politics in the U.S. ended the short life of the copper trust. In 1899, ACM stockholders and Standard Oil offices promoted the union of all mining operations in Butte under one holding company. The Amalgamated Copper Company was formed in April 1899 to acquire the stock in ACM and all its subsidiaries, as well as other mining companies in Butte. Amalgamated was only a holding company and was not involved in managing the properties. A smelter built in Great Falls in 1892 that duplicated much of the work done at the Anaconda reduction works was eventually integrated so the Anaconda reduction works continued to handle the early stages of concentration and smelting, and the Great Falls plant finished the copper refining. The Great Falls plant also had an electrolytic zinc plant.¹⁰⁴ As Amalgamated grew, it absorbed Clark's extensive Montana holdings as well as those of the Boston and Montana Co., a large mining and smelting company operating in Butte that was financed by bankers in Boston. The overall Amalgamated plan was to create a copper trust and bind it to the existing oil trust.¹⁰⁵ From 1899 through 1915, the Anaconda Company was controlled by Standard Oil President Henry H. Rogers along with William Rockefeller, John D. Rockefeller's brother, and Thomas W. Lawson.¹⁰⁶

One person who fought the growth of the new trust was Heinze, one of Clark's former allies, a rapidly rising Butte mining magnate who once had helped finance an anti-trust political party in the state. Heinze's motives were influenced as much by money as by

noble causes.¹⁰⁷ Newly arrived from the Columbia School of Mines, Heinze took on Amalgamated by using the little known apex law and his control over a county judge to make claims against adjacent mine shafts in Butte. When the judge enjoined Amalgamated from operating mines claimed by Heinze, Amalgamated closed down its mines in protest, idling 3,000 miners until the judge revoked the injunction. Heinze continued his trespasses under the legal pretext of the apex law until October 1903 when, unable to cope with Heinze's tactics and unsuccessful in its efforts to buy out local judges, Amalgamated shut down all its mines and plants throughout Montana, idling some 20,000 workers. The impact of essentially shutting down Montana as winter approached forced the state government to take Amalgamated's side, and Heinze knew his gambit had run its course. In 1906, he sold all his interests to Amalgamated for \$10.5 million and agreed to drop the 110 lawsuits he still had pending.¹⁰⁸ Heinze's sale price was "his nuisance value, as his friends called it," Sen. Burton K. Wheeler pointed out in his autobiography, "No matter how clever, unscrupulous or spendthrift the opponent, you couldn't lick Amalgamated."¹⁰⁹ Free to operate, Amalgamated continued to consolidate the mines and smelters in Butte. In 1910, the company acquired all of William Clark's mines and smelting operations and became the Anaconda Copper Mining Company.¹¹⁰

The departure of Heinze and Clark marked the end of the Copper Wars but not the end of the copper trust. It took increasing pressure from the federal government and the Sherman anti-trust act to break the trusts. In 1915, the Amalgamated Copper Company dissolved itself and Standard Oil left Montana. The operating company remained, the original Anaconda Company, "but that made little difference to Montanans," Toole wrote. "Anaconda had a memory, too. The 'Company' never let things get far out of hand. In all essential respects it controlled the legislature, the press, and most facets of the economy of the state except for agriculture." The 1903 threat to essentially shut down the state's economy remained a memory for the state legislature, and "in combination with the overt employment of power and coercion by the Company throughout the years, it remained very much a part of the Montana psyche," Toole wrote.¹¹¹

Amalgamated had turned to John Ryan to convince Heinze to walk away with abundant compensation and to eventually acquire Clark's properties. After all the Butte mines were consolidated, Ryan became president of a newly named company, but his story began a decade earlier.¹¹² After Daly died in 1900, his widow had begun a relationship with Ryan, a shrewd and intelligent businessman who eventually took over the Anaconda Company.¹¹³ Ryan brought to the company a new corporate personality. He was depicted as cold and calculating, immune to emotion, with a mind that reveled in high finance.¹¹⁴ Ryan went to work for Anaconda in 1904, where he used his experience

in banking and finance to outmaneuver Heinze to control copper mining in Butte. Two years later, Ryan was described as king of the Butte Hill. Ryan took over Anaconda in 1908 and by 1910 had consolidated more mines and smelters from Clark. Under Ryan, ACM became known simply as “the company.” Ryan then helped establish the Montana Power Co. to deliver cheap power to Butte’s copper mines. Ryan, who was also known for ruthlessly fighting the mining unions, died nearly broke in 1933.¹¹⁵

Beyond mining and timber, Anaconda’s economic presence in Montana included electrical power production. In 1912, Anaconda merged with several small hydroelectric plants to create the Montana Power Co. At the time, Anaconda was the largest power consumer of any utility in the nation. Between 1910 and 1915, Montana Progressives established the Public Service Commission to regulate Montana Power. Under the regulation, Montana Power was granted a monopoly and shielded from competition in return for selling power to Montanans at low rates. In 1928, the American Power & Light Company, an East Coast holding company, bought all the outstanding stock of Montana Power. In the 1930s, Montana Power moved into the natural gas business. By 1940, more than 76% of Montana Power’s electricity went to the Anaconda Company and its railroad between Butte and Anaconda. Only 5% went to Montana residents. In 1950, American Power & Light was dissolved and stockholders regained control of Montana Power. According to Malone, Montana Power and Anaconda were never formally joined, “but they might as well have been.”¹¹⁶

The company and control

The Anaconda Company was successful for several decades in holding off a strong regional union movement by miners. In 1893, the Western Federation of Miners was founded by the merger of several small mining unions in Butte, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, and other Rocky Mountain states. Following several violent labor actions, the Western Federation of Miners adopted a socialist program in 1901 and then became associated with the International Workers of the World in 1905. Following factional differences, the Western Federation of Miners withdrew from the IWW in 1907 and joined the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1911. The failure of subsequent labor actions and an economic depression in 1914 brought about a sharp decline in membership, and the Western Federation of Miners changed its name to the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, or Mine-Mill, in 1916.¹¹⁷ A recession and turmoil stemming from actions during World War I led to the demise of the Butte Miners Union in Anaconda’s mines and smelters. An open shop prevailed in the company from 1914 through 1934, while a general stagnation in labor spread across the nation. The New Deal and the National Labor Relations Act helped resuscitate the labor movement in Butte. By July 20, 1933, Mine-Mill had signed up 4,500 members and the difficult process of dealing with

the company began. Negotiations broke down on May 8, 1934, and the “most important strike in Montana history” began. After four months, the union declared victory on Sept. 17, 1934, when Anaconda granted union members a wage increase, a 40-hour work week and full recognition under the rules of the National Labor Relations Act.¹¹⁸

Although labor had been organized in Montana since the 19th century, it was not until 1934 that the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers won the right to negotiate contracts with the Anaconda Company.¹¹⁹ After World War II, miners and smeltermen fell on hard times as the company cut back production and allegations of links to Communism hurt the prestige of key national unions. In 1950, feeling that Communists had gained influence among the leaders of Mine-Mill, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) expelled the organization from its ranks and gave jurisdiction over its miners and smeltermen to one of its largest unions, the United Steelworkers of America. In Montana, however, the rank and file refused to relinquish their association to Mine-Mill, the “union of their fathers.” For years, the CIO and the Steelworkers tried to take over leadership of Anaconda’s workers. In 1967, a merger finally took place in which the Steelworkers in effect absorbed Mine-Mill’s local affiliates. It was 1967 when the Steelworkers led the last major copper strike at Anaconda Company operations in Montana. The longest and costliest strike in the state’s history lasted eight and one-half months and cost Montanans \$34 million in lost wages.¹²⁰

In Mexico, labor problems under one mining company opened up an opportunity for acquisition by Anaconda. In 1906, a strike at the Cananea Mines in Sonora, Mexico, spread beyond the Cananea Consolidated Copper Company lumberyard and turned into gunfire, leaving 20 miners and six company men dead. Col. William Greene, who owned the mines and made \$12 million there between 1899 and 1906, called for help and received a response from an officer in the Arizona Rangers and 275 volunteers from Bisbee, Ariz. In addition to labor troubles, Greene faced increasing production costs and lower grade copper ore and was heading toward bankruptcy. By the end of 1906, investors representing the Amalgamated Copper Company, Thomas F. Cole and John Ryan, provided the \$6 million needed to keep the Cananea mines going. Eventually, Anaconda took over the mines under the name Cananea Central Copper Co.¹²¹

As the Butte mining operations grew, the state’s politics became entangled in the various mining companies. Between 1893 and 1905, wholesale bribery of Montana legislators by Clark, Heinze and Daly was common as Clark fought to gain a seat in the U.S. Senate. The Anaconda Company gained political strength as it took over most of the state’s daily newspapers and destroyed the mine-mill unions during World War I. “Until well past mid-century, the Anaconda held a predominant position in Montana, allying

with other conservative forces in the state and usually routing its foes on the big issues,” Malone wrote. “Montanans often displayed a paradoxical attitude toward the company, resenting its bestriding of their state and often resigning themselves to apathy in the face of its power, yet also fearful that it might close its high-cost mines and sink their economy.”¹²²

Toole provided a thumbnail sketch of the Anaconda Company that reflected on the mining giant’s overwhelming impact on life in Montana. “By 1884, the world’s largest copper smelter at Anaconda was belching smoke and spewing arsenic across the Deer Lodge valley,” he wrote. “By 1888, the Copper Kings, Marcus Daly and William Andrews Clark, were locked in bitter combat and politics on every level revolved around them. By 1894, Helena had more millionaires, per capita, than any other city in America. And from 1880 to 1900, the wondrously productive and ingeniously managed Anaconda Copper Mining Company, a local corporation partly owned and entirely operated by Montanans, extended itself into every facet of the lives of the western inhabitants. It was the most productive copper enterprise in the world. It owned millions of acres of timber; it owned municipal water works, stores, hotels, newspapers – ultimately all but one of the seven major dailies. It owned street railway systems, railroads, great sawmills, brickyards, and scores of other enterprises. By 1900, Anaconda was employing nearly three-quarters of the wage earners of the state.”¹²³

Some of that changed in November 1958 when an Anaconda official reported that the company was considering selling its chain of newspapers in Montana. Anaconda’s chain of major daily newspapers accounted for more than half the circulation of the state – the only major daily newspaper independent of Anaconda was the Great Falls Tribune. “The idea of a metals company owning papers with most of the daily circulation in Montana was not for the good of the newspaper profession,” Hungry Horse News publisher Mel Ruder wrote in an editorial. In avoiding issues that could be considered detrimental to the company, the Anaconda newspapers became so timid they failed to champion even issues favorable to Anaconda, Ruder pointed out. In February 1959, a rumor circulated that Anaconda would only sell the newspapers with a provision that nothing unfavorable to company could be printed by the new owners. Ruder doubted such a provision would be acceptable to even the most conservative publishers. In May 1959, it was reported that Lee Enterprises, a Midwestern newspaper chain, had purchased the Anaconda papers for more than \$6 million.¹²⁴

Anaconda was similar to Alcoa in its dominating influence in the metals industry, but while it never held a monopoly, it did take a look at cartels. In 1918, while traveling in Europe, Kelley was asked by Bernard Baruch, chairman of the War Industries Board for President Woodrow Wilson, if he would serve on the Versailles Peace Conference. Kelley

hastily refused and immediately returned to New York City. On April 17, 1927, the New York Times published statements by Kelley that explained why he was in Europe at the time. Referring to a cartel-like organization called the Copper Exports Association, Kelley said one of its purposes “was to eliminate in foreign countries the harmful speculation that caused wide fluctuations in price, unwarranted by industrial factors in European markets, which tended to destroy confidence in the integrity and stability of the business.” In 1940, a U.S. Senate committee that was investigating price-fixing by the Copper Exports Association around that same time period questioned Kelley about the matter. Kelley admitted that it was impossible to fix foreign market prices without affecting domestic prices as well. ¹²⁵

In 1920, with two progressive candidates running for governor of Montana, the Anaconda Company reluctantly supported the Republican candidate, Joseph Dixon, as the lesser of two evils. In 1921, with the state government facing serious financial distress, newly elected Gov. Dixon sent a message to the state legislature calling for an enlightened tax program that included taxes on income, oil, coal, gasoline and mineral production. Taxation of the mining industry in Montana had been much discussed since territorial times, and a University of Montana economics professor had recently completed a study which showed that Montana’s mineral industry paid a disproportionately smaller share of taxes. Dixon’s proposal for a 1.5% tax on the net proceeds of mines met stiff opposition by Anaconda. In 1924, Dixon put the tax reform before the voters as an initiative and ran for re-election. He lost his bid for governor, but the tax reform passed. As it turned out, the mineral industry reported net profits in 1925 that were three times higher than in 1924. ¹²⁶

At the same time that ACM was consolidating its Montana operations, it was working toward vertical integration, providing copper from the mine to the consumer, by purchasing smelters and fabricators in other states. In the early 1920s, ACM acquired the Chuquicamata copper mine from the Guggenheim family and the smaller Potrerillos mine, both in Chile, and a large zinc treatment plant in Poland. ¹²⁷ According to Malone, the height of Anaconda’s influence in Montana was in 1920, by which time the company dominated the economic, social and political life of the state. The company owned the “Richest Hill on Earth” in Butte and smelters, refineries and reduction works in Anaconda, East Helena and Great Falls. It also owned hundreds of thousands of acres of timberland, lumber mills in Bonner, a powerful chain of newspapers and a powerful “Siamese twin” – the Montana Power Co. During its heyday from 1900 until World War II, the Anaconda Company controlled so much power in Montana that the state earned an unsavory reputation as merely “a corporate asset.” ¹²⁸

Anaconda's first big move outside Montana came in 1922 when it bought the American Brass Co. in Connecticut, making Anaconda the largest copper fabricator in the world and helping to stabilize copper sales and production.¹²⁹ Anaconda acquired American Brass, the largest consumer and fabricator of raw copper in the world, for \$45 million. The depression in the copper industry following World War I had convinced the Anaconda Company that market stability had to be ensured, and Kelley had long advocated the idea that the most efficient way to accomplish market stability was to control the product from mine to consumer by vertical integration. To convince American Brass management to sell, Kelley told them Anaconda would go into competition with them if they refused and put them out of business. American Brass management recognized they couldn't compete with a copper fabricator that was also a copper producer. Acquiring American Brass meant Anaconda had 400,000 tons per year more fabricating capacity than it had in production, so the company began to look for new sources of copper.¹³⁰

In the 1920s, metal prices jumped and mining activity increased. These were the "golden years" for the Anaconda Company.¹³¹ Following up on a tip, Ryan and Kelley approached the Guggenheim interests about selling their mines in Chile. The deal was closed on March 15, 1923, when the Anaconda Company paid the Guggenheims \$77 million for the Chile Copper Company – the most expensive single transaction in Wall Street history. The acquisition included the Chuquicamata mine with more than a billion tons of copper ore.¹³² The Chilean mines soon came to produce two-thirds of Anaconda's primary copper and three-fourths of its earnings.¹³³ In 1926, Anaconda acquired the Giesche Company, a large mining company in the Upper Silesia area of Poland. By that time, Anaconda was the fourth largest company in the world.¹³⁴ In 1928, Anaconda bought up the remaining mining properties developed by the late Copper King, William Clark.¹³⁵ In 1929, the company created another fabricating subsidiary, the Anaconda Wire and Cable Co., with plants in Great Falls and outside Montana.¹³⁶ In 1929, ACM bought the Green Cananea Copper Co. in northern Mexico. The expansion of the company outside Montana had a profound impact on its influence inside the state, "for now Montana was only one province in a far-flung corporate empire."¹³⁷

Anaconda's success in the 1920s met with a major setback of its own doing at the end of the decade. In 1928, Ryan sold the Montana Power Co. to American Power & Light for \$85 million in company stock. Anaconda then used the stock to buy speculative interests that failed badly in the 1929 stock crash, causing the company to suffer serious financial setbacks, with Anaconda stocks falling from \$175 a share to just \$4 at the bottom of the Great Depression.¹³⁸ There's more to the story. In 1928, Ryan and Percy Rockefeller, William Rockefeller's son, began to aggressively speculate with Anaconda Company

stock, causing the stock value to go up and down, a practice known as “pump and dump” which wasn’t illegal at the time. A million and a half Anaconda shares jumped in price from \$40 in December 1928 to \$128 in March 1929. Smaller investors were wiped out. Considered one of the largest “fleecings” in Wall Street history, at least \$150 million was lost to the public. In 1933, a Senate banking committee called the operations the greatest fraud in American banking history and a leading cause of the Great Depression. After the crash, copper prices fell from 29.5 cents per pound in 1930 to 10.3 cents per pound in 1932. The combined impact severely hurt Anaconda. On March 31, 1931, Anaconda cut its dividend rate by 40%. Ryan, who was blamed for causing the crash, died in 1933 and was buried in a copper coffin.¹³⁹

Like other large U.S. companies, the Anaconda Copper Mining Company kept busy during World War II – in 1943, Anaconda supplied one-third of the primary copper used in the U.S., a critical war-time material used to make brass shell casings.¹⁴⁰ But the only new major business commitment by the company in Montana after World War II was the construction of an aluminum smelter in the Flathead. The company also backed away from its traditional style of wielding political power, especially after Kelley’s retirement.¹⁴¹ On May 21, 1952, Kelley issued a 32-page stockholders report titled “Anaconda Is Building” that outlined a postwar construction and improvement program estimated to cost about \$289 million. Included was \$45 million for a new aluminum smelter in the Flathead.¹⁴² To reflect its growing diversification, the Anaconda Copper Mining Company changed its name to the Anaconda Company in 1955. The name change was announced along with plans for development of the El Salvador project in Chile, while in Montana the new Anaconda Aluminum Company plant in Columbia Falls was dedicated and the Berkeley Pit in Butte was opened.¹⁴³

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