

# Rattlesnake History

By D. Stack

## Geographical Names

*McLeod Peak* - probably named after Angus McLeod, a Hudson Bay fur trader who lived circa 1855 - 1870 along present day Highway 93 at Butler Creek.

*Rattlesnake Creek* - the most likely story:

A person was bitten by a snake, died and was buried while gathering firewood along the Creek. Grave maker indicated how the person died and was destroyed by railroad construction.

Salish name: 'In-tlah-e-eitz-chistum' or stream of bull trout. Source is Duncan McDonald from a Missoulian article on 10-31-1884. But McDonald in a Missoulian article of 6-30-35 says the Salish name is 'Kehi-oo-lee' meaning Rattlesnake. (The book uses the term 'Indian name' - Stack assumed it was Salish.

John Mullan (Army surveyor) 1853/1854 named the creek "Observation Creek". There are 1860 maps with both Rattlesnake and Observation.

## Settlement Era

Mostly public domain lands in checkerboard with Northern Pacific Railroad land grants. (odd numbered sections). Approximately ownerships: National Forest - 42%, Montana Power - 37% and other - 21%.

Forrest Poe's map indicates there were about 19 homesteads in the Rattlesnake prior to 1936 (includes 3 in Spring Gulch and 1 in Sawmill Gulch). These homesteads were purchased from Northern Pacific in the 1890s' or early 1900s'. In 1935 - Montana Power Company (owner of the municipal water-company) begins to purchase homesteads.

**Grade School** - highest enrollment was 24 students. Constructed 1906. Permanently closed 1930 when only 3 students would attend. Used as a polling place in the 1900's and residence. 1936 District gave the land to Missoula School District #1. National Forest acquires the land (about 1 acre) in circa 1990.

## People

### Fred Poe

Settled in Rattlesnake in 1900 at Hog's Back — a natural dam site. He and a partner thought the site to be valuable since Missoula was growing in population and the city would need a dam to supply water. He bought the land from people living on the land. Could not homestead the property because it wasn't surveyed. Poe called it squatters' rights. He paid \$500 for 160 acres (\$3.12/ac). There was a log house and several out buildings. 1906 land survey determine that Poe was occupying NP land grant. 1920 NP said they would sell the entire section for

\$2.50 per acre (\$1,600). Poe hired a logger to take off all timber. Fred Poe and his wife left the homestead in 1930.

### **Forrest and Flossie Poe**

They took the Fred Poe ranch over from his parents. Had two daughters - Hazel born 1932 and Shirley born 1935. Doctors & hospital fee was \$75. Traded firewood. Prices: cattle - \$12.50/head (ranchers investment was probably about \$15; Sold dressed pork @ .04/lb. Eggs retailed at .10 to .14 / dozen. Price of milk for farmers went to 0.01/gallon (they dumped at that price).

Forrest Poe employed by Works Progress Administration (WPA). Worked - \$3/day for 30 hours per week at the University. Hired out his team \$2 per day (he had to feed them) and his wagon for \$0.50/day.

Traded 3 cords of wood for a battery radio in 1934. No electricity to ranch.

Forrest contracted polio in July 1936, mainly in one arm. Believed there were only 2 cases of polio in Montana in 1936. Confined to hospital bed for 13 weeks.

Sold the ranch in late 1936 (or early 1937) to Montana Power and moved to Locust Street in the lower Rattlesnake.

### **Bill Beeskove was Coyote Bill (see POE page 36)**

He was Colonel Karolus F. William Beeskove, was a former colonel of scouts for the army (Custer). Beeskove place was above the Poe Ranch.

Hogs Back Mine (may have also been called the Three Swedes Mine)- shaft 95 feet deep (1919 fire burned the mine timbers. 2000 - shaft now 66 ft. deep). Coyote Bill told the miners that he owned the land and he demanded a 50/50 split. Bill shot the chimney bricks off their cabin to scare them away when they did not pay. They left a few weeks later.

Arthur Franklin, a civil engineer from back east built a hunting lodge at the end of the road (site of Franklin Guard Station). Franklin left arm was shriveled and useless. Franklin acted as hunting and fishing guide. Bill did not like Franklin traveling the road through his land. Bill gated the road. Franklin asked Bill if he would open the gate. When Bill saw Franklin wasn't wearing his sixgun, Bill walked up behind Franklin and hit him with a 2x4. Franklin was knocked down but was able to run away with several broken ribs.

Two lumberjacks, (Smoot and Burrig) had purchased 115 cords of firewood above the Beeskove place. The sellers had told the lumberjacks about Bill and potential road access problems. The lumberjacks broke the gate down and always kept a rifle handy. Bill set the wood on fire. One day he saw Bill without his rifle, they beat him up, broke his ribs. While Bill was in the hospital, his cabin burned. Later Bill heard some chopping above his land - he found old Burrig by

himself and he didn't have his rifle. Bill shot (2 times) and killed Burrig (circa 1905). He said he was going to kill 2 more people (Forrest says he looked for Franklin and Fred Poe). Trial - sentenced to hang; Montana Supreme Court gave him a new trial because of local prejudice. 2nd trial - sentenced to 10 years. Paroled in 1912 after serving 6 1/2 years. Bill 'drowned' in 1916 near his mining claim near Dixon, MT. His throat was slit. He was buried in Plains, MT.

## Municipal Watershed

1871 - Worden and Higgins organized the first water company (Missoula Light & Water) with a ditch constructed a couple of miles up Rattlesnake. Water was carried to the reservoir on the hill north of town called 'Indian Hill' (Indians used the site for burials). Assumed this is today's waterworks Hill. The crude ditch water system did not work during the winter. The next improvement was installation of locally bored logs (2" dia. pipe). After the Northern Pacific Railroad came in 1883, they were able to purchase commercially made wooden pipes (like barrels with staves). 6" diameter pipe. At that time the ditch was extended further up the creek. They started to explore the high mountain lakes region.

1929 — Montana Power acquires the water company.

1979 — Montana Power sells the Water Company to Mountain Water Company.

May 1983 - Giardia outbreak forced Mountain Water to stop using the creek for city drinking water.

1986/1987 Mountain Water Company asked Missoula City/County Health Department to order removal of beaver. Public opposition. CASTOR special interest group formed to lobby against proposal. Forest Service and Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks rejected the proposal. Forest Service biologist consider beaver removal impractical.

1995 (Circa) - Forest Service recommended Wild & Scenic River designation (scenic) based on an EIS. Agreed to consider construction of a large reservoir on the lower creek if the Missoula aquifer became unfit for human use.

2002 - Mountain Water Company plans to construct water treatment facilities to allow use of Rattlesnake water.

### *Wilderness Lakes with 10 Dams on 8 Lakes — constructed 1911 - 1921*

Little Lake (breached 1996)	Sanders Lake (2 dams) Carter Lake Big Lake	Worden Lake Glacier Lake Sheridan Lake (2 dams)
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## Places / Events

### **Franklin Cabin (POE page 47)**

Had vertical logs. Burned shortly after WWI, circa 1920. The Forest Service built the Guard Station on the site. Telephone lines connected Sheep Mountain Lookout and Gold Creek Ranger Station<sup>i</sup>

### **Limekiln Road**

About 1 mile above Hog back. Road was pretty steep for horses. Two miles in length. Forrest did not know date kiln operated.

### **Lovers Rock**

Forrest Poe told Andy Kulla a story of a young boy who wanted a girl to like him. Forrest saw this when he was a young boy living at Poe Meadows. To win the girl's love, the boy painted a yellow heart on a rock outcrop just above the road at Poe Meadows (just above and to the left of a flat top pine tree growing one-half up the rock cliff). Forrest said the young girl was still not interested in the boy.

### **1919 Fire**

Stared by Charles Quast on his ranch (Lincoln Hill subdivision). He was burning haystacks on August 17, 1919. He let the fire escape. Burned sawmill Gulch, Spring Gulch and main Rattlesnake clear through to Placid Lake. Burned down at least 2 homes in the Rattlesnake. See newspaper account that indicates fire origin was in Grant Creek. Could be a mistake. Local source told me that there were two Quast brothers with ranches in Rattlesnake. Other was the Quast dairy along the creek near Lincolnwoods.

### **Moonshine**

There were moonshine stills in Rattlesnake and other places around Missoula.

### **Rattlesnake Road**

In the fall 1929, road ended at the Franklin Guard Station.

### **Rother Road**

Logging access road constructed circa 1955 by Montana Power logging contractor on the west side of Rattlesnake Creek. The road extended from Duncan Drive (current name) to just beyond Sawmill Gulch. The road was constructed because the County Road Effinger Bridge across Rattlesnake Creek (just above the mouth of Spring Creek) could not support loaded log trucks. Rother Road south of Sawmill Gulch is used by private landowners for access.

### **Timber Cutting**

Tom Greenough - contract from Northern Pacific Railroad for ties in 1885-1887. Tie Camps were established in Rattlesnake Creek. "Improved" the creek by removing obstructions so logs could be floated out. Also constructed a dam (probably what was called a splash dam) about 3 miles above the mouth of Spring Gulch (That would be the 'Hog Back' at Poe Meadows). The yard was located at I-90 and where Greenough later built his mansion. 1884 also floated out 2,500 cords of firewood. (It was likely that firewood was taken at other times too.)

1956 - 1964 — Forest Management Plan for Montana Power Company's land in the Rattlesnake (5 pages) prepared by T.C. Spaulding in 1953. Clearcut harvesting occurred in upper Rattlesnake, Lake and Wrangle Creeks. The last commercial logging in the Rattlesnake ended around 1964.

## **Forest Service Management History**

From Agency Files

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
1970s	Friends of the Rattlesnake (a private special interest group) promoted wilderness designation for the Rattlesnake drainage. It was the "last" relatively undeveloped creek in the Missoula Valley.
1980 circa	Lolo prohibited further all motorize travel by the public. Exception - small snowmobile use area near Mineral Peak. Some people are still hurt over this decision.
1980	Rattlesnake National Recreational Area and Wilderness is established by Congress. Wilderness = 33,000 acres. NRA = 28,000 acres. Public Law 96-476 of October 19, 1980. Congressman Pat Williams' bill was adopted into law. Earlier versions of his bill included provisions for an environmental education building within the NRA. Senator Melcher also proposed legislation. The Forest Service testified in favor of a NRA designation to facilitated wildlife habitat projects using prescribed fire.
1981??	National Forest acquires all Montana Power Co. lands, approximately 21,500 acres, within the RNRAW. Montana Power Company receives federal coal biding rights in eastern Montana as payment.
1984	The Forest Supervisor approves RNRAW management plan. The decision to prohibit dogs was appealed to the Chief. To resolve the appeal a new decision-limiting dogs was issued. The decision was based on wildlife and social rationale. Restrictions based on water quality were deferred to the State. The State has not issued additional restrictions.
1980s	Montana Power conducts senior citizen van trips up Rattlesnake. Forrest Poe was the interpreter on these trips.
1986	Lolo Forest Plan is approve. 1984 RNRAW Plan is incorporated.
1993	RNRAW Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) management standards amend the Forest Plan. Management strategy adopted after consultation with public. Established standards for trails, camp sites, signing, encounters, solitude, etc.
1987-91	Recreational facilities are constructed to facilitate visitor use. Construction costs about \$500,000. 1987 - Main Rattlesnake Trailhead. 1989 - Sawmill County Road & bridge reconstructed to main trailhead (50/50 partnership with Missoula County). 1991 - Rattlesnake Horse Trailhead.
1997	800 acre prescribed fire on Strawberry Ridge to improve wildlife habitat and reduce forest fuel levels. Helicopter ignited on May 12, 1997. City Health Dept

and Citizen complaints of smoke in city the following morning. Smoke cleared out in the early afternoon.

1997 Noxious Weed Control has been well supported by most, but not all of the community. A small group physically blocked Forest Service access. Spray project was completed several days later without confrontation.

**Current Issues:**

- Recreation funding.
- Recreation use levels and conflicts between different uses.
- Weeds
- Municipal Watershed Use
- Wildland fire and prescribed fire and air quality.
- Mountain Bike Impacts

**Sources:**

Forrest and Flossie Galland Poe. 1991. *Life in the Rattlesnake, A personal history of early life in Missoula's Rattlesnake Valley, as told by a son and a daughter of Montana early settlers.*

Missoula Sentinel Newspaper. August 20, 1919.

Hans Hartse. June 1976. *The Rattlesnake Drainage 1860-1976.* Montana Historian Vol. 6, Number 2.

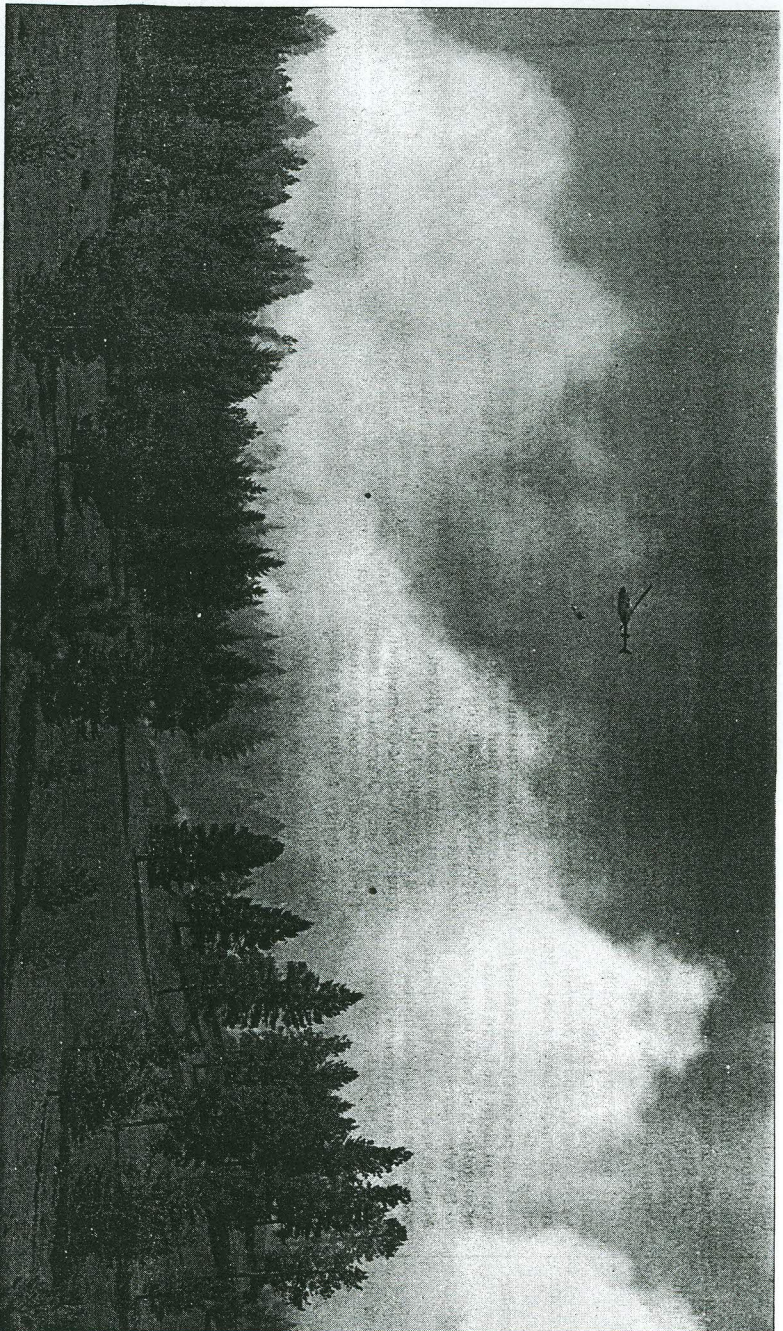
Hans Hartse. June 1976. *Early Residents of the Upper Rattlesnake Valley.* Montana Historian Vol. 6, Number 2.

September 7, 2000 Distance — 6 miles

0900	Leave Holiday Inn by Bus
0930	Start hiking Rattlesnake Corridor
Stop 1	Trailhead Sign - brief overview of RNRAW and settlement history
Stop 2	School Site
Stop 3	Base of Strawberry Ridge - 1997 Prescribed Fire
Stop 4	Small meadow along the trail - discuss noxious weeds
Stop 5	Dutchman's Mine at base of Strawberry Ridge. (Do we have enough time to hike off the trail//)
Stop 6	Poe Meadows - Lunch and more stories of settlers – Coyote Bill Beeskove's deadly feud
Stop 7	View forest mosaic. Fire history — 1919 fire.
3:00	Meet bus at Rattlesnake Trailhead.

**Participants:** 24 on hike including Kulla and Stack. Excellent day - warm and clear blue skies. Everyone said they had a great time.

<sup>i</sup> Cohen, Stan. 1993. Missoula County Images, Vol II. Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., Inc. Missoula Montana



MICHAEL GALLACHER/Missoulian

A prescribed burn in the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area Monday should provide better forage for deer and elk herds that winter in the drainage.

# Forage fire

*Rattlesnake burn may help restore food for area wildlife*

5-13-97

By SHERRY DEVLIN  
of the Missoulian

**W**hen you see the smoke, such as billowed from the upper Rattlesnake Valley on Monday, think of it as a food drive for deer and elk.

So counsels Mike Hillis, a wildlife biologist for the Lolo National Forest and architect of the 500-acre burn ignited by hell-torch on Strawberry Ridge Monday afternoon.

"Animals in this country winter mostly on shrubs," Hillis explained. "The snow's too deep for grass."

But the shrubs — serviceberry, mountain maple, scouler willow and varnish-leaf ceanothus on Strawberry Ridge — all evolved with frequent rejuvenating fires.

And those fires have been eliminated by modern fire suppression. Until now.

Monday's prescribed burn was the first of a series that will eventually bring back fire to 2,000 acres in the Rattlesnake National Recreation Area used by deer and elk for winter range.

After burning, an acre of shrubland will produce 400 to 600 pounds of forage a year, Hillis said. That compares with the 30 to 45 pounds of forage produced by an acre of shrubland from which fire has been excluded for 20 years.

"That's a 15-fold differential — and a real loss of ability to support wintering animals," he said. "If you want a large number of deer and elk on winter ranges, you have to keep

fire in the system."

As fire is excluded, a plant produces more and more wood, "so most of its energy goes into sustaining the woody trunks," Hillis said. "Less and less energy is available for producing the succulent, nutritious new growth that animals actually eat."

Eventually, the plant is all wood and no new growth.

In the year after a fire, a serviceberry bush will produce three or four feet of new growth, Hillis said. "The top has burned off, but the roots remain and start over again with these long, succulent leaders."

The roots of some shrubs may be centuries old.

On Tuesday, the burning will move to Marent Gulch, near Evaro Hill,

where the intent will again be to encourage the growth of shrubs. Two herds of elk use that area during the winter.

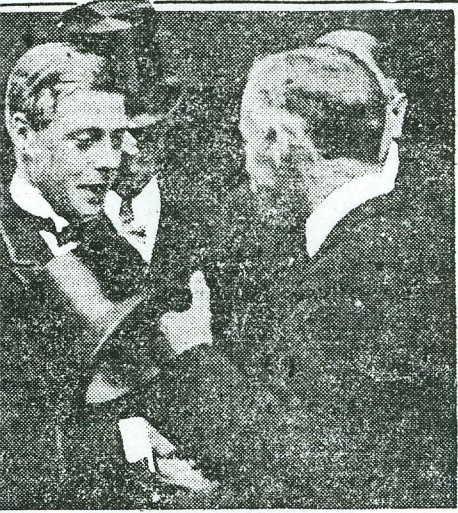
In addition, Hillis said, the so-called Northside project also will kill Douglas firs that are crowding out older, larger ponderosa pine trees.

"Over time, we would like to restore the open stands of pine, which were valuable for quite a number of animals," he said. "The flammulated owl, for example, is adapted to those stands and can only forage in fairly open stands."

The owl sits on a old-growth pine and surveys the ground below and air above for grasshoppers and moths. Hillis said. "Burning out the undergrowth helps the owl. And helps the forest as well."

# es Are Controlled by Foresters

## INS S PRINCE BEFORE HIS TOUR



Englishman thinks of Lloyds before he ventures out of the was quite natural that the Prince of Wales should take out bounds extra insurance before he started his American tour. s taken just as he was leaving the portals of Lloyds.

## S READY PAY PRICE

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## in Favor ion-Wide Strike

## EXTRA-HOUR-OF-DAY LAW FINALLY DIES WHEN SENATE VOTES

By the Associated Press.  
Washington, Aug. 20.—Repeal of the daylight saving act was accomplished today when the senate voted, 57 to 19, to sustain the house in passing the repeal of the measure over the president's veto.  
The repeal of the law becomes effective after the nation's clocks are turned back to normal in October. It is one of the very few measures which twice have been vetoed by a president and have become laws in spite of such vetoing.

## RAILROADERS' DEMANDS APPROVED BY CHAIRMEN

### Great Strike if Demands Are Not Granted.

Detroit, Aug. 20.—General chairmen of the United Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and Railway Shop Laborers today approved a new wage and working agreement already submitted to the railroad administration, calling for an increase in pay of approximately \$1 a day per man, time and a half for overtime and promotion by seniority.  
The demands, it is said, affect all railroads in the United States, Canada and Central America and involve about 600,000 workers. Half of that number are members of the union.  
A referendum now being taken is returnable August 24. Union officials declare 99 per cent of the men favor the proposed schedule and promise a general strike of all maintenance of way employes if their demands are not met.

## RAILWAY EXECUTIVES

TELL PLAN OF RETURN

## OHIO BOLSHEVIKI THROWN IN JAIL AFTER POLICE RAID

### 118 Russians Arrested in Youngstown; Red Flags and Propaganda Seized.

By the Associated Press.  
Youngstown, Ohio, Aug. 20.—One hundred and eighteen Russians, alleged Bolsheviks, are held in the county jail today as the result of a raid by federal officials last night on an alleged Bolshevik meeting in East Youngstown.  
The officers broke up the meeting in the midst of a speech said to have been highly radical.  
An automobile load of red flags and Bolshevik propaganda was seized.  
Federal officials said today that a charge of sedition would be filed.

## PALMER OPPOSES FOOD-LAW CHANGE

### Too Much Power to President, He Says, and Would Delay Other Amendments; Appears Before Committee

By the Associated Press.  
Washington, Aug. 20.—Proposed amendments to the food-control act which would authorize the president to fix wholesale and retail prices of certain commodities today were strongly opposed by Attorney General Palmer. Appearing before the house agricultural committee to urge speedy enactment of additional laws to help reduce the cost of living the attorney general declared such executive power to be too drastic and that it would provoke so much debate in congress as to delay the passage of other amendments suggested by the department of justice.  
The department has recommended that the provisions of the food-control act be made applicable to wearing apparel, fuel and fertilizers, with a heavy penalty for profiteering.

### Friends of Packers Are Heard.

By the Associated Press.  
Washington, Aug. 20.—Opponents of legislation providing regulation of the packing industry was heard today when the senate agricultural committee resumed consideration of this subject. William T. Nardin of St. Louis, manager of a milk condensery, objected to federal licensing, on the ground that other industrial establishments would be required to submit to regulation.  
The situation from the retail butchers' standpoint was presented by Emmanuel Wasserman of Norfolk, Va. "Any legislation that hurts the packers will hurt the retailer's business," he said. "I've always found the packers fair and square."  
Senator Kenyon, Republican, Iowa, asked if the packers' representatives had not urged the witness to appear. "They talked to me about it," he said, "but I was interested myself."

### Lot of Work by a Lot of Hens Goes to Waste

By the Associated Press.  
Rome, Aug. 20.—Five million eggs, worth approximately \$200,000, had to be dumped on the mole at Genoa re-

## JACOB CURRY ESCAPES; INCENDIARIES ACTIVE

### Criminals in Woods Start Many Conflagrations; Salmon Mountain Out of Control; Lockouts Abandoned.

### GOLD CREEK DANGER IS BECOME ACUTE ONCE MORE

**FIRES ON RESERVATION.**  
Reports of three large fires burning on the Flathead reservation, on Indian land, were brought to Missoula today by residents of the section, who came to this city seeking men and supplies for fire-fighting crews. One fire, with a front of several miles, is burning near the Jocko river and covering several sections of land. Another is burning fiercely not far from Mill creek, and is threatening to advance into the Lolo forest at a point near Evaro. A third blaze is burning near St. Ignatius.  
The general fire situation in district No. 1, embracing Montana and Northern Idaho, has never in the history of the west been as serious as it is today, according to forestry officials. Reports of new fires breaking out and old blazes escaping control and spreading over the entire country are coupled with those of vicious actions of criminals in the woods, who not only set fires in isolated spots, but have in several cases severed connections between the fire-fighting crews and the outside world, with serious results.  
The fires in the Salmon Mountain district of the Bitter Root yesterday ran wild over the country south of the Bitter Root valley, fanned by high winds. The Whitecap fires are also very bad and have escaped all control lines.  
So severe are the fires in the Selway forests that three important lookout stations on the front lines have been abandoned. The density of the smoke pouring forth from the mass of flames burning through the dry yellow timber country makes it impossible for the men combating the flames to accomplish anything toward their control. The Petking, Eagle Butte and Rocky Ridge blazes are worst in the Selway.

**Criminals Cut Telephone Wires.**  
Communication with the Clearwater forest was severed early this week by members of a crew coming out from the fires cutting the telephone lines. Thirty men were in the crew which passed out along a telephone line, which before they left was in perfect working order. After they had passed out all communication was cut off and investigation revealed that the government line had been cut in seven places, and the wires wrapped around trees or destroyed. As a result, it has been impossible to obtain information from the Clearwater or get any calls for men which might have been sent out.  
Reports from the Cabinet forest are that a fire is sweeping down Swamp creek over a 15-mile front, fanned by

**Four Ranch-Houses Near to City Destroyed; Aged Man Is Safe From Flames; the Fighters Establish Camp.**  
Sweeping through the Rattlesnake valley at a rate of speed inconceivable even to veteran forestry men, flames originating in the vicinity of Quast's ranch in the Grant creek country yesterday destroyed four ranch houses and forced farmers of the Rattlesnake to flee with their families for their lives, while driving two score fire-fighters from camp to camp.  
The fire, said to have been started Monday afternoon by a rancher while attempting to drive some sheep grazing in the vicinity of his property from the neighborhood, burned over a mile front that afternoon and continued spreading yesterday morning, though not seemingly serious. In the middle of the afternoon a high gale drove the flames over the mountains and into the flat valley country at a terrific pace.  
**Fire Fighters Forced to Retreat.**  
Supervisor Rutledge Parker, with 40 men, attempted to establish a camp at Curry's ranch, on Spring creek, but the flames advanced so speedily that his forces did a rapid about-face and retreated, barely saving their supplies and the cars which had brought them up the valley. Jacob Curry, the pioneer owner of the ranch, and 10 fire-fighters, were cut off from the remainder of the crew and for the time being were given up as destroyed by the flames. Curry is said to have sought refuge in a roothouse and later to have worked his way out safely. The fire-fighters followed the flames down Spring gulch until they reached the fox farm.  
After the flames had driven the fire-fighters from the Curry ranch and had burned some buildings there, the crew attempted to make another stand at the fox farm, owned by the Montana Silver Black Fox company. The

(Continued on Page Two.)

### China Still Determined Not to Sign Peace Pact

By the Associated Press.

### FOXES HIDE UNDERGROUND AS DANGER PASSES OVER

(Continued on Page Two.)

### CLAIMS ANACONDA WOMAN TOOK HER HUSBAND AWAY

**Mrs. Fowler Wants Police to Return Erring Spouse.**  
Stealing a husband is a new crime in the annals of the local police department, but such was the charge filed by Mrs. Kate Fowler against Helen Willey at an early hour this morning. The source of the trouble, Floyd Fowler, is being held in the city jail and the two women are held at the county jail.  
At 3:30 this morning Officer Coffey was called to the Milwaukee station to take in charge a woman who was acting suspiciously, according to the report received. Why Coffey placed the woman under arrest she stated her name was Kate Fowler and said another woman was attempting to steal

(Continued on Page Two.)