

Louis Newman (1868-1932) in Montana

The development of Montana after 1880 until 1910 was mostly due to the construction of three major railroad lines that crossed the state: Northern Pacific, Great Northern, and Milwaukee Road. The track for all of them went through Minneapolis/St. Paul, the Dakotas, Montana, Idaho, and Washington. They all ended at ports along the Puget Sound.

James Jerome Hill (1838-1916) "The Empire Builder"

When [James J. Hill](#) decided in 1889 to build across the northern part of the United States, he made trips to Europe to secure financing and recruit people to come settle the areas where his railroad was going. Louis Newman was born in Germany/Austria in 1868 and became an orphan there at the age of 7. He had family in New York and therefore was sent to the United States in 1875. Later he had a job selling papers and sundries on various railroads. That job required living on the train for long periods of time. Eventually, he was working for the Great Northern around 1892 when the end of the line was at Havre, Montana. Through his job, he had gotten acquainted with James J. Hill. A [statue honoring Hill](#) is opposite the current Amtrak station in Havre, Montana. The town is named after the town of Le Havre in France but is pronounced as Have-ER according to people from there.

Havre, Montana

[Havre](#) was a rough frontier town at the time in 1892, but James J. Hill wanted to make the town, which was the halfway point from Minneapolis to Seattle, into a major station, junction, and repair facility on the railroad. To do this, Mr. Hill needed to make the town more civilized so it would attract settlers and families. He approached Louis Newman to see if he could help clean up the rough and tough elements of the town. Louis was well acquainted with people in the town with his job on the railroad selling sundries to the passengers. He recruited three townspeople that he knew. There was the boxer who could really hit hard from a short distance, the wrestler who was a large muscular sort, and the gunslinger who was really quick on the draw. They all went as a group to visit some of the undesirables in the town: the first one got the punch, the second got the full nelson hold, the third suddenly found a gun in his face. They all got the message that they were unwelcome and should move on. Mr. Hill was delighted with the result and gave Louis the lunch room concession at the railroad station in Havre. Since the train stops were limited in time, Louis decided to bake chicken pot pies in advance and sell them to passengers. After all, pot pies were baked hot, with meat, dough, and vegetables, all in a convenient container. His food/drink service was excellent, and he got to meet many of the people that lived in town or passed through on the railroad.

He had made several trips to New York and back on the railroad as a part of his business. He met his second cousin, Jennie Sinaberg, there. Jennie was born on February 29, 1876 in Austria (some documents say New York). When her family came to the United States with her, they disembarked the ship in Manhattan since the parents was relatively prosperous with relatives in the city. They did not therefore go through Ellis Island. Since Louis had decided to

settle in Havre, he wrote Jennie a beautiful series of letters describing life in Havre and progressively pursuing her as a wife. The entire courtship was done by letter and eventually, he went back to New York to claim his bride. They were married in 1896 at her parent's home on 120th St. in the Harlem District of New York City. Jennie tried to keep all the magnificent letters, but they got lost in the home moves over the years; she also was the oldest of 8 children from her parents; all survived into adulthood and older ages.

Jennie arrived in Havre and immediately noticed what Louis had not told her. She was a city girl that was now living in a wild west town. The town was poorly constructed; there were cracks in the wooden walls that let in the wind and dust from across the plains. Winters were cold and snowy; there were few activities. Keeping the house warm was a major activity.

Louis was a respected person in town who knew most of the people. He became a civically active leader and joined several organizations such as the Masons where he was promoted to the highest rank. He got involved in city politics and continued to make Havre a better place to live. Around 1904, he became mayor of Havre. He became involved in banking and promoted the development of the town. [In February 1905, he sent a letter to Secretary Hay cosigned by 473 northern Montanans to protest a Canada plan to divert water from the Milk River.](#) Over time, he became a party-line Democrat in his political dealings, and continued his good relationship with James J. Hill. He also became acquainted with Theodore Roosevelt during his many trips to visit the West. The National Park bearing that President's name is just east of Montana in North Dakota. Havre became a division point and repair shop for the Great Northern Railroad, which was the largest employer in the town for the next ninety years. The town was the most populated Montana town along the main GN railroad line across the state.

Louis and Jennie eventually had 8 children. Three were still-born and the records for the five that survived are available from the records provided by *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. There are also marriage records and census records from 1910, 1920, and 1930.

Name	Birthdate	Location	Deceased	Location
Walter Samuel	13 Mar 1898	Manhattan, NY	21 May 1908	Havre, Montana
Daniel Edwin	02 Mar 1900	Bronx, NY	27 June 1900	Havre, Montana
Bernice Evelyn	18 Jul 1901	Cascade County	4 Oct 1959	Los Angeles
Edmund Sinaberg	18 Mar 1904	Manhattan, NY	4 Jun 1989	Los Angeles
Arthur Ignatius	30 Sep 1911	Great Falls	30 May 2005	Los Angeles

The 1910 Census record shows Louis living in Havre with two children and three boarders. Frontier life in Montana was not easy for the family. Jennie had several trips back to New York (where her parents lived) for child birth and various medical procedures. She had fifteen surgical operations in her life. Both Bernice and Arthur were born deaf; this is now attributed to having children with your second cousin. At that time, such marriages were considered acceptable, but genetic knowledge has advanced since then. Now, having children with any close relative is not a good plan since it may lead to a greater probability of hereditary issues.

Great Falls, Montana

The Great Northern connected Havre directly to [Great Falls](#) which had a rail line to the mining area around [Butte](#). Great Falls grew to become the second largest town in Montana at the time after the Butte copper mining area. The Anaconda Copper Mining company became the largest employer in Great Falls. In 1908, a high smoke stack was built at the large smelter at Black Eagle across from town. That chimney rose 506 feet (148 meters) and was called the "Big Stack". It became the symbol of the town which had the nickname of the "Electric City" due to the power generated from the nearby namesake falls on the Missouri River. The navigation headwaters of the Missouri River are east of the town at Fort Benton. The falls in the area were a substantial obstacle for the Lewis and Clark 1805 expedition westward.

In 1911, Louis moved to Great Falls where he was then running all the lunch rooms for the Great Northern in the state of Montana. He had an office on the platform of the railroad station. He moved to a well-built house at 1313 2nd Ave North. The house had a basement and more modern plumbing and heating facilities. Jennie was delighted with the décor and additional space available. Even many of the streets in Great Falls were paved. As a much larger city, there were more services, such as a larger hospital, that were available to the residents. Jennie could feel comfortable inviting her parents and siblings to come visit the city. Since her mother was an excellent cook, she was always welcome to stay and visit the family.

Louis was the President of the Montana Chamber of Commerce in 1916. Louis continued his involvement in politics and was elected a representative from Great Falls, Cascade County, in 1916 to the Montana legislature at the capital of Helena. He was then elected mayor of Great Falls in 1919 and his picture hangs in city hall along the [Hall of Mayors](#). He continued to be involved in several banking and business activities in Montana. He was invited to join the Board of Directors of several banks.

Economic Crash of 1919

The state of Montana had done very well during World War I due to the demand for copper, minerals, and farm products because of the war. Several events occurred in 1919 such as the Spanish flu epidemic, liquor prohibition, and the end of the war that caused a huge decline in the demand for Montana products. Some economic studies have shown that the relative prosperity of the state has not reached the levels of 1918 since then.

There were also problems in Montana with the educational facilities for the deaf. At the time, the school for the deaf was combined with the school for people who were mentally disabled. Better schooling for the two deaf children was available in Ogden, Utah which had a good rail connection via the Union Pacific in Butte. Later, the family decided to migrate to Los Angeles where the schools for the deaf were much better and the weather was nicer. Some of Jennie's siblings had already relocated there from New York and recommended the area.

The economic crash and financial panic adversely affected the finances of Louis. Although in 1918, he was worth about half a million dollars, by 1921, when he closed out his business dealings and left Montana, he only came out of there with fifty thousand dollars.