My objective is to write a worthwhile article on the Yellowstone Wagon-Road & Prospecting Expedition. The Historical Society of Montana has been of great assistance in this study and has invited me to submit the article for publication. I'm only an amateur at this sort of thing and can only hope that the article will be adjudged worth reading. But, whatever happens, I don't ever want it to be said that I failed to do my very best to deal in strict fairness with the aims and actions of these old-timers--white men and red—who have now all crossed the range.

Leading up to the question I want to ask you, I think it will probably be best if I describe, briefly as I can, the doings of this expedition. In January, 1874, the citizens of Bozeman and the Gallatin Valley, for various reasons, raised and equipped an expedition, officially styled the Yellowstone Wagon-Road & Prospecting Expedition but known to most folks in that area as "the boys." This expedition was expected to march down the Yellowstone River, picking out a route suitable for freighting, until it had reached the head of navigation, supposed to be near the mouth of the Tongue. There the party was expected to establish a sort of outpost, which, it was supposed, would soon develope into a regular settlement, giving impetus to a speedy development of lower Yellowstone Valley. The men in charge of promoting this expedition were shrewd enough to start a hue and cry about rich strikes of gold which were sure to be made in the region through which it was intended the wagon-road should pass. After that news got around it was no time before a large force of men began to assemble.

On February 13, 1874, the expedition commenced its march down the Yellowstone. The party numbered approximately 147 men, many of them old-timers in the region, most of them frontiersmen of experience, and in general a tough, hard-bitten lot. Among the party were William H. Hamilton (MY SIXTY YEARS ON THE PLAINS) and George Herendeen, a scout for Generals Gibbon and Custer in 1876. There were over 200 horses and mules, twenty-eight yoke of oxen, twenty-two wagons loaded with provisions for four months, and two pieces of artillery, with about 150 rounds of shell and canister. All of the men had breech-loading rifles, with over 40,000 rounds of metallic cartridges.

The expedition moved down the left bank of the Yellowstone until it arrived at a point near the mouth of Big Porcupine Creek. Here, on March 21st, they crossed the Yellowstone on the ice and went into camp on the south bank. The men dug rifle-pits to fortify the camp, continuing a practise begun when they had passed the mouth of the Bighorn River. A small party was sent across the Yellowstone to prospect both the Big and Little Porcupine and O'Fallon's Creek, which came back in a few days with nothing to show. All the men were, naturally, chiefly concerned with finding gold and, as there appeared to be no prospects along the Yellowstone, quickly forgot all about the wagon-road, etc. The expedition's leadership decided to leave the Yellowstone and to march generally south, it having been rumored that plenty of gold was to be found in the vicinity of Goose Creek.

On March 26th, as the column was mounting the bluffs that border the Yellowstone Valley on the south, occurred the first brush with Indians--a trifling affair. The story goes that a big encampment of Sioux had, by means of scouts, been watching the movements of the expedition. The Indians are said to have supposed that the expedition would pass the mouth of the Rosebud and they consequently moved their camp to that neighborhood, planning to intercept the white men as they passed that point. It is further stated that the expedition's delaying in order to prospect the Porcupines caused the Sioux to lose sight