St. Louis, Montana ??

When gold was discovered at Last Chance Gulch and Confederate Gulch in 1864, miners and prospectors were drawn to the Missouri River Valley. Radersburg exploded to a town of around 2500 people.

According to early accounts in 1866, mining claims were filed in the area along Indian Creek and the town of St. Louis sprung up. According to Leeson's History of Montana, St. Louis had a population of 116 people including merchants who had associated stores in Diamond City and Canton.

Of course, the much better-known city of St. Louis, Missouri already existed. Mail was often routed to the wrong place and the United States Postal Service soon asked the town of St. Louis, Montana to change its name.

A town meeting was called and the suggested names for the town was narrowed down to the names of two old-timers, B.F. Lowery and Joe Hassel. A vote was cast and it was a tie between the names of Lowery and Hassel. A count was taken and there was only one eligible voter missing: Charley Moffat.

A delegation was sent to Charley's house to ask him to make the tie-breaking vote. Mr. Moffat was sound asleep (passed out?) and highly inebriated. When asked to vote between Lowery and Hassel, Charley Moffat remembered that Lowery had been a Confederate soldier and exclaimed "I'll vote for Hassel. I wouldn't vote for that renegade rebel Lowery". And the town was renamed Hassel.

Mr. Moffat likely regretted making that vote since B.F. Lowery was his best friend! Or at least he used to be his best friend.

The town of Hassel was strictly a mining town and the town's fortunes rose and fell with the price of metals. Hassel never had a population much over 200 people, but the town lasted well into the 1930's and 1940's. In January of 1971, the Townsend Star carried a small item in the Commissioner's proceedings, stating that there was a petition to abandon the streets and alleys of the site of the St. Louis Townsite later know as Hassel.

All that remains of Hassel is a single building located across Indian Creek and the fork between Indian Creek Road and Shep's Gulch road. Many of Broadwater County's older residents remember 2 signs painted on the Indian Creek Canyon walls that advertised Townsend businesses to the citizens of St. Louis/Hassel. The signs have all but disappeared from the rocks along the canyon road.