

the crisis of that year, and the resulting hard times, told heavily on the prosperity of Helena. Two years later the tower was closed and many of its employés left the place. Just at this time, however, occurred a daring venture by Samuel B. Knapp, which for a brief time imparted an unusual activity to all of Helena's business operations. In the summer of 1839, Knapp, then cashier of the Mineral Point Bank, leased the tower and began making shot. His brother was associated with him in this enterprise, acting as his agent in buying the lead, disposing of the shot manufactured, and having general local oversight of the business. John Wilson, who was then at St. Louis, was hired to come to Helena and take charge of the manufacture of shot-kegs. As there was no dry lumber with which to make these, a steam drying-house was erected, and green lumber was thus prepared for immediate use. John Metcalf was hired as shot-dropper, and he also acted as superintendent of the tower and kept the books for Knapp.

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cut from the bank of the creek to the perpendicular shaft. \* \* \*

A small railway is erected within the lateral drift, communicating with the well, and extending to the finishing house, which is built on the bank of the creek, immediately opposite the entrance of the shaft. On this railway the shot is carried in small boxes or cars from the basin or well, by a horse power, into the finishing house; the same power by various machinery is employed in drying the shot in a cylinder over an oven; from the oven the shot is carried into the polishing barrel, and thence the various sizes are passed over the several inclined floors for separation, and taken to the separating sieves; after which the several sizes are weighed, bagged, and put into kegs; a steamboat can lie at the door of the finishing house for the purpose of taking the commodity to market.

"This establishment would do honor to any old settlement in the east; the public spirit of the proprietors deserves remuneration in the profits of their business. I am informed that five thousand weight of shot is the usual quantity made per diem, by one set, that is six hands—twice the quantity can be made by doubling the hands—of course there is no want of pigs of lead in the country. This company are the owners of a large body of mineral and timber land. One of the partners, Mr. Benjamin L. Webb, resides here and superintends the concern. The hospitality of his house and the information obtained in his society are matters on which a traveler's recollection may dwell with pleasure."