



*The* DENVER WESTERNERS  
**ROUNDUP**

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1999



*Colorado State Historical Society photo, circa 1920s*

Helen Bonfils and her tiger cub in her electric car, both gifts from Papa

**Papa's Girl:  
Miss Helen Bonfils**  
by  
**Eva Hodges Watt, C.M.**  
(Presented January 27, 1999)

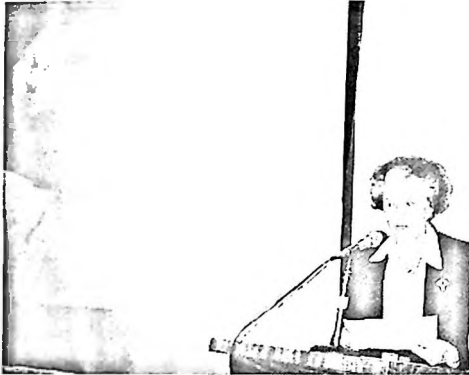
# THE DENVER WESTERNERS ROUNDUP

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Eva Hodges Watt presents her paper to the Denver Posse under the watchful eye of Helen Bonfils

## About the Author

Eva Hodges Watt was born in Silver City, N.M., the daughter of a lawyer-politician.

Following her graduation from Colorado College in 1943, she worked for a year and one half for the El Paso Times before joining The Denver Post as a reporter. She retired in 1985 after serving as a reporter, religion editor, fashion editor and, finally, society editor.

She was married in 1953 to Thompson R. Watt, former news director of KOA-TV and Radio. Mr. Watt died in 1972. She has two sons, Joe, an assistant city editor at The Post, and Rob, an artist and employee of the Jefferson County Sentinel.

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# Papa's Girl: Miss Helen Bonfils

by  
Eva Hodges Watt, C.M.  
(Presented January 27, 1999)

When people learn that I am writing about Miss Helen Bonfils, the late major stockholder of *The Denver Post*, they often ask, "did you know her?"

The answer, of course, is "yes". We all felt we knew Miss Helen, as she was known in the city room and throughout Denver, because she was so warmly gracious. She greeted almost anyone who crossed her path as "darling" or "dear" (though this was often in lieu of knowing their names.)

But as one of only two or three women general assignment reporters on *The Post* in those years, I gained a more personal access when I was sent to her office to interview her favorite New York designers, Elinor and Frank Jenkins, who were in Denver as her house guests.

I apparently passed muster, and thereafter, she several times requested me as a reporter, right up to the day *The Post* moved from Champa to California Streets, and I was sent to record her feelings on that occasion which so mingled nostalgia and anticipation.

When I told Miss Helen that I would be leaving *The Post* because I was pregnant, I expected to hear the usual felicitations. Instead, she responded vaguely, "well, that's nice, dear." Then she dismissed the subject, adding airily, "I was never maternal."

Later, friends of Miss Helen's told me she was not just disinterested in children (until they reached the age of reason, that is), she actively disliked them. Neither she or her sister, May, had children.

I decided the flamboyant Miss Helen was secretly shy, and that was why she asked for me, a familiar face, on occasions when she had to be "written up," as we used to say.

Some years later, when I read a piece about her in the *Saturday Evening Post* I understood a more compelling reason for her aversion to interviews.

In 1944 the *Saturday Evening Post* was the most prestigious mass-circulation magazine in the country and the one with the largest circulation. And since Miss Helen Bonfils was one of the wealthiest and potentially powerful women in the United States, it was inevitable that she should come to its attention. A request from the magazine for an interview was almost a command performance.

And so, Miss Helen graciously welcomed Mary Ellen and Mark Murphy into the Bonfils mansion on East 12th Avenue where she sat for photographer Victor de Palma with her favorite dogs, a poodle and a small bulldog, in her lap. She and her husband, George Somnes, posed strolling down Champa Street with *The Post* in



*Colorado State Historical Society photo*

### F.G. Bonfils and aviatrix Amelia Earhart

the background for a picture; she gave the Murphys free rein to roam the Post and talk to—and photograph—her executives. She and George Somnes entertained the couple at their River House apartment in Manhattan. The Murphy's article, entitled "Papa's Girl," appeared Dec. 23, 1944. Its effects were devastating.

It began, "God knows what the late Frederick G. Bonfils, who, with his partner, Harry Tammen, built the Denver Post into one of the most raucous and annoying newspapers in the country, would think of his paper and favorite daughter, if he could see either of them now"—a decade after his death.

While the paper continues its "relentless use of big type," the authors wrote, "the reading matter beneath the raging headlines is little different from that appearing in any other undistinguished newspaper in any other American city."

Helen Bonfils, the Murphys speculated, "would startle her parent somewhat too. She has married a man connected with the stage, has become an actress, lives a good part of the time in New York and gives a lot of Bonfils money away, sometimes without getting a receipt...She has a tremendous income, which she spends on her own church, the Roman Catholic, and on a lot of others of various denominations;

her gratuities to impoverished friends run high, and the money she gives away on other things is amazing.”

“The town,” the Murphys said, “looks upon her with pride and affection. She has gained this respect through effort and a genuine graciousness and charity. As an angel of bounty, she looks like a superannuated chorus girl, having that sort of taste in clothes and a similar manner. “My dear,’ she is likely to say in describing an episode (or maybe ‘darling’ or ‘honey’) ‘it was brutal.””

Helen, the article continued in its faintly mocking tone, “seems to remember her father as a great, proud man who lived to improve the world as well as his own fortunes. She speaks of him often, reciting little axioms of his which, she gives one to think, guide her life.”

Of course, the authors had familiarized themselves with Bonfils past, including the “lotteries” and “fairly ripe land promotions in the Southwest,” thanks to *Timber Line*, the book in which one-time Post reporter Gene Fowler painted a less than flattering portrait of Bonfils.

Bonfils, the Murphys said, was “rapacious and cunning, and he had a great pride. He was brilliant in his knowledge of what people would read and of how to make a paper a part of a region’s life, and although the Post was one of the most monstrous efforts in American journalism, no competitor could come close to it.”

“When he died, “ the article said, “a number of merchants and politicians of the town attended his funeral, to make sure he was dead and buried deep.”

The Murphys’ conversations with a number of Denverites led them to conclude that Helen’s early social life “wasn’t much,” and that abundant snubs had been directed against Bonfils and his family by “the establishment.”

The Murphys threw in the gratuitous information that “one of the town’s games of an evening is guessing her age. The guesses run from forty to sixty.” (Miss Helen, who *never* revealed her age, was then 55). And they opined that “although her imperious face shows some strain and age, (she) has a young neck and a young, full figure, which isn’t as corseted as much as some Denver women would like to believe.”

The Murphys ended by quoting Helen, “The Post is Papa’s monument. It is like he was, dynamic, protean and strong with the strength of a virile man ...I’ll always live in my father’s shadow.”

“And so will her newspaper,” the Murphys concluded.

The article was brilliant, but as Helen herself might have said, “my dear, it was brutal.” Whatever qualms Helen may have had about the article, she hadn’t expected a portrayal so stinging personal. Worse yet, she felt she had freely offered up Papa and his paper for the worst savaging since Gene Fowler’s *Timber Line*, a book she detested.

When I began my duties as a reporter in the old city room of *The Denver Post*, then on Champa Street, in May 1945, Miss Helen and her husband, George Somnes, were in New York, where they customarily spent the winter season producing Broadway plays. Other reporters had let drop

some titillating tidbits about the Bonfils. For instance, her sister, May, I was told, had eloped with a man described as a "piano tuner" some years before. As a result her father had hardened his heart against her. May and Helen were also estranged. Betty Craig, the ancient drama critic (ancient, to me; that is; she was then in her forties), was said to be Bonfils' love child by a Denver society woman, no longer living.

Still, I was unprepared for the drama of a scene which took place one fine morning in June 1945 in the City Room of *The Post*.

### Statuesque woman

On that day the door of the little elevator that served the second floor news room opened at about 10 a.m. and discharged a remarkable couple. The statuesque woman who emerged exuded an exuberant sense of pleasure. She was Miss Helen Bonfils, mistress of all she surveyed, and she obviously relished her role.

With typical flamboyance (as I came to appreciate), she was marvelously dressed for her part. A small black hat and veil partially confined an aureola of bleached blonde hair. Gleaming silver foxes circled her shoulders and cascaded luxuriantly down a well-endowed bosom encased in a svelte black suit.

Her slender legs were balanced confidently on spiky four-inch heels. A waft of expensive Bellogia perfume preceded her, and she was followed by a handsome man with a trim moustache, nattily attired in a double-breasted, pin-striped black suit. He held a homburg to his chest and wore a

slight smile.

Miss Helen's resounding cries of "darling" could be heard in the furthest corner of the room as, first, the publisher, William Shepherd, then the managing editor and the city editor, approached her one after another for warm embraces and lipstick-laden kisses on their cheeks. Fixing each greeter with her keen blue eyes, she would engage in conversation punctuated by her throaty laughter. And each listener, in turn, was convinced he was the most important and interesting person in the world at that moment.

In the background, her husband, George Somnes, regarded all this with an expression of amused tolerance.

Awaiting their turns to welcome "the boss" were the lesser luminaries, employees who had known Miss Helen over the years. Among the first of these to come forward was the drama editor, Betty Craig, her presumed half-sister. The two women fell into each other's arms, and, then as they chatted animatedly—Betty, small and homely with a face like a little bulldog and one withered arm, and Helen statuesque and glamorous—onlookers were struck by the one characteristic they shared; both women had the same ultra slender legs.

Later, Miss Helen huddled in the art department with *Denver Post* artist, Paul Gregg. He would pause in his work on the weekly oil painting for the Sunday magazine cover, and Miss Helen's gleaming blonde head would be close to his handsome silvery one. Then, her delighted, hearty laughter would ring out across the room. They were exchanging the latest risqué stories.

Before the morning was over,

Miss Helen would have been to the back shop to visit the men operating the big black linotype machines, asking about families and extracting personal tidbits. And she would have hugged and kissed various members of the advertising department, the artists and longtime photographers.

Miss Helen was, as Denverites often said, a “wonderful woman” and of an entirely different stripe than that old pirate, her father, a founder of *The Denver Post*, Frederick Bonfils.

But to understand Miss Helen, you must first understand the father she adored. During his lifetime, her every aim was to please him—including remaining single until after his death which occurred in 1933. She was then 44 years old.

The dashing Bonfils was a handsome man with intense blue eyes, wavy dark brown hair and a moustache jauntily waxed at the ends. Trim and erect, he carried himself with a presence that belied a stature of only medium height. A Missourian by birth, Bonfils was said to be closely related to Napoleon Bonaparte, and he was proud of the family boast that his grandfather had played with the future emperor of France when both were boys in Corsica.

Perhaps his erect carriage dated from his years as a cadet at West Point, which he left without completing his studies.

Instead, he wed Belle Barton of Peekskill, N.Y. in 1882. The young couple came west to Canon City Colorado, where he tried his hand at teaching in a boys’ academy. But this mundane pursuit was not for Bonfils. As the *Saturday Evening Post* article indicated, he was engaged in the phony

lottery business in Kansas City in 1895 when he came to the attention of a Denver curio dealer named Harry Tammen.

Tammen was conducting business in a Chicago print shop, when he noticed some lottery tickets which he learned were being printed for a “gambler” in Kansas City named Fred Bonfils. This Bonfils struck Tammen as a man with a sporting nature, and, better yet, with money. Tammen arranged a meeting and offered him a proposition: “You’ve got the money. I’ve got the brains, and there’s a bargain of a lifetime waiting for us in Denver.” The bargain was *Denver’s Evening Post* at a price of \$12,500.

Bonfils was intrigued by the offer, the law was breathing down his neck in Kansas City because no one ever seemed to win the lotteries he sponsored except his employees. And he liked this brassy stranger. The two men shook hands on the deal. Tammen was thirty-nine, Bonfils, thirty-four.

In Denver, Bonfils settled his family in a substantial brick home at 939 Corona Street, a respectable upper-middle-class neighborhood. (The house is no longer standing.) Helen was six.

The year was 1895, and Denver was energetically shedding its image as a frontier town. Only thirty-six years earlier, in 1859, it had been a settlement of crude shacks on the banks of Cherry Creek. Now it was beginning to take on some of the airs of a real town. The offices of *The Evening Post* were on the town’s main thoroughfare, a dirt-packed Sixteenth Street, across from the Tabor Grand Opera House and the five-story Tabor Business Block, which was serviced by the town’s first eleva-

tor.

The elegant Windsor Hotel on Eighteenth Street could boast that it had hosted both a president (Ulysses S. Grant) and a poet (Oscar Wilde). Further up, on Seventeenth Street, The Brown Palace Hotel had recently been completed, and its builder, Henry G. Brown, had given the state land for a capitol which was to be to the east of his hostelry.

Bonfils and Tammen proved to be naturals as publishers of a paper which was soon to be scorned by many as a sensational rag. Still everyone read it, though—as the Colorado historian Caroline Bancroft said, many of the respectable folk of the town had it delivered to the back entrances of their homes.

After only six years, in 1901, the *Denver Post*, as the *Evening Post* had been renamed, overtook its major competitor, the *Rocky Mountain News* in paid circulation. The *Post's* competitors charged that Bon and Tam, as the owners were sometimes called, were not above using blackmail to persuade advertisers to patronize the *Post's* pages.

May and Helen attended St. Mary's Academy and the exclusive Wolcott School for Girls before going east to the Brownell finishing school in New York.

Bonfils was noted for his tight-fisted policies, and these were felt at home as well as at *The Post*. By the time May and Helen were teenagers, they had developed strategies to get around his parsimonious ways.

In one instance they entered into a conspiracy with a popular Denver milliner, Kate Feretti. Kate created

Denver's most charming hats, and each season the girls were permitted to visit her shop on Fifteenth Street to select chapeaus of the newest mode. Bonfils himself was a dandy when it came to dress, and his vanity extended to wanting his women folk to look their best. Kate Feretti would bill Bonfils for half a dozen hats for each girl, although she had made only three apiece. Bonfils would pay her bill, and Kate refunded the difference to the sisters so they would have some spending money.

The sisters were both very pretty, curvaceous, blue-eyed blondes. May, the eldest, was her father's favorite. One day after May returned from college she announced she was going to a dance that night to celebrate her twenty-first birthday.

"You don't love me, or else you wouldn't want to go out tonight," Bonfils said stiffly. "You can go only if you take me with you." May went to the dance and her father went with her. Bonfils cast a suspicious eye on every young man who asked May for a date. He was convinced they were after his money. Probably he had a possessive nature as well.

That summer, May seemed to be taking a serious interest in the piano, she frequently rode the tramway downtown to buy sheet music. In fact, she was enjoying a flirtation with Clyde V. Berryman, a young clerk at the Wells Music Store. At night, she slipped out her bedroom window to meet him, and they spooned in Cheeseman Park, which adjoined the splendid new mansion Bonfils had purchased on East Twelfth Avenue.

One day when Papa was out of the city, on Nov. 7, 1904, May and





*photo courtesy Belle Bonfils Blood Bank*

### Belle Bonfils, Helen's mother

Clyde were married in a civil ceremony in the nearby town of Golden. May was 22, Berryman, 24. Papa was predictably furious; he was convinced Berryman was a fortune-hunter, and he steeled himself to shut his eldest daughter out of his life.

The awful consequence of May's rashness was not lost on Helen, who was then 14. Nor did the lesson lose any of its impact in the years that followed when May and Berryman drifted about the country while the young man struggled to make a living for them.

Dr. Osgood Philpott, who was dermatologist to Helen and her mother, Belle, gave me an insight into the restrictions Bonfils placed on his daughter's social life at a time when she was in her late twenties.

A friend of Dr. Philpott's, Clarence Cobb, was "a young, unmarried, fashionable blade who was always in demand as a partner at a dinner or to make a fourth at bridge," Dr. Philpott said.

"Cobbie met Helen and tried a dozen times to get a date. Each time she put him off. For a year he kept trying,

because he thought she was fascinating. Finally, one morning when he called she said she could see him.

When he called for her at the mansion about eight, he saw someone peering out the window, and out came Mr. Bonfils himself.

"I have come to call for Helen," Clarence said.

"Yes," Bonfils replied. "I want to talk to you first. Helen has to be back on this porch at a quarter of twelve, and if she isn't, you'll hear from me."

During the evening, Clarence asked Helen why—after nine or ten invitations—she finally decided to go out with him. "I have to get permission from my father," she explained. "He always said you were too flashy, but this time he changed his mind."

"Cobbie said years later that it was too bad she didn't have the same freedom as other girls," Dr. Philpott said. "She wouldn't have picked such lemons (as husbands)."

(As a footnote: The first time Belle and Helen came to Dr. Philpott's office after Bonfils' death, the physician extended his condolences. "I'm sure you will miss him," he sympathized. "Miss him!" Belle Bonfils exclaimed. "I'll say I'll miss him. If you had to crawl out of bed over two shot guns and light a fire in the fireplace every morning, you'd know how I'll miss him!")

But life was not dull for Helen during Papa's lifetime. Papa and Tammen bought a circus, the Sells-Floto. One summer she was allowed to tour with the circus with her best friend, Thelma Groth, whose father managed the circus. They traveled in a sumptuous railroad car, and Helen appeared in

the circus's melodrama. She proved to be a natural as an actress, and discovered the thrill that comes with an audience's applause.

Helen adored animals—and circuses—all her life. On one of her birthdays, Papa gave her a lion cub, and she rode around Denver in her electric car with the cub on the seat beside her.

### **Life was a circus**

Sometimes it seemed that life was a circus on Champa Street, which was now home to *The Denver Post*. Harry Houdini hung by his heels on rope slung over the iron balcony on the front of the *Post* building, and escaped from a strait jacket. "Human Flies" scaled the sides of the Foster Building across the street. The *Post* was one of the first newspapers to install an electric play-by-play scoreboard for World Series baseball games, and hundreds of Denverites massed on Champa Street to watch the miraculous scoreboard on the iron balcony of the *Post* building.

Papa played host to many celebrities who came to town, and he and his chauffeur frequently took them on sight-seeing excursions over Colorado's primitive mountain roads. His guests included Jack Dempsey and his wife, actress Estelle Taylor; humorist Will Rogers, and America's sweethearts, Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. The new airplanes fascinated Bonfils and he greeted Amelia Earhart at Denver's airport. Helen knew of no girl who had a father like Papa.

In the early 1930s, Bonfils permitted Helen to appear in productions of the newly-organized Denver Civic Theater. He was something of a

ham himself, having appeared in minstrel shows in his youth. She arrived at rehearsals in a chauffeur-driven limousine, accompanied by a maid. However, it was not until after Bonfils' death in January 1933 that Helen could even think of realizing her fantasy of becoming a professional actress. "Papa thought that actresses were whores," she sometimes recalled with fond amusement.

Soon after her father's death, Helen auditioned at Elitch's Theater and secured a place in the company as a character actress. This she did on her own merits. She used her mother's maiden name, Barton, when she read for the director. He didn't know who she was until Jack Gurtler, one of the owners of Elitch's, told him. Her association with Elitch's soon led to a long-delayed courtship and marriage.

But before we turn to the romantic chapters of Miss Helen's life, we should consider the enormous impact on her of her father's death in 1933 and his will which left her the controlling stockholder of *The Denver Post*.

Before Papa's death, Helen had very much resented the fact that a nephew, Major Frederick Bonfils, was slated to be Papa's successor at *The Post*. He wasn't even a *real* Bonfils, Helen fumed inwardly, he had changed his last name from Walker because F.G. encouraged him to believe he would inherit his *Post* shares.

One day she marched into Bonfils' office and told him she wouldn't stand for it. He admired her spunk and told her she had shown him she had what it took to run *The Post*. He said he would see to it that she

would have a controlling interest in the paper. May, who had settled in Denver with her hapless husband by this time, was understandably angry when she learned about Helen's ascendancy at *The Post* under the terms of their father's will. Worse yet, May was to receive only \$12,000 a year so long as she remained married to Clyde Berryman. Helen was to receive \$75,000 a year. May challenged her father's will and won.

### Mother's death

A little more than two years after Bonfils' death, on July 3, 1935, Dr. Philpott arrived at his office to find his receptionist in a state of agitation. He must go to the Bonfils house immediately, she said. "I was there in ten minutes," he recalled, "and you've never heard such a bedlam of sobbing and wailing. The cook, the chauffeur, the gardener—some ten or fifteen people—were milling about. Helen was there, moaning and grieving and making a commotion, too. It was like a show. And there was Belle Bonfils lying dead at the bottom of the long circular staircase. She had suffered a heart attack about three-fourths of the way down the stairs. I took out a syringe and gave her an injection in the heart, but it was no use... Just then, in came another doctor. He went up two or three steps and shouted, 'Shut up! There never was a Bonfils who wasn't a God-damned fool!'"

"He was an arrogant German," Dr. Philpott said, "but he quieted them down."

Belle Bonfils' will also showed great favoritism to Helen. May once more went to court, charging that



Helen Bonfils and her husband, George Somnes: circa 1940s

Helen had used undue influence on their mother. A compromise settlement was reached, but the enmity between the once-loving sisters was now irreversible. They never spoke again.

In 1936, not long after Miss Helen was chosen for Elitch's summer company of actors, George Somnes, joined the theater as its new director. A cosmopolitan man of the world, Somnes had acted in Europe before becoming a Hollywood director. He had served as an understudy to John Barrymore, and his profile was reminiscent of Barrymore's chiseled good looks. In fact, Frederick Bonfils' profile

had borne more than a passing resemblance to that of the matinee idol.

Miss Helen was enchanted with Somnes' savoir faire, his wit and his knowledge of the theater. And Helen offered ample attractions for Somnes. At 46, she was a striking woman. Her strong face was too angular to be considered pretty, but she had a marvelous porcelain-like complexion and her eyes were wonderfully ice blue. Her face was more heavily powdered these days, and she bleached her hair at a time when women who practiced such fakery were considered "fast". But Somnes was not one to be put off by

this show of theatricality.

Moreover, Miss Helen, was warm, generous and affectionate. She had, as her friends said, a marvelous sense of humor. And, of course, all that money.

Helen and George were married Sept. 15, 1936, in a Catholic ceremony at the home of the Arnold Gurtlers.

Miss Helen told Robert Stouffer, the family chauffeur and her closest confidante, that the marriage was "merely a business arrangement—she had the money and George as a director had the means for putting her on the stage." (Still, in later years, after Somnes' death, she often referred to him as "my darling George," and "the love of my life".)

Stouffer drove them across the country to New York on their honeymoon. They tried to persuade him to accompany them to Bermuda, but he begged off, saying he was obliged to visit relatives in New Jersey, his former home.

George and Helen spent most of the fall and winter season in New York where their open checkbook gave them access to a marvelous life, which included a beautiful apartment at one of Manhattan's best addresses, Riverside Drive, and the excitement of being players, in every sense, in the theater world. Helen starred in several of their productions which opened to moderately appreciative reviews. They spent their summers in Denver, where George directed plays at Elitchs Theater, and Helen acted in the productions. (The late Edwin Levy, a Denver director, wrote in a thesis for D.U. that, over the years, Miss Helen became the all-time

favorite actress of Elitch theater-goers. Humor was her forte, and she was more apt to appear as a scrubwoman in a scruffy wig than in a glamorous role.) As Helen once told her good friend, Haila Stoddard, "I may not amount to much in New York, but in Denver I really am somebody."

It wasn't until after George's death that Miss Helen realized her dream of producing a major Broadway hit. This standing room only attraction was *The Thurber Carnival*, and it was written by her best friend, Haila Stoddard, whom she met when both were actresses at Elitchs. Later, she was co-producer with Morton Gottlieb of the Pulitzer-prize winning *Sleuth*, a play Gottlieb says she never liked.

But as much as Miss Helen adored the theater, friends said the most important thing in her life was Papa's paper, *The Denver Post*.

As painful as the *Saturday Evening Post* article had been for Miss Helen, it did have one positive effect. She had described *The Denver Post* as "dynamic". The magazine's dismissal of the *Post* as little different from "any other undistinguished newspaper in any other American city," rankled sorely.

Miss Helen's provinces at the paper had always been the drama and society departments, otherwise, she left the running of the paper to her news executives. She was genuinely surprised to learn that it had lost so much of its edge.

Not long after the article appeared, Miss Helen and E. Ray Campbell, her personal attorney and vice president of *The Post*, undertook a search for a new publisher to replace William Shepherd. "Shep," as he was

known, had joined *The Post* as a reporter in 1908, and was named to succeed Bonfils in 1933. He was by this time a rather dotty seventy-one.

*The Post* had grown tired under his leadership in recent years; its pink cover pages and the blaring red headlines were only brave camouflage for its listlessness and staid ultra-conservatism .

### **New leader at *The Post***

*The Post* executives found the "dynamic" new leader they were seeking in Palmer Hoyt, 49, who had revitalized the *Portland Oregonian* in the seven years he had been the paper's editor and publisher. Hoyt made changes swiftly. He removed Bruce Gustin's fiesty column of editorial opinion from the front page, and banished editorializing from *The Post*'s news stories. He replaced its creaky equipment and modernized the sensational make-up. Whereas "correspondents" for the *Post* had seldom traveled further from Denver than to Englewood by trolley, Hoyt sent his newsmen throughout the country and abroad to cover breaking news stories. Shepherd's Post had thought the Japanese, now in Colorado interment camps, were a menace. Hoyt sent staffer Bill Hosokawa, a veteran of an interment camp, to cover the Korean war in 1950, the paper's first accredited war correspondent. In his twenty-four years with the newspaper, Hoyt upgraded the creaky *Post* to a top-notch newspaper, adjudged one of the best in the country.

But it wasn't all huzzahs and plaudits for the new publisher. In his early years with the *Post*, Hoyt drank heavily. The gossip grew. Helen

couldn't help comparing this garrulous drinker with her abstemious father. She herself took little more than a sip of champagne on occasion. She made her feeling known; Hoyt quit drinking altogether.

Then in June 1949, Hoyt was sued for divorce by his wife of twenty-seven years, Cecile, better known as Brownie. Once his college sweetheart, she was the mother of their two grown sons. Mrs. Hoyt missed Portland and had never adjusted to Denver. And perhaps she had her suspicions...

Soon after the divorce suit was filed, a scandal erupted. Hoyt had sent his outdoor editor, Wallace Tabor, to Africa to write about local men on a safari. The adventure writer returned to find that Hoyt intended to marry his wife, Helen May. Helen Bonfils had been very fond of Brownie; she took a less favorable view of the second Mrs. Hoyt, a vivacious brunette of Rubenesque charms who was only 30. The couple was married Nov. 7, 1950. "Helen didn't like me; she didn't like wives," Helen May said. It was not too long, however, before Miss Helen discovered for herself that the heart has no fealty to common sense.

George Somnes was diagnosed with a chronic liver ailment in 1954 and became bedfast at home for a year. He died at home Feb. 9, 1956. Several years before his death, George had fired the now-aging chauffeur, Robert Stouffer. An ad was run in *The Denver Post* seeking a replacement. Among the applicants who responded was Mike Davis, age 25. Davis was short, prematurely balding, and unprepossessing in almost every way. But he had an ingratiating personality and, most

important, he was strong as an ox. He had pounded ties on a railroad in Nebraska before coming to Denver, where he had been driving a truck.

### **Marries chauffeur**

Strength was a necessary qualification for the job, because the chauffeur's duties included carrying Miss Helen from her upstairs boudoir to the waiting limousine when she was suffering one of her frequent bouts with phlebitis. Davis was hired. Helen Bonfils surprised Denver and even her closest friends when she married Davis in a ceremony in New York in 1959. Several years earlier, when she read that her sister, May, had married Denver interior designer, Edwin Stanton, Helen had scoffed, "The old fool; he's just after her money." And now, at 69, Miss Helen had taken as her groom a man less than half her age.

Davis was a high school dropout. His grammar was atrocious, and, according to those who knew him, he had an exceedingly profane mouth. Helen stood half a head higher than her new husband in the stilt heels she favored.

Helen's friends could only sigh and say Mike was the first real man she had ever known, and she fell head over heels in love with him. But they also asked themselves in wonderment, "Where did he come from?" Where indeed?

Edward Michael Davis was the youngest of seven children—five daughters and two sons—born to Ollie and Mike Davis near Valentine, Nebraska. He was a third generation Nebraskan, his grandparents on his father's side had immigrated from

Lebanon in the 1890s and were pioneer settlers in the Midwest. His parents met and were married in Lincoln.

"Eddie" (as he was known in those years) grew up in Valentine. Becoming bored with high school he dropped out and went to work on the railroad. Popular legend has it that Davis was a dishwasher—or, sometimes it was said, a fry cook—at a restaurant on Denver's East Colfax Avenue before he became the Bonfils-Somnes chauffeur. It would be an interesting rags-to-riches story if true, but the facts are somewhat different.

When Mike first came to Denver in the 1940s, he drove a cement truck. Nights, his favorite pastime was to go to a lively neighborhood bar near his boarding house. Sugie's, on East Colfax Avenue, was owned by Sammy Sugarman, a former University of Denver football player and a popular local figure.

Sugie's was more than a run-of-the-neighborhood saloon. Not long before Davis appeared on the scene, Sugarman had seen the comedians Tom and Dick Smothers at the Red Onion, one of Aspen's most popular night spots. He booked their act and introduced the brothers to Denver at Sugie's. Denver agreed that the brothers were hilarious, and business was booming at the lounge.

"I'm talking about the years from 1949 to 1953," Sugarman recalled. "There were an awful lot of rooming houses around, and after Mike rented a room, he became a customer. He would sit at the bar and order Canadian Club and ginger ale and sip one or two drinks all night.

Mike Davis "was a friendly

kind of guy," Sugarman remembered. "He came in every night after work. It was a neighborhood tavern and everyone knew everyone else by first name.

"When we closed at two, we used to go up to the Corner Kitchen, a twenty-four hour place, for something to eat, and Mike would come and have breakfast with us.

"Since we had some good entertainment in the lounge, we were pretty busy. One Saturday night my barmaid didn't show up and we were swamped. Out of the blue sky this Mike Davis sitting at the bar said, 'Mr. Sugarman, I can't stand to see you work so hard. Can't I wash the dishes?'

"I said, 'Man, you've got a job.'

"He was there every night when he got off work. He loved people. He had a job driving a cement truck and he came in sometimes in dusty clothes. He kept helping and helping me. Maybe one of my workers wouldn't show up; he'd say, 'Don't worry-I'll unload the beer, I'll stock the bar.' Whatever.

"I wanted to pay him, but he said, 'I don't need your money; I've got a good job.' I finally got his social security number and I think I paid him a total of \$100. I guess this continued for three or four months."

A casual observer might well have mistaken Davis for an employee. But Mike saw it differently.

"Week-ends he'd stand at the front door and greet people," Sugarman said. "I think he wanted to be known as the owner, and that was all right with me. He was having a ball. He would have made a wonderful politician.

"One night he comes in and

says, 'Say, do you know a lady by the name of Helen Bonfils?'

"I looked at him like he was crazy. I said I didn't *know* Helen Bonfils, but everyone knew of her. She was the owner of *The Denver Post*.

"He said, 'You'll never believe this, but I answered a blind ad and I got a job working for Helen Bonfils.'

"There, parked at the filling station across the street was a big black Cadillac, a four-door sedan. 'This car belongs to her,' he said. 'I'm her chauffeur. She's married to a guy named George Somnes, and my job is just to take her out to Elitch's and bring her home.'

"He'd come by a lot of times during the day and park in front. He always had a couple of dogs in the back seat. Nights when she was at Elitch's and she was ready for him to pick her up, she'd call and say, 'Sugie, is Mike there?' and I'd say, 'Yes, just a minute, Helen.' She was a wonderful person.

"He'd still help me out a lot when he was her chauffeur. I never saw him wear a uniform; maybe a driver's cap when he was in the car. He wore suits; he liked to get dressed up.

"Then she would fly to New York and he would drive the car back East so they would have it. He'd be gone from three to six weeks. Once he came back and said, 'Here's a coat for you,' and he gave me this nice cashmere coat. He would buy me expensive ties, shirts, lizard shoes, and my wife purses. He used to come over to the house quite a bit.

"One day he comes in and says, 'I'm still driving that black Cadillac for Helen Bonfils, but come see something.'" Sugarman went across the street



to the filling station with Davis, and "there was a black Cadillac. 'This one's mine,' Mike says, and he shows me the ownership paper. He said Helen gave it to him. I said, 'you must be terrific in bed, Mike,' and he kinda blushed."

### Davis strikes oil

Davis wanted to get into the oil business as a wildcatter, and, quietly, Miss Helen became his backer. For sometime she had been lavish with gifts and bonuses for her chauffeur. After their marriage she opened a checkbook that would provide him with millions to purchase equipment and leases.

"Then I saw these headlines (about Davis striking oil)" Sugarman recalled, "I couldn't believe what I read. I thought, 'Well, maybe he *is* an oilman."

Then he started drilling oil wells like crazy and was always getting his name in *The Denver Post*," Sugarman recalled. "He had a tremendous office in the First National Bank Building. My wife and I went with Lillian and Harry Hoffman (Denver's leading liquor dealer) to a Christmas party he gave there.

"I could not believe what a fantastic office he had. And there was Helen Bonfils, just as gracious, and on our level. That was after they were married. "I said two or three times something like, 'Boy, you must really be hung, Mike.' I think it embarrassed him. Well, I was just putting two and two together. I figure why else would a woman like Helen Bonfils take up with Mike Davis?

"His language was terrible. He thought it was cute. I think Helen liked hearing it; It was a part of life she had

never had before.

"I have a lot of dear memories of Mike. I never saw him smoke, never saw him take more than a sociable drink. He liked to buy drinks for the house. He had a filthy mouth, but he never used that language around my wife or kids.

"It was interesting to see a man come to Denver from a little town in Nebraska, drive a cement truck and marry Helen Bonfils. It still seems like a fairy tale to me."

Gretchen Weber, the late fashion editor of *The Denver Post*, was among those who asked Helen point blank why she had married Davis. "Loneliness is a terrible thing, dear," Miss Helen sighed.

At first, Mike had made her feel much younger than her sixty-some years. He took her to Jack Dempsey's Restaurant in New York, where he was on first-name terms with the owner, and went with her to the circus and the zoo in Central Park.

"She would actually run to meet him, she was so infatuated," her friend, Haila Stoddard, recalled.

Miss Helen's investment in Tiger Oil paid off—for her husband. After several millions of dollars expended, Davis was regarded as one of the most successful wildcatters in the business. As "Tiger Mike Davis," he made strike after strike in oil fields in Colorado and Wyoming. He was also attracted to the bright lights of Las Vegas, and, soon, he was devoting a large portion of the earnings of his Tiger Oil Company to his courtship of the singer, Phyllis McGuire.

The evenings when Helen and Mike had sat together at the dinner

table and laughed uproariously at each others tales or went out for dinner and a movie became fewer.

Mike was quite upfront, as we say today, about his infatuation with Phyllis.

"Phyllis is a wonderful girl," he told Helen, he knew Helen would be crazy about her. "I want my little sweetheart (meaning Helen) to meet Phyllis," he urged. Would Helen invite her to Denver? Please? Helen would, and she *did* like the pretty, breezy singer with the irreverent wit. Phyllis stayed at the Lido apartments, a few blocks down from Helen's home at 770 Washington Street. Helen included Phyllis in parties she gave for visiting actors appearing in productions at the Denver Auditorium theater, and would take her around the room, introducing her as "my *very* dear friend, Phyllis McGuire."

And Phyllis often told people, "Helen Bonfils is one of the finest women I have ever met." Once, when Helen's friend, Haila Stoddard, objected to Mike's attentions to Phyllis, Helen said, "Oh, he's young, honey; he has to have some fun." If Miss Helen was surprisingly tolerant about Mike's affair with the singer, The Post's executives, including publisher, Palmer Hoyt, and her attorney, Donald Seawell, were less sanguine about Davis.

Mike had always been fascinated by mobsters, and Phyllis McGuire's lover, before he exiled himself to Mexico, was Sam Giancana, for decades one of the Mafia's most notorious characters. Giancana was renowned for his role in the alleged C.I.A. plot to assassinate Fidel Castro. One

of his former mistresses was Judith Campbell Exner who he generously shared with President John Kennedy, an affair we're still hearing about.

Giancana left for Mexico as a grand jury prepared to indict him in the early 1960s. Mike Davis moved into Phyllis McGuire's life when Giancana moved out. He built a gorgeous home for her in Las Vegas, which he used as his headquarters on his frequent trips to the desert town, and he is said to share it today.

As for Giancana, his life ended in a gang slaying in 1975 when he was shot seven times by a High-Standard Duromatic .22 target pistol in the basement kitchen of his Oak Park, Illinois home, as he was cooking Italian sausage. Phyllis was among the few celebrities from his Las Vegas days who attended his funeral at Oak Park.

Miss Helen was in the eighth year of her marriage when she entered St. Joseph's hospital in a diabetic coma in 1967. She would spend most of the last five years of her life in a penthouse suite at the hospital.

Mike was barred from visiting her on orders from executives of The Denver Post. He would fume at the security guard, "you son of a bitch, that's my wife!" But the guard would reply, "I don't care who you are; orders are orders."

As Miss Helen's health failed, her executives at *The Denver Post* and her physician and friend, Dr. Frank McGlone, pressed her to consider a divorce.

Dr. McGlone, said, "we would have the papers ready in the morning, but by noon she would change her mind."

"Helen was afraid of the scandal (of a divorce), afraid of what the *Rocky Mountain News* would do with the story," her attorney, Donald E. Seawell, told me. Seawell was acting as chief executive officer of *The Denver Post* in Helen's absence. But Father C.B. "Woody" Woodrich, who was then chaplain at St. Joseph's, maintained, "she loved Mike until the day she died."

Finally, Helen signed the papers. Under the terms of a sealed divorce decree, Davis received a generous settlement, including the Bonfils home at East Seventh Avenue and Washington Street, and all its furnishings. Soon, Phyllis McGuire arrived with vans to oversee the packing and shipping of the home's contents to Las Vegas.

"She even stripped the wood paneling from the walls," Miss Helen's longtime security guard, Denver detective Mike Carroll, said. "Christ, I was crying," Carroll shook his head. "I had to leave."

I had thought, when I first considered writing about Helen Bonfils, that my story would be largely concerned with her amazing generosity. Denver knew her well as the builder of the Holy Ghost Church and Bonfils Theater in the late 1940s and early '50s, both in memory of her parents. She gave hundreds of thousands to the United Fund, and purchased elephants and other animals for the Denver zoo; she bought a Rembrandt painting for the Denver Art Museum. She was marvelously open-handed toward Central City's cultural ventures, and for almost forty years her newspaper sponsored free summer performances

of *The Denver Post* Opera in Cheeseman Park.

With Seawell's guidance, she arranged for her *Denver Post* holdings to go into an employees' stock fund. Some said she was trying to atone for her father's notorious stinginess. But it was more than that. She loved and supported Denver's Dumb Friends League. She also performed hundreds, perhaps thousands, of small, unpublicized acts of kindness. For years a committee of her women friends was charged with making sure that any Catholic High School girl who couldn't afford a suitable dress for graduation would have a pretty frock for the occasion. When she heard of a lonely shut-in, she would order a radio sent round to the person's home. In later years, it would be a television set. She funded college educations for dozens of the children of her employees and friends.

Helen had often said she wanted to bring theater to the people of Denver, to offer plays in an even larger venue than the Bonfils. So it seemed altogether appropriate that, after her death, her attorney, Donald Seawell, whom she had first met as a theater lawyer, should devote the Bonfils Foundation monies to building the Denver Center for the Performing Arts.

Over the years, the Denver Center has been the catalyst that transformed a depressed section of the city into one alive with lights, the arts, and thronging crowds. It helped spark a renewal of Denver's downtown.

When Miss Helen died in June 1972, she had no family. Her sister, enriched by her fair share of her parents' estates and finally shed of her ne'er do-

well husband, built a replica of the French Petite Trianon on South Wadsworth Boulevard across from the present Villa Italia Shopping Center. The home stood on hundreds of acres of landscaped grounds, dotted with marble statuary, lakes and grazing deer. May, who was also very generous to various Denver institutions, left the mansion to the Denver Catholic Archdiocese. The diocese found it could not afford to maintain it, and the building was razed. Much of the area is now a park; some of its acres will be the site of Lakewood's new municipal buildings. May's second husband, Edwin Stanton, proved to be a loyal and considerate help-meet, who took her on several trips to Europe, where they enjoyed buying antiques. But May had died in 1962, still estranged from Helen.

Miss Helen had the love of many people, both as friends and employees. And yet more than one of them spoke to me of her bouts with sadness and loneliness, of the many times she spoke forlornly of being loved only for her money.

Once, Dorothy Rader, the business manager at Bonfils Theater, came upon Miss Helen in her office in tears. "No one loves me for myself," Miss Helen sobbed. "They only care about my money."

"I thought it was so sad." Dorothy Rader said. "Here she had everything, but she wasn't happy."

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 Sam Sugarman  
 Joy Swift  
 Gretchen Weber  
 The Rev. C.B. "Woody" Woodrich



# Over the Corral Rail

Please send items of interest to Jim Krebs, Publications Chairman. Jim's contact information is on page 2.

Francis B. Rizzari (1911-1998)

On August 13, 1998 the Denver Posse of the Westerners lost its most senior member. Francis Rizzari had been a member of this organization for nearly one half century, and during that time held nearly every job, including being Deputy Sheriff twice, the Editor of the 1964 *Brand Book*, (Volume 20), and having presented at least 16 papers to the Posse. In recognition of these contributions he was elected to honorary membership in the posse. In 1992 he received the Rosenstock Lifetime Achievement Award of the Denver Westerners.

Francis was a Life Member of the State Historical Society of Colorado, an honorary member of the Ghost Town Club of Colorado, and held memberships in the Ghost Town Club, Colorado Springs, and in the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club for decades. He was a past member of the Jefferson County Historical Commission, and in 1987 was inducted into their prestigious Hall of Fame. Francis has presented many illustrated lectures for the State Historical Society, the Denver Public Library, and the University of Colorado, as well as countless other organizations.

A Colorado native, he was born in Denver in 1911, and had a lifelong fascination with Colorado history. He had an abiding interest in railroads, early trails and ghost towns. Through jeeping, hiking and researching he became a Western historian of authority. With his great collection of photographs, his remarkable memory, and an unbounded willingness to share his talents, he earned the gratitude of many Western historians in providing information, as well as hundreds of photos for publications.

Among other accomplishments, in 1950 he republished *Aspen on the Roaring Fork*. With fellow posse members Dick Ronzio and Charles Ryland he republished the rare Williams' *Guide to the San Juan Mines*, and the scarce second 1885 edition of Crofutt's *Grip-Sack Guide to Colorado*.

Francis graduated from Arvada High School in 1928, attended the Colorado School of Mines, and worked at the Adolph Coors Co., before serving as a weather observer for the U. S. Army Air Corps in World War II. After the war he worked for the Topographic Division of the U. S. Geological Survey. He retired from the USGS in 1971 as Chief of the Map and Field Data Unit.

In 1935 Francis Rizzari married Freda Schoech, another Colorado native. Their 63 years of marriage including many enjoyable years of active retirement. His interest in Colorado history continued through the years, even as dimmed in recent months by failing health. Our enjoyment and appreciation of Western history are richer because of him, and we will deeply miss Francis.

Ed Bathke, P.M.

**With My Own Eyes: A Lakota Woman Tells Her People's History**, by Susan Bordeaux Bettelyoun and Josephine Waggoner. Edited with an introduction by Emily Levine. Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1998. 199 pages, 20 photos, 1 chart, 3 maps, index. Clothbound, \$35.00.

As I reflect on this book, *With My Own Eyes*, I am amazed to think about the numerous groups of people who will be interested in reading it. For example, Native Americans will be proud to read the history of the sand hills of Nebraska, the Black Hills of South Dakota and the area around Laramie, Wyoming from the Native American point of view, as written by an eye witness to the events in the late 1880s to 1900s. People interested in photography will enjoy the photographs of prominent figures of that same time period. Genealogists, especially Native Americans, will find the details of families, covering many generations, to be helpful in their research. Trail historians will be delighted to hear about the everyday occurrences along the Oregon Trail. Women historians will be pleased to find a wonder-

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...chapters were sent to  
be published, but  
nothing ever came out...

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ful book of the everyday life of pioneer women. And I find the story of writing this book and getting it in print to be almost as important as the book itself.

The editor, Emily Levine, described a fifty-year struggle to get the manuscript published. Susan Bordeaux Bettelyoun met Josephine Waggoner in Hot Springs, South Dakota where both lived in a retirement facility. Susan told her story to Josephine who wrote it all down. Chapters were sent to be published, but nothing ever came out. Many historians, including our own Merrill Mattes, used this material in their books. But publishers were prejudiced about first-hand accounts, thinking every fact had to be checked and documented. Finally Emily Levine took the manuscript, returned it to the original form submitted by Susan and Josephine and then did laborious research which resulted in the index of the book.

The book is in three parts. Part I includes the introduction and history of the manuscript, followed by short biographies of Susan Bordeaux Bettelyoun and Josephine Waggoner. Part II contains the words of Susan. She tells of her family, Indian battles, famous warriors, Native American customs, education of her people, and the changes her people endured, from living free to living on reservations. Part III is the index, with documentation, of the events of Susan's life.

Josephine Waggoner once wrote, "the old people are dying off so fast a person must work fast or their stories will be like a closed book." Please open this book, *With My Own Eyes* and read a marvelous account of Native Americans during an important segment of American Western history.

--Nancy Bathke, P.M.

**O dammit! A Lexicon and Lecture from William Cowper Brann, The Iconoclast** by Jerry Flemmons. Texas Tech University Press, Lubbock, 1998. 177 pages. Illustrated with one photograph and one newspaper facsimile, index. Hardback with dust jacket, \$27.95.

William C. Brann had a few short years of glory, attention, and influence as the publisher, editor, and writer for a magazine called the *Iconoclast*, which he mailed out from Waco, Texas, in the late Eighteen-Nineties. He was a combination of H.L. Mencken, Ambrose Bierce, and Colorado's notorious radio demagogue, Alan Berg. However, as John Clum of the *Tombstone Epitaph* and William Byers of the *Rocky Mountain News* learned, sometimes folks who don't like your editorial policy may come "a-gunnin'" for you. Brann learned it as well and ended up as dead as Alan Berg. This crusading editor was killed in a gunfight in Waco in 1898 when he offended the Baptist supporters of Baylor University.

Brann's writings were published in full in 1912 and they made up twelve volumes. An earlier two volume set of selections was published in 1903. A short biography about him was published, I believe by the University of Texas in about 1958 (my copy is missing in action in my basement library). Brann was not an atheist and saw himself as a crusading follower of Christ, but his acid pen made people either supporters or enemies. Disregarding the warning in the Bible, Brann did not shrink from calling folks fools.

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...his acid pen made  
people either supporters  
or enemies...

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Mr. Flemmons' book is divided into two parts. The first part is akin to Bierce's *The Devil's Dictionary*. This part is made up of pithy sayings from the *Iconoclast*. For example: "Mixing religion and politics is like mixing whiskey and water—it spoils both." Brann also could be credited with foreseeing his own fate when he wrote, "If Socrates was poisoned and Christ was crucified for telling the truths . . . it would ill become me to complain of a milder martyrdom for a like offense." However, although Brann's writings included some mean comments about at least one American ethnic group, I do not think Mr. Flemmons included any of those comments.

And the second part of the book is the reason why Mr. Flemmons goes somewhat soft on Brann in his presentation. The second part is the script for a one-man play about Brann that Flemmons has produced and performed. The script indicates that it is a worthwhile play, keeping in mind that it makes Brann probably a bit more loveable than he was.

While I know that Brann and I would disagree about many topics, I long have been fascinated by this man who at least argued for compassion and was an advocate for many of the downtrodden in the latter part of the last century. While this book gives just a taste of Brann, a little bran is good for all of us, as the breakfast cereal folks say. The book is moderately recommended.

--John Hutchins, P.M.

**Cowboy in the Roundhouse, A Political Life**, by Bruce King (as told to Charles Polling). Sunstone Press, Santa Fe, NM, 1998. 368 pages, 22 photos. Hardcover, \$26.95.

Despite its high-culture image as home of artists, writers and expensive Indian crafts, New Mexico's politics, until the last decade, have been good-old-boy rural—symbolized by the story of Bruce King, the state's three-term cowboy governor.

With this personal account, King gives valuable insight into the mid-century politics of a multi-racial Western state.

Born on a ranch 40 miles from Santa Fe, King never gave up his cowboy hat and boots in the 40 years he served in state government. Elected governor in 1970, he was in and out of the governor's chair until 1994, when he retired to his ranch.

As a moderate Democrat, King worked cooperatively with Republicans and paid close attention to the needs of Hispanic voters. He claimed at one time to know two-thirds of the voters in New Mexico.

...King never gave up his cowboy hat and boots in the 40 years he served in state government...

He is frank in discussing his defeats. At one time he and the state legislature voted overwhelmingly to create a "Pancho Villa State Park," near the border town of Columbus. It was here in 1916 that the Mexican revolutionary, Pancho Villa, crossed the border and killed 18 Americans.

But when New Mexico's U.S. Sen. Dennis Chavez got wind of the plan he ripped into his fellow Democrats, ridiculing them for wanting to name a park "for an outlaw." He turned King and his allies around 180 degrees.

King, who had been only moderate in his support of the park, said it was a good lesson. He observed: "When your name is called you vote 'yes' or 'no', you don't vote 'maybe.'" Sound political advice.

King's era was a time of flagrant deal-making. He once visited the Santa Fe New Mexican newspaper to try to secure a promise concerning what the paper would say about his personal land deals. No worthwhile newspaper can make such promises and King still seems baffled as to why the paper didn't keep its word.

But when he and his wife, Alice, returned to the ranch, King conceded that his era was over. Immigration had changed New Mexico's political landscape in ways King couldn't cope with. He concludes wistfully: "Much of our population is from somewhere else and they don't have a long-term perspective on New Mexico politics."

The book title refers to the circular territorial design of the capitol building in Santa Fe, built in 1966.

--Lee Olson P.M.



**The Plains Indians** by Paul H. Carson. Texas A & M University Press, College Station, TX, 1998. 254 pages, photographs. Paperback, \$15.95.

Whether 10,000 years ago or closer to 30,000 years, the peopling of the Great Plains began when groups of nomadic hunters following large herds of animals crossed the Bering land bridge and traveled south through ice free corridors. With the retreat of the glaciers, the occupation of the area from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains has been continuous. Archeological evidence of camp and kill sites is abundant.

Around 1400 AD dramatic changes occurred which led to the development of the historic Plains Indians. First was the invasion onto the Plains of Athabaskan speakers from the north. Primarily Apaches, these tribes overran existing inhabitants, changing forever their way of living. Second, three devastating droughts occurred forcing some semi-horticultural nomadic tribes to reorganize into settled villages in the eastern tall grass, riverine environments. Third, the arrival of Europeans with their horses and firearms produced a profound change in the lifestyle of the hunting-gathering inhabitants.

With pressure from the eastern tribes, who were in turn being replaced by

Europeans, more and more diverse tribes migrated onto the Plains and merged with existing residents. Carlson discusses at length the development and structure of social institutions. As these new arrivals adapted to a big game hunting, nomadic lifestyle, social organizations changed and new ones arose exhibiting a degree of homogeneity of structure.

While the settled eastern prairie dwellers lived in clan affiliated lineages, the nomads lived and traveled in small family bands oriented towards hunting and warfare. Towards the end of their ascendancy, a chiefdom system representing families with wealth and status developed among the Plains tribes.

However, until the discovery of gold when vast numbers of immigrants began to cross the Plains, these two cultures were quite stable. Then the United States Government tried to contain tribes, via treaties, into designated areas to reduce warfare and insure safe conduct of immigrants traveling west.

During and especially following the Civil War, active warfare broke out when the government began displacing all the prairie and plains tribes. By 1875 most of the hostilities had ended and the reservation system was solidly established.

In the Epilogue, Carlson discusses the changes made before and by the Roosevelt administration, World War II, and acts of Congress which brings the reader up to date on the status of the Native Americans of the Great Plains.

The book is clear and concise with ample endnotes. It would serve as a good text for high school classes in Native American history, or an adjunct to college texts in ethnohistory of the Plains Indians.

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...the book is clear and  
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--Jean Afton C.M.

**Butch Cassidy: A Biography**, by Richard Patterson. University of Nebraska Press (Bison Books), Lincoln, 1998. Illustrated with photographs, notes, index. 362 pages. Paperback, \$19.95.

With this first-time-in-print (Bison Original), publication, Richard Patterson has written what very well may be the definitive life story of one of the most famous outlaws of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Patterson, a retired lawyer, has succeeded in separating fact from fiction of an individual who at times has been compared to an American Robin Hood. As he explains, Butch Cassidy went by several assumed names and did not keep a diary and only wrote a few letters. Being a man who spent most of his life on the other side of the law, one tends to tell a story of what the man did or what others believe he may have done and not portray him as the man he really was. The author in his thorough research had access to many libraries, archives, numerous newspaper articles, books, and reminiscences. He also consulted with noted Butch Cassidy and Wild Bunch writers and historians Dan Buck and Anne Meadows and Jim Dullenty.

Robert Leroy Parker was the oldest of seven children (four boys and three girls) born to Mormon parents Maximillion and Ann Parker. Though not unruly

...does an admirable job  
in following the criminal  
life and career of Butch  
Cassidy...

while growing up at home, Robert would have been considered self-willed and obstinate for a young person belonging to the church and following the teachings of the Latter-Day Saints. While his mother was a devout member and tried to bring up the children accord-

ing to the rules of Mormon ideals, his father tended to be less so. In his teen years Robert took on the job as a hand on a neighboring ranch and it was while working there that he met drifter Mike Cassidy, a man Robert apparently admired enough that he would later take his last name. Cassidy was not only an experienced horse wrangler and skilled livestock handler, but was also adept at changing brands and rustling. He also gave Robert a gun and taught him how to use it.

By using his past experience as a lawyer, Patterson does an admirable job in following the criminal life and career of Butch Cassidy, (the alias by which Robert Leroy Parker is best known as), when he left his family home at the age of eighteen. Early on Patterson mentions that some writers and historians of the Wild Bunch have contended that Butch and his fellow outlaws robbed banks and railroad express cars because of the greed of business corporations and money interests. This is certainly the excuse brought out by Charles Kelly in his book *The Outlaw Trail*. Patterson says they did it simply for one reason, they wanted the loot for themselves. The author also shows that of several bank and train robberies Butch is given credit for, there is no positive proof that he was present at them. There were a few occasions when he could have left crime behind and started a new life, especially after leaving prison in Wyoming, but whenever he or someone else needed money he got it by-robbing a bank.

When law enforcement officers and agencies started closing in, Butch along

with two other companions fled to South America. Did Butch Cassidy's life come to an end in San Vicente, Bolivia, or did he survive the shootout with soldiers that occurred there? On the one hand Richard Patterson gives evidence that he may have. On the other, he also gives evidence that it may not have been him. The story doesn't end here either, the reader is also told about Butch Cassidy sightings in later years and the story of one William T. Phillips who claimed to be the famous Outlaw.

This is a book that will be a must for all outlaw and lawmen readers.

--Mark E. Hutchins, P.M.

**Voyages of Discovery - Essays on the Lewis and Clark Expedition**, edited by James P. Ronda. Montana Historical Society Press. Helena, 1998. 351 pages. 8 contributors, 20 illustrations, 5 maps. Paper back \$19.95, cloth edition \$45.00.

"It is not easy to recognize the last day of the expedition's journey. But perhaps September 26, 1806, is as good a choice as any". The many essays in this book's six chapters cover the many aspects that it took to accomplish such an expedition. From Jefferson's instructions to Lewis to their being "The Writingest Explores" I found the essays interesting and educational. At times I got bogged down in the many paragraphs presented but I truly enjoyed the book and learned how "important this American story is." Some of the articles are by leading Lewis and Clark scholars such as John L. Allen, Bernard DeVoto, Donald Jackson, Gary E. Moulton, and James P. Ronda. Many of the illustrations were of the Indians. Sacagawea of course, because of her role in the expedition. Also Black Moccasin and Wolf Calf were present. Several photos of the Mandan earth lodges on the west bank of the Missouri River are included.

Part Four in this book offers some very interesting "what-ifs".

What if the Spanish and their Pawnee allies had captured the American Party?  
What if the Teton Sioux had attacked the expedition at the mouth of the Bad River?  
What if Cameahwait and his warriors had killed Lewis instead of welcoming him?  
What if the Chinooks and Clatsops had laid siege to Fort Clatsop and destroyed it?  
What if Lewis and Clark had made their way through a country where they were the only human beings?

I was surprised to learn how Jefferson made available his own instruments and scientific library to Lewis and personally instructed Lewis in the use of the instruments required for surveying and determining latitude. Jefferson also enlisted the cooperation of botanist Benjamin Smith Barton, Caspar Wistar, anatomist with a wide knowledge of zoology, and Dr. B. Rush who advised on medical practices and supplies. There were countless others who assisted in many ways.

The final sentence of this book written by James Ronda states, "As ordinary travelers we can join the Corps of Discovery, learning its lessons and sharing its joy and hardships. So long as we envision life as a journey, one with both hazard and promise, the Lewis and Clark story will have a special place in the American imagination. It will remain, as Lewis said, "a darling project of mine."

--Erma Morison, P.M.

**Buffalo Guns & Barbed Wire.** Two Frontier Accounts by Don Hampton Biggers. A combined reissue of *Pictures of the Past* and *History That Will Never be Repeated*. Introduction by A.C. Greene, Biography by Seymour V. Connor. The photographs that accompany *Pictures of the Past* are from a series made in 1874 by George Robertson of the Oliphant Gallery in Austin, Texas. The photographs that accompany *History That Will Never Be Repeated* are the work of Erwin E. Smith. Texas Tech University Press, 1991. 241 pages. Index and sources. Hardback, \$39.95

Historians view newspaper accounts of our early history with a skeptical eye as original source material, however, had it not been for the handful of newspapermen who followed the pioneers westward into the Panhandle of Texas, we would have large gaps in the human story of the settlers as they faced the day to day challenges of coming out west. Don Hampton Biggers' two historical accounts of the life of the West Texas cowboy and buffalo hunter are an "I-was-there" first-hand kind of history. The life of the early frontier printer/editor was wrought with change. Never settling long in any one place (being run out of town was not uncommon), writing about anything and everything that passed before him, using words as his weapons, they attacked anything disapproved of, and frequently crossed the line of fairness and balance. Don Biggers fit the description, and he had no use for tact when called upon to offer his opinion.

Being born on September 27, 1868 in Meridian, Bosque County, Texas he was born too late to have witnessed the buffalo hunt or ridden with the early cattle drivers. From early childhood he sensed that there was something happening around him that was both grand and doomed. His father exposed him to the historical events of the day, taking his young son with him on some of his trips. It was on one of those trips to Fort Griffin, Texas, that the author's father made arrangements with an old buffalo hunter friend of his to take young Don Biggers with him for a short trip out onto the Texas buffalo range. The buffalo hunter shared many stories of buffalo hunts he had been on, the good, the bad, and the ugly. He minced no words. The author wrote in later life that his biggest regret was that he never saw a live buffalo on the old, open range. Biggers recorded the stories of the buffalo hunter sensing that these were events that would not happen again. The result of his historical record was the book, *History that Will Never Be Repeated*.

*Pictures of the Past* is Biggers' historical account of the Texas cattleman, and the life of the men who worked the drives. The author's father was a rancher, so from an early age he became indoctrinated into that unique fraternity of cowboys. Most of the book comes from the personal accounts that friends and acquaintances related to the author over a period of many years. The author did research some of the statistics, as he felt it was important that his account be as factual as possible. Not a trait that many newspapermen felt necessary.

The photographs that accompany the two books document what the author has written. Some came from glass plates, and others from the early nitrate film. The photographs, along with the author's narrative, have captured moments of *History That Will Never Be Repeated*.

--Roger P. Michels P.M.

**Frontier Soldier: An Enlisted Man's Journal in the Sioux and Nez Perce Campaigns, 1877**, by William F. Zimmer. Edited and annotated by Jerome A. Greene. Montana Historical Society Press, Helena, Montana, 1998. 171 pages. Illustrated with photographs and maps, index, footnotes. Hardback \$32.00, Paperback \$15.95.

Jerry A. Greene, of course, needs no introduction. He has authored or edited numerous books on the Indian Wars of the 1870s. He currently is working on a book on the Nez Perce War of 1877. His books have been well received by professionals and by the public, and this reviewer has given favorable reviews to at least a couple of them. In short, he is known as a dedicated researcher and as "a scholar and a gentleman."

This book may amount to the publication of the best diary ever produced by an enlisted man in the later Indian wars. Unlike, for example, the scraps of information provided by Private Coleman in his diary, (published by John Carroll and Bruce Liddic as *I Buried Custer*, in 1979), this diary details the Indians, the weather, the comings-and-goings, the fights that Zimmer participated in, (including the Lame Deer Fight), and the other fights he heard about (including the Battle of the Big Hole). Zimmer's diary (and Mr. Greene notes that it apparently was copied, in part, from an earlier writing) reads, not like the diary of a private in the 2nd Cavalry, but like the journal of a staff officer or a war correspondent. If authentic, it is an indispensable book for historians and scholars.

And "there's the rub." This reviewer has read the diary four times. This reviewer has compared the type of writing attributed to Zimmer to the published field diaries or journals of Irving Dodge, of Private William Earl Smith, of Lieutenant John Bigelow, and of Captain Henry Freeman. This reviewer compared it to a couple of unpublished military diaries in his possession. This diary does not read like the diary of a private in the cavalry on campaign. He does not complain about bunkies, about bugs, about officers, about army food, about doing guard duty, or about having sore feet. For example, on May 23, Zimmer notes that some mail was brought into camp. He doesn't even add "but none for me," which is what a typical soldier would complain of. Yet Zimmer gives detailed (and rather detached) accounts of local military history, biology, botany, agriculture, anthropology, and ordnance. He sounds like John Bourke, the scholar-soldier, not like a tired private who was a bottom-of-the-pile participant more than an observer. If this is the diary of Private Zimmer, he was the "Renaissance Man" of the U.S. Army.

Mr. Greene, as usual, has provided wonderful footnotes and annotations. He has verified about all the facts that can be verified. Yet, did Miles City really have "3.2" drinking places in 1877? (page 71) And, when Zimmer asserts that soldiers with General Terry had to leave their weapons in the U.S. when they crossed into Canada to treaty with Sitting Bull (page 135), a source (somewhat obscure) that Mr. Greene mentions in a footnote indicates (at a page not cited by Mr. Greene) that the Canadians let Terry's men, as personal servants, keep their arms. Also, Mr. Greene does not note that Zimmer got NWMP General Walsh confused with Colonel

McLeod at a very critical point in the historical narrative. These are small things, but they are mere examples and they might encourage some skepticism.

Nevertheless, it might be this reviewer who is too skeptical. Although the provenance for the document is rather sketchily presented in the introduction, Mr. Greene has assured the reader that the diary is authentic. Plus, Bob Utley (whom the reviewer attempted to contact) apparently is satisfied with the document. But the reviewer knows that Josiah Rice's *A Cannoneer in Navajo Country* (Old West, 1970) is really a virtual copying of Frank Edward's 1847 *A Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan*. This reviewer knows that William Taylor's *With Custer on the Little Bighorn* (Viking, 1996) is, at the least, or at the most, from a document apparently copied from another document that has long been at Yale University. Also, this reviewer recalls that even Charles Hamilton, in his *Braddock's Defeat* (Oklahoma, 1959) did not even provide a footnote when one journal said Fort Necessity was "foursided" (when more recent archeology has indicated it was circular). Mistakes do occur and Piltdown men do get created.

The reviewer wants to use the Zimmer "diary" as a source in the future. He therefore hopes that Mr. Greene, whose integrity the reviewer has never heard questioned, is right and that this skepticism is unfounded. Indeed, this reviewer reluctantly gets involved in the very contentious area of Custer-era history and has delayed this review with re-reading and research. But, as Martin Luther once said, "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise."

--John Hutchins, P.M.

**Custer and the Great Controversy: The Origin and Development of a Legend**, by Robert M. Utley. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1998. Reprint of 1962 Edition, Westernlore Press, Los Angeles. Illustrated, 172 pages. Paperback, \$10.

While this book's primary value is as a resource for those contemplating further study of the subject, it is not a dry compilation of data. The book comprises six sections: I- The Background, II- The Press, III- The Great Debate, IV- The Indian Side of the Story, V- The Legend of the Little Bighorn and VI- Bibliographical Survey 1876-1900. The material is presented in a readable and concise style, yet one is struck by the incredible amount of research the author brings to the subject.

Since first published in the Potomac Corral of *The Westerners* in 1956, this thesis has seen a steady stream of new material appear from Custerphiles to Custerphobes as well as more objective contributors. Obviously, writings of the past 40 years are not dealt with in this book—but as a base for study of the Little Bighorn Legend—this treatise serves quite well.

--Charles Moore, C.M.

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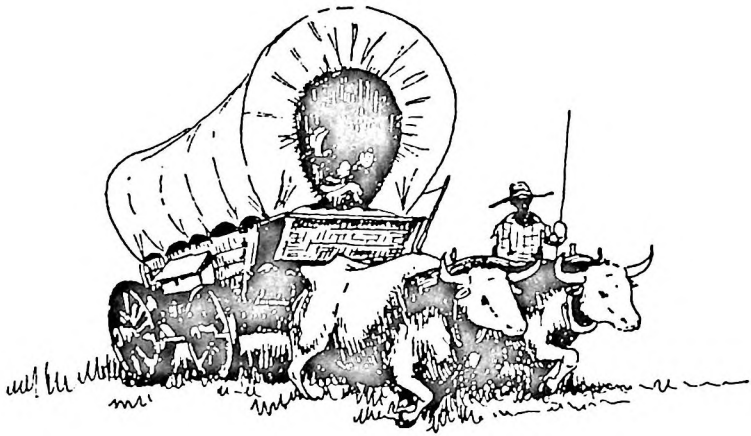
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MARCH-APRIL 1999



*Colorado State Historical Society photo*

Silas Soule

**Silas Soule, His Widow Heresa,  
and the rest of the story**

by

**LaVonne Perkins, C.M.**

(Presented May 26, 1999)



## About the Author

LaVonne (Vonnie) Perkins was born in Owatonna, Minnesota on March 15th, 1935. Her formative years were spent on a farm in northern Minnesota. She considers herself fortunate to have experienced life much as the pioneers would have, as the farm was without electricity, running water, indoor plumbing and was heated with a beautiful pot bellied stove. Visiting the county dump a short distance from the farm sparked an interest in objects of yesteryear. Her mother always made her and her brother take the treasures back, but her interest in antiques and history remained.

She graduated from Sebeka High School in 1953, and has been married to her childhood sweetheart, Ron, for forty-two years. They are blessed with two sons, Randy and Dan. Vonnie became a corresponding member of the Denver Posse in 1998.

Since 1990, she has been researching and writing a book on the daughter of D.C. Oakes, Emma Oakes Bennet. Much of the material in this paper is from her book. The book has evolved into a history of Denver's pioneer children and their parents, who were the nuts and bolts of early Denver. She feels the experience of researching, and all the wonderful people she has met who have helped her in her quest for knowledge, has enriched her life beyond belief. They are too numerous to mention, but she wishes to say thanks for sharing their experiences and knowledge.

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# Silas Soule, His Widow Heresa, and the rest of the story

by

LaVonne Perkins, C.M.

(Presented May 26, 1999)

Major Oakes was famous for publishing Luke Tierneys Journal of his trip to the Gold Fields, to which Oakes added a Guide Book. For this, Oakes was buried in effigy with numerous sayings, such as, "*Here lie the remains of D.C.Oakes. Who was the starter of this dammed hoax!*" Although many others wrote guide books, he is mentioned the most, in my opinion because Oakes rhymes with Hoax!

Because of a lifelong friendship between the Oakes and the Coberly families, I became aware of the following story. It has its beginnings in Colorado Territory in 1860 and ends in China in 1912.

Heresa Soule's maiden name was Coberly. The Coberlys arrived in Colorado from Iowa in 1858. Their objective was to raise cattle, rather than to seek gold. They journeyed up West Plum Creek to Spring Creek, just north of Perry Park and settled there.

Family memories state that James Leroy Coberly was killed at the "Battle at Franktown" by Indians. A "Battle at Franktown" cannot be documented; there are absolutely no accounts of such a thing ever happening.

As the Coberlys were well known, I thought it rather odd that the exact date of Mr. Coberly's death couldn't be determined. Certain events

handicapped the preservation of news during 1864. First, in the spring, a flood destroyed the *Rocky Mountain News*. This left a period when the *News* wasn't printed. Second, in the fall, the paper became one sheet, printed as the *Daily News Extra*. The owner of the news Mr. Byers, returned from a weeks absence to find that all but one printer had joined Uncle Sam. There had been twelve printers working at the *News*. Every able bodied person over the age of sixteen had enrolled in the volunteer militia. Those who hadn't joined up were building defenses around the city.

From the *Daily News Extra*,  
Denver, Thursday, August 18, 1864;

*"It has been reported here to-day and generally credited that the Indians attacked and murdered a few families on the head of Cherry Creek; also attacking Coberly's ranch and killing Mrs. Coberly's two daughters. Parties of Military and citizens hastened out there this morning, but have not returned as we go to press. There is one thing certain, however, that Running Creek, Cherry Creek and Plum Creek are at the mercy of those thieving*

*scalping sons of butchery."*

I feel this is very close to the date of Mr. Coberly's death, as Joseph Coberly was mustered in Company E, Third Regiment, Regular Colorado Volunteer Cavalry on August 18, 1864, the same date the girls were reported to have been murdered!

On the 20th, it was reported that 15 or 20 Indians had been seen on Plum Creek. One or two bodies were found, but no names. A Mr. Shoto had been killed near the California Ranch. Perhaps it was one of these incidents when Mr. Coberly was killed. A correction of the Coberly girl's death, was never found.

Sarah Coberly was now the head of the family which was comprised of two sons, William and Joseph, and two daughters, Heresa and Mattie.

Joseph's son, Carroll Coberly, years later attempted to put family stories together. As these are second and even third person accounts, he stresses the discrepancies.

The love of Heresas life was Silas S. Soule. Picture a handsome, young man, with unbinding wit, somewhat of a prankster and fun loving. He could carry a yarn the likes of no other. He also liked to sing and enjoyed the company of a pretty gal.

Silas' family were strong abolitionist, his father was head of the "Underground Railway" in Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas. Silas, who was a Jayhawker at the age of eighteen, was instrumental in the release from jail of "Dr. John Doy", one of the groups leaders. This took place from the Old St. Joseph, MO. jail.

Because of his success in that

venture, he was requested to attempt another release, that of John Brown, famous for the raid at "Harper's Ferry."

Even though young Silas, managed to get arrested and in a position to rescue John Brown, it didn't transpire. John Brown realized his death would do more for the cause than if he were to live.

Although Brown had refused rescue, two others, a Mr. Stevens and a Mr. Hazelett, were being held in Charleston. It was determined to rescue them.

Silas managed to get himself arrested by pretending to be intoxicated. He then entertained the jailers family, using his wonderful Irish brogue in telling jokes. He achieved a relaxed atmosphere, where by he was allowed to talk to the imprisoned men. They too, felt it was too risky and would not allow the rescue to take place.

The next morning Silas was taken before the justice of the peace, and given a stern lecture and released.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Silas willingly signed up on the side of the Yanks. Kit Carson, a friend of his fathers, requested Silas join his scouts at Raton, New Mexico. He did this and later transferred to the 1st Colorado Cavalry, and eventually became captain of company D, known as "Chivington's Regiment."

Silas was extremely popular among his fellow soldiers, as well as the people of Denver. If he was at Camp Weld, or anywhere near Denver, something would be printed in the *News*. He was, what is known today as, good copy!

On March 8th, 1864 it had been reported that he had married a rather

well known female at Conjeos. His denial appeared at length and in good humor on March 26th.

In 1864 he recruited men for the cavalry. A poster that he created read:

\$302

“Poor Old Thing.” “Old Sweatness.”

For you Rip-Roaring Bull Whackers, and fatigued miners, who are loyal to your country and would like to put in a few days service before the close of the war...“That’s What’s the Matter.” You will get \$302 in Green Backs as Bounty, \$75 to start in with, \$66 at the end of two months, and the rest in installments. Only 30 more men wanted in the First Cavalry of Colorado. Any man can go in a “Pauper,” and be mustered out with the Regiment, and have money enough left to start a Bank or run a Quartz Mill. If you want good clothes “till you can’t rest,” come to the office. If you want a “Square Meal,” come out with us, and we won’t charge you a red for and suffer with pleasure.”

We are “on it,”

S.S. Soule

Recruiting Officer.<sup>1</sup>

One more interesting remark regarding Lt. Soule. “*Soule is reported to have had a most successful skirmish lately with a corps of mosquitoes on the Arkansas, making them hunt their holes*

*and mortally maiming more than one of em. Still later advice states that three dead bodies were picked up on the field next morning but whether they met their untimely end by alighting on the Captains very auburn hair and getting scorched or by listening to his sweet Irish brogue and getting charmed, deponent knoweth not!”<sup>2</sup>*

I had always wondered if Captain Soule had red hair, this certainly confirms that idea, *Red enough to scorch the mosquitoes!*

Silas’ commanding officer was Edward Wynkoop. Over the years Maj. Wynkoop and his men had fought many Indians. When a particular group came to him, asking for peace and offering to turn over white captives, he was willing to work with them.

The Indians returned the captives, Laura Roper, age 16, Isabel Ubanks, Ambrose Usher and Daniel Marbel.<sup>3</sup> Later a meeting was held at camp Weld.

Governor Evans and Col. Chivington were not friendly to the Indians at this meeting. They didn’t believe the Indians actually wanted peace. They turned the matter over to Major Wynkoop. He in turn promised them safety if they would camp at Sand Creek. Silas was second in command at this meeting and had witnessed this promise.

Shortly after this, Wynkoop was transferred to Fort Riley and Major Scott Anthony was given command of Fort Lyon. Two days after Major Wynkoop left Fort Lyon, CO, Col. Chivington arrived on his way to Sand Creek.

Major Anthony’s way of dealing with the Indians was very

different than Major Wynkoop's. Silas argued with Major Anthony, and on November 25th, requested a leave of absence. This was the same day Major Wynkoop left the post. The leave was granted, but before it could be acted upon, the Battle of Sand Creek transpired.

On November 29th, 1864, The Battle of Sand Creek, became a monumental event in Colorado History. And Silas Soule, a footnote to the events of that fateful day.

Lt. Soule accompanied Chivington to Sand Creek, but refused to order his men into battle. They observed the battle from a ridge. However, not one shot was fired by company "D", even though they were in the midst of the fighting.

Ironically, Major Wynkoop was returned to Fort Lyon in December of 1864.

Silas was a loving son, he sent money home and wrote wonderful letters to his Mother and his sister, Annie. He assures his mother that he is reformed, he no longer chews tobacco, or smokes a pipe! He will indulge in a cigar when he can get one and has given up drinking. He speaks of getting a wife when he goes down east.

On January 8th, he wrote of his feelings on the events at Sand Creek, and expressed his hope that the authorities would investigate.<sup>4</sup>

An investigation was held in Denver. Silas, along with others, testified against Chivington on those events. On February 15th, he was the first to testify and his testimony went on for six days. He knew it was risky, but he felt honor bound to make known the true story of what had transpired on that

day. I had hoped to find all kinds of material on the trial in the *Rocky Mountain News*.

Although Col. Chivington had wanted an open trial, it was decided the trial would be closed. Consequently, the interesting comments on this event, which the *News* most certainly would have printed, are lost to history.

While Silas, was fighting for causes, Heresa Coberly was assisting her mother in Douglas county.

Coberly's was noted for providing fine food, great fiddle playing and most important, there were three woman to dance with! Sarah Coberly was famous for making weary travelers welcome. The cabin was halfway between Colorado City and Denver. It was known as "Coberly's Halfway House."

There is a wonderful quote, found in Josephine Marr's *History of Douglas County*, "When Chivington was sending troops from Denver, he used a cuss word and remarked that it did not seem to matter where he was sending men, North or South, East, or West, the first night's vouchers would be sure to come from Mrs. Krull's [Crulls] ranch."

Chivington uses the name Crull, but it generally was called Coberly's. I am assuming that Colonel Chivington's remark, was made after 1865, although he had been mustered out by that date.

Finding personal information on Heresa, as is the case for most women during this time, was not as abundant as the notices given the enchanting Captain Soule. It would have been scandalous for a woman to have her name in the papers, except for

a social announcement!

However, there is one incident involving Captain Soule and a witty young lady. The lady is not identified and it is strictly my interpretation that the following story might have occurred at the Coberly Halfway House.

*Rocky Mountain News,*

May 7, 1864

*"We won't ascend at present into the realms of romance expatiating on that male boy matter, as told to us by Soule, that inveterate encyclopedia of anecdote and exaggeration, if not (between me and you) "amplifier" of the truth. The gist of the joke is on a captain of the First during his return trip from Garland. At a stopping place, no matter where, the hostess informed the officers within that the mail boy was a coming, to which the genial gentleman afore-said running to the door, remarked in cadences of sincerity saluted with surprise, "Why no, that isn't the mail boy!" to which the lady of the rural rest replied, with all that naivete which a witty woman can. "Well, Captain, from his appearance I don't think it's a female boy!" The laughter that ensued was equal in volume, pitch and tone to that of a herd of horses, so Soule says, though this is*

*questionable authority, to say the least."*

Heresa's nephew, although he had never met her, was told some things about her by family and family friends. In speaking of the trip to Colorado from Iowa in 1858:

*"...I remember one of my aunts telling about the wonderful time they had on the trip. There were few women, and girls of fifteen and seventeen were given as much consideration as grown women probably more so for the older women were generally married and a jealous husband watched their every move. She spoke of many amorous times on the trip and how it taught them their best evasive manners..."<sup>5</sup>*

Heresa was described as a good looking woman and friendly with the riders. She was very witty and kept them laughing at meal time. They all liked to be at meals when she was there.

*"...The general impression was that Heresa was very nice and friendly..."*

*"...both girls liked to ride (Which by the way was side saddle!) and did their part in taking care of the extra stock..."*

*"...The girls lived to get the most fun they could..."<sup>6</sup>*

I think it is safe to assume Heresa could hold her own with the witty young officer, Silas Soule.

The day after Saint Patrick's Day, on March 18th, 1865, *The Rocky Mountain News* reported:

*"...The Regimental Band and Capt. Soule, too, were musically on it yesterday-thanks to their good taste and generosity for a glorious serenade, now mellow as St. Patricks day..."*

Heresa, with her friend Maggie Burgess, had their picture taken the day before she and Silas got married. I think Maggie was from Golden and may have had something to do with the popular "Cheney House."

Certainly, there had to be some meaning in Heresa having her picture taken the day before her marriage. I can almost hear the girls remarking on how they had best capture the image of the single woman, as tomorrow Heresa, would join the ranks of mistress of her masters house! (My interpretation.)

Whether their marriage was planned or spur of the moment, probably is of no consequence, and who but these two would decide to get married on April fools day at eight o'clock in the morning?

A marriage document found in the land records at the Denver county court house, gave a bit more information than the one recorded at the State Archives. It stated that they were both of Denver county and territory, and that Silas was Provost Marshall.<sup>7</sup> Heresa had evidently been living in Denver.

*The Rocky Mountain News* printed the following announcement on April 5th.



*Denver Public Library, Western History Collection*

Maggie Burgess (standing), Heresa Coberly (seated), taken the day before Heresa's wedding to Silas

### MARRIED

*In this city, at the residence of H.J. Rogers, on the 1st inst., at 8 o'clock A.M. by Rev. Mr. Kehler, Capt. Silas Soule and Miss Hersey A. Coberly.*

H.J. Rogers was the son-in-law of Rev. Kehler. He must have been on very good terms with Rev. Kehler to request the marriage of Silas Soule, on April Fools Day, at eight in the morning. Rev. Kehler, formerly of St. Johns, was Chaplain for the First Cavalry. He certainly knew Silas well enough to suspect an April Fools joke.

After all the times Captain Soules romantics had been published in the *News*, I was surprised nothing more



was mentioned when he actually got married.

I also was surprised that they had not been married at Heresa's home, and then it occurred to me that her family may not have been in favor of the marriage, (my interpretation), once again because of the battle at "Sand Creek." Further arguing points;

1. Heresa's father had been murdered by Indians at Franktown.
2. Her brother Joseph G. Coberly, was mustered in August 18, 1864 in company E, 3rd Regiment, regular Colorado Volunteer Cavalry. He was all too happy to take part at "Sand Creek."
3. Heresa had fallen in love with the one man who had refused to take his men into the battle.

The month of April, 1865 would be remembered for generations.

On April 7th, Denver learned Lee had surrendered. The War between the states was over. On April 12th, Col. Moonlight, who had replaced Col. Chivington, gave a ball, a grand affair. Forty of the elite young couples of Denver attended. Their names weren't printed, but I like to think that Mr. and Mrs. Soule were included at the evenings festivities. (Once again I want to stress, this is the authors interpretation.)

Silas was now Provost Marshal in Denver. His many friends were still having a good time with Silas and his new bride.

The following article appeared in the *Rocky Mountain News* on April 14th:

*"PRESENTATION.-The saying that "it spoils a man to marry him," doesn't seem to be verified in Capt. Silas Soule's case.*

*since he is doing better, apparently, than ever before. At least, he "seems to be." Yesterday the "A. Provost General" was presented with a present which may prove of use, not so much as an heirloom memento for after years, than as a "Handy thing to have in the house," a year from now or less. It is a fabric of the flaxen order, immaculately white, and with a "Victoria pin" connecting its rectangular corners. A few days previously, he was donated a specimen of cabinet-work art, in the shape of a juvenile chair, or rather a chair for a juvenile, so constructed, scooped and sized as to be of service in correlation with the former article. By the way, Mr. and Mrs. Capt. Soule have since their recent marriage, gone to housekeeping, on Curtis street, where it is expected that the name of Soule will succeed, spread and flourish, like the branches of a green bay tree."*

Also on this same date, April 14th, news reaches Denver via telegraph. President Lincoln had been shot! On the fifteenth, they are informed of his death, and the city is in a state of mourning.

Denver along with the nation,

mourns the president's death. Residents and businesses drape their buildings, they have a funeral procession through the streets of Denver and hold a service with many speakers.

On April 20th, the *News* gives a wonderful review to the manner in which Capt. Soule and Lt. Wilson have improved their soldiers appearance and behavior:

*"-Co. D., of the Veteran Battalion, look well with their "adaies" or brass epaulets-sabre guards, upon their shoulders. Capt. Soule and Lt. Wilson are devoting much attention to this, their company; and indeed, the fact may be said of all the other soldiers of here of late, that this late regiment of strictness and attention to business, appearances of uniform, etc. have improved the looks and bearing of the soldiers full fifty or a hundred percent. On guard, patrol or drill, our soldiers here nowadays look like soldiers, and act as soldiers should do."*

The next day, a terrible outrage is reported in the *News*.

*"OUTRAGE AND THINGS.-Last night, about six or a dozen disorderly soldiers, (or citizens in soldiers clothes,) stole away from quarters somewhere, and broke into the quiet cabin of one*

*Reed, a colored man, a few squares north of this office. After unmercifully assaulting him and family, literally "busting open" his head, and smashing all before them, they insulted and tried to carry off his grown-up daughter. Strict orders were issued about these uniformed wretches by the authorities, and the Provost Marshal went after them, with a "sharp stick." They had better go slow, among whites or colored, just about these days, for "things ain't as they used to was," and thank the Lord and Gen Connor for it! All the people have already cried "Amen!" ... "*

The Daughter of the Regiment was playing at the Peoples theater and The Bridal of Netherby at the Denver.

On Sunday, evening April 23rd, Silas and Heresa had been out for the evening. Accounts vary as to whether they attended the theater or were visiting friends. They returned home between 9:30 and 10 P.M. Shots were heard, and Silas left his bride to determine the cause.

We know that they lived somewhere on Curtis street, he ran along Lawrence, near F street, (15th Street downtown) and was directly in front of Dr. Cunninghams residence, on the corner of F and Arapahoe street\* when he met his assassin.

Because Dr. Cunningham had advertised his house in the Rocky

Mountain News on the 17th, we have a pretty good idea where the assassination took place.

*"...HOUSE AND LOT FOR SALE- On the corner of F and Arapahoe streets- five good rooms, papered and carpeted, a good cellar, well of soft water, out house & etc. Enquire of Dr. Cunningham, at his office over E. Cody's store, Larimer St..."*

The Black Hawk Daily Mining Journal on April 24th stated that he was assassinated near the Presbyterian Church.

Although he was in readiness, it appeared that both fired at the same time. *"...The ball entered the Captains face at the point of the right cheek bone passing backward and upward, and lodging in the back of the head. He fell back dead appearing not to have moved a muscle after falling..."*

Today, the location would be downtown, on 15th street, between Arapahoe and Lawrence street, in the middle of the block on the North side.

Silas and Heresa had been married twenty-two days. The funeral took place on Wednesday, April 26th.

Governor Evans attended but Colonel Chivington and his followers did not.

The investigation into Chivington's actions at Sand Creek was still in session. Entered into the record was the following statement.

*"The members of the Commission having been requested to assist in making arrangements for*

*the funeral of the late lamented Silas S. Soule, commission adjourned until Thursday morning April 27th, 1865 at 9 o'clock."*

The funeral was held at St. John's church. The News reported that the service was performed by Rev. Kehler, the same minister who had performed the marriage ceremony on April 1st, and Rev. Hitchings.

However, Rev. Kehler recorded every birth, marriage and death and according to his records, he did not officiate at the funeral.

To quote the Rocky Mountain News:

*"...As a military funeral, this was the finest we have ever seen in the country. The officers and soldiers and Lt. Wilson's company, made an appearance of style and discipline most "military" indeed. A long line of carriages-almost all the public and private ones in town- were in the citizen cortege..."*

*"...Deceased was about 27 years of age, descended from Irish parentage. His mother and sister reside in Lawrence, Kansas. Her property was destroyed by Quantrel's raiders when he sacked that city..."*

In true Victorian style the News describes the widow *...his young widowed bride- who has thus been*

*draped in weeds before the orange blossoms scarce had time to wither...*<sup>10</sup>

Heresa, only twenty years old, must now wear widows clothing for at least two years. According to an 1879 edition of *Our Department*, a widow was to wear solid black woolen goods, collar and cuffs of folded untrimmed crepe, a simple crepe bonnet, and a long, thick black crepe veil. The second year, silk trimmed with crepe, black lace collar and cuffs, and a shorter veil could be worn and in the last six months of the mourning period gray, violet and white were permitted.

The Commission reconvened on the 27th of April, four days after the assassination and the day after the funeral.



*Denver Public Library, Western History Collection*

Heresa in widows weaves, 4 days after the assassination.

On this same day Heresa had her photo taken in her widows weaves. We can observe a bit of the spunky young lady, in this photo. Heresa, is wearing a delicate white collar. Other than this, she is perfectly groomed, her hair is fashioned plainly and her gown I would assume is black.

My theory on why she had her picture taken, is that Silas mother would want a photo of her sons wife. The only indication we have that the Silas family attended his funeral, is a small thank you in the *News* printed the day after the funeral:

*"The friends and relatives of Capt. Soule feel grateful for the practical demonstration of sympathy, expressed by Mr. Krieg, Estrabrook, Sprague, Walley, Sam.D.Hunter and many others."*<sup>11</sup>

I think it would be safe to assume that most of the residents of Huntsville would have attended this funeral.

"On May 7th, 1865 Sarah Coberly, married William Crull in Huntsville by Thos. Dawson Justice of the Peace. D.C. Oakes witnessed their marriage."<sup>12</sup> Certainly this had to be a difficult day for Heresa, as her husband had been buried just ten days earlier.

Maj. Wynkoop, had strong feelings as to what happened to Captain Soule. From his typescript at the Colorado Historical Society:

*"...Col. Chivington never dared to place Capt. Soule in arrest but some months subsequently had him murdered at night in the*

*streets of Denver by an assassin whom he had hired for that purpose... ”<sup>13</sup>*

Last February, unknowingly, Silas had prepared a comfortable jail where his assassin would be detained.

The *Rocky Mountain News* dated Feb. 9th reported:

*“Provost Jail -Capt. Soule, Provost Marshall, showed us through the new provost jail which he is having completed, in the building formerly occupied by Wallingford & Murphy, Larimer street. There are ten or twelve rooms or cells, a cook room, an office and a provost jail, already finished in first class style comfortable enough for the most quiet, and dark enough for the most dangerous. This is an institution that has long been needed here.”*

A soldier by the name of “Squires” was arrested as the assassin. I learned that it was Major Wynkoop who had arrested the assassin, “Squires”, and then had Lt. Cannon bring him to Denver.<sup>14</sup> Wynkoop’s name was never mentioned, in the *Rocky Mountain News*, in regard to the arrest of “Squires.”

On July 14th, Lt. Cannon was found dead in his room at the Tremont house. Wynkoop says he was poisoned.<sup>15</sup>

The Court Martial of the assassin “Squires” was first reported in August as being conducted in Denver.

Although Lt. Cannon had Squires (the assassin) secured in ankle cuffs and a large lock on the jail door, he escaped! October 10th, 1865 the *Rocky Mountain News* reported;

*“...it is supposed he was aided from the outside, as the large padlock at the back door was picked. Two men are under arrest for aiding in the escape, one of them, a blacksmith, charged with furnishing the chisels for removing the shackles from the limbs of the prisoner...”*

The controversy over the Sand Creek Massacre and this incident continues today.

Silas and Heresa had many friends. The citizens took up a collection and built a magnificent monument for the fallen hero. The base including the cap, was to be six feet high, and the shaft seven, making the total monument thirteen feet.

The Monument was completed and on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1866, Heresa published a thank you in the *News*.

*A Card of Thanks*  
*The undersigned takes this method of extending her heartfelt thanks to the officers and members of the First Colorado, and all the others, who have so kindly and thoughtfully placed the beautiful and enduring monument over the remains of her deceased husband, Capt. Silas S. Soule. She begs them all to believe that this*

*mark of their esteem for the dead is a solace to her mourning heart, and will ever be remembered with gratitude by her.*

*Hersey A. Soule*

Captain Soule is buried at Riverside, in the military section of the cemetery with a regulation headstone. Silas was first buried at Mount Prospect Cemetery. When this cemetery was dismantled and the graves moved, because of the size of the monument, I must assume that it was impossible to move and so it has been lost to history.

Recently, Cliff Dougal at Riverside, has replaced the regulation headstone for Silas Soule. Except for the accounts printed in the *News*, one would never know how the citizens had honored Silas Soule.

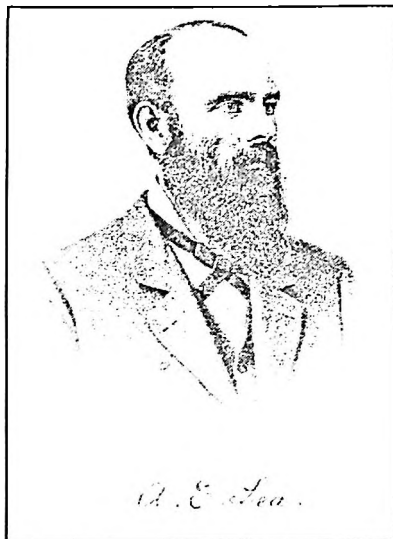
The Soules did not have any children.

Family documents suggest that Heresa returned to the "Half Way House," in Douglas county.

What Heresa's life was like between this time and 1870 is unknown. Because of the 1870 Census, we once again learn what has happened to the widow Soule. She is listed as living in Denver at her mothers home. She has real estate valued at \$4000. This, in my opinion, is quite a large sum at that time. For a comparison, her mother owns property valued at \$6500, while Mr. Crull only claims personal property of \$1500.

Heresa waited six years before she found a man who could take the place of Silas Soule. Once again she choose a man of principle.

Alfred Lea arrived in Colorado



*Alfred Lea*  
from Baskins History of Colorado

in 1862, he immediately went to Black Hawk and engaged in mining.

He served in company "B" 3rd Colorado. During 1864 he fought the Indians, and I think he also was at "Sand Creek."

Alfred took an interest in the affairs of the community and in 1869 was "... elected to the lower house of the Territorial Legislature, where he introduced the first and only bill to extend the right of suffrage to women which was one of the principal features of that session."<sup>16</sup>

In 1870 in association with Governor McCook and J.U. Marlow he began mining at the Caribou Mine in Boulder, CO.

Family history notes that Heresa met Alfred at the Half Way House, on one of his trips from South Park to the Caribou Mine in Boulder.<sup>17</sup>

In the fall of 1871 he was

elected county clerk and recorder in Boulder, CO. He was re-elected in 1873 and served until 1876. Then he was engaged in the abstract, real estate and brokerage business.

On December 14, 1871 Alfred and Heresa were married at the home of her mother, Mrs. Crull in Denver.

As Alfred had been elected County Clerk and Recorder of Boulder County that fall, the newlyweds moved to Boulder.



*Colorado State Historical Society photo*

In my search for photos, I found another of Heresa, (above); it has me totally stumped as to its meaning. Heresa is dressed in a garment, very much like a monk would wear. She is young, the photo is marked Heresa Lea, Mother of Homer Lea. The photographer was C. DUHEM & BRO., the mark suggests that it was taken between

1869 and 1879.

Over the years Heresa and Alfred had five children. A son Ivan and a daughter Mary died shortly after birth. Ivan died on March 28, 1875. They also had two daughters, Emirl and Heresa. On November 17, 1876, Heresa gave birth to a son, the proud parents named him Homer.

It was said that Heresa had the gift of second sight.<sup>18</sup> When Homer was born, she supposedly had recurring dreams of a far away land, with great armies dressed in very different garb.<sup>19</sup> If this was true, had she also had a premonition of Captain Soules murder?

Sadly, when Heresa's son was about three he had an accident, causing curvature of the spine, which disabled him the rest of his life. There are several accounts of how he was injured; the one that the family credits occurred at Heresa's Mother's home in Denver... "he was sitting in his high chair and rocked himself off the porch." Other thoughts were that Heresa had jumped from a runaway wagon with him in her arms and another that he fell off a shed roof.<sup>20</sup>

There may be another story as to how Homer Lea, received his injuries. The previous March an incident happened at Mrs. Crulls, that might explain Heresa's son's injury.

On March 30th, 1879, Mr. Crull struck Sarah Coberly so hard that her eye was black and blue for three weeks. D.C. Oakes was there shortly after the incident and asked Mr. Crull why he had struck her? He replied, "they had disagreed as to correcting a child." Homer would have been two and a half to three years old at this time.

Mr. Crull left Mrs. Crulls home

and had been gone ever since. This information was obtained from their divorce document granted on August 19, 1881. Also this again is *my interpretation of what might have happened.*

Both D.C. and Olive Oakes testified as to the accuracy of this incident. (Mr. Crull having hit Mrs. Crull.)

Around the first of May, 1879, Alfred Lea left Boulder to survey the head waters of the Gunnison. It is said, that Heresa did not want him to go. In his absence Heresa took her children and went to Denver to care for her mother, who was quite ill.

*The Rocky Mountain News,*  
May 13, 1879

#### DIED

*"LEA-At the residence of her mother, Mrs. Crull in this city, at 7:30 P.M. Sunday. Mrs. Heresa A. Lea, wife of Hon. A.E. Lea of Boulder, aged 34 years, 2 months and 14 days. Mrs. Lea was one of Colorado's most loved and lovable women, and leaves a very large circle of friends to mourn her untimely demise. Funeral from corner 16th and Glenarm Streets, at 2 p.m. to-day."*

On Friday May 16, 1879 the community (in Boulder) was shocked to learn that Heresa Lea had died in Denver on Sunday evening, May 11th of malignant Erysipelas or Saint Anthonys' Fire. The dictionary describes this as: an acute infectious disease of the skin or mucous mem-

branes characterized by inflammation of the skin; Accompanied with fever; it is caused by any of several kinds of streptococcus.

The notice in the Boulder paper, gives us some of the details.

*Boulder News and Courier,*  
Friday May 16, 1879

#### Death of Mrs A.E. Lea

*"We learn from a private letter to Alphens Wright, Esq. from General Brown, that Mrs. A.E. Lea died in Denver on Sunday evening last of malignant erysipelas. This sad news brings the deepest sorrow to the hearts of many friends of this estimable lady. The circumstances of her death are particularly painful she having gone to Denver to nurse her mother, Mrs. Crull, who has been sick for some time. Mr. Lea started for the Gunnison country only a short time ago, full of buoyant expectations, leaving his wife and little ones in health and happiness. He has the heart felt sympathies of the entire community in his great affliction. Mrs. Lea has been something of an invalid for years until lately and in commenting on her improvement in health, said she felt better than she had for years and capable of accomplishing a great deal. Alas! for human expectation, she*



*has been cut down in the prime of a useful womanhood. May the sheltering wings of a kind Providence ever hover lovingly over the pathway of the bereaved little ones, leading them safely, at the end of lifes journey into a glorious reunion with Sainted Mother."*

In another article on May 23rd, Heresa was described in the News and Courier as a gentle wife and mother, of there being unfinished bits of work awaiting her home coming and whose feet will never more bring gladness to the desolate house.<sup>21</sup>

Mrs. Crull had been ill for some time. I am going to take liberty once again to make the assumption that it would be the Oakes family who would prepare Heresa's body and make the funeral arrangements. Friends and neighbors did this for each other during such times.

Heresa Lea is buried a few feet north of the D.C. Oakes family plot at Riverside Cemetery. On her tombstone it is inscribed, "My lambs shall lied down with me." Family documents quote, "I will lay me down beside my lambs."

One month and seven days after Heresa was laid to rest, Alfred E. Lea returned home.

*Boulder News and Courier*, June 20, 1879  
*"A.E. Lea has returned to his now desolate home. He was away on the headwaters of the Gunnison when the news of his affliction reached him."*

It would seem that it was too much for Alfred to remain in the home that had vibrated with laughter and the activities of a loving mother.

One month later in the *Boulder News and Courier*, July 11, 1879;

*"A.E. Lea has sold his brick house and lot on Pine St. to G.H. Buckingham. The property comprises a lot and a half and is one of the most desirable on the street."*

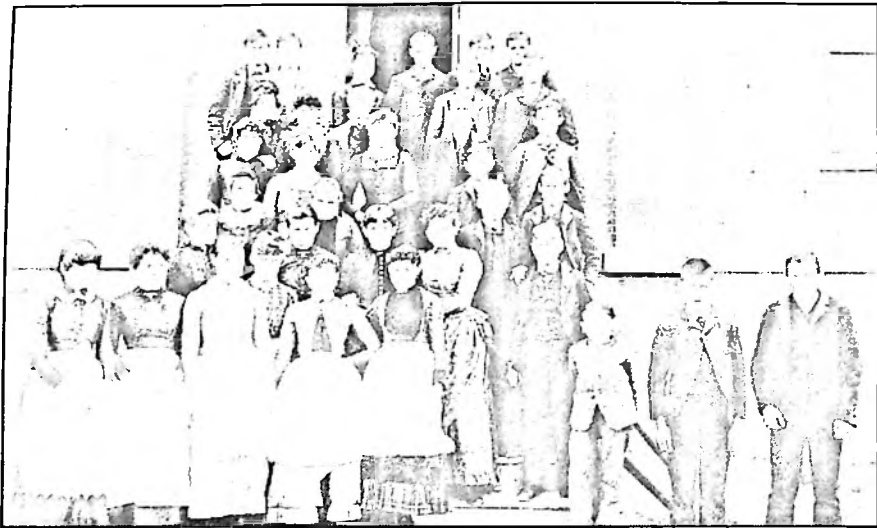
On Christmas Day, Dec. 25th, 1877 George Buckingham and Clara McIvor were married at the home of Alfred and Heresa.<sup>22</sup>

The Buckinghamhs have now purchased the home, where they had celebrated on Christmas Day, two years before, their marriage in the company of their friends, Alfred and Heresa. They no doubt had spent many an evening at that house in happy company with the Leas. Unless they moved at a later date, Heresa and Alfred Leas home is now one of the Historic homes in Boulder, listed as the Historic Buckingham House at 1645 Pine St. It has for many years been divided into apartments.

The only documentation as to this being the home of the Leas, is the article in the paper. A very limited search of land records in Boulder county, failed to confirm the purchase by the Buckinghamhs.

And now, as Paul Harvey would say, "for the rest of the story".

Exactly what happened to the Lea children after Heresas death, is somewhat confusing. Alfred Lea had



*Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder Historical Society Collection*

### Homer (3rd from right) at Central School, Boulder, 1887

been successful in his mining operations and moved to California in 1893. Mrs Crull had moved there sometime earlier. Family documents indicate that their grandmother Mrs. Crull raised them. However, there is a picture of Homer Lea attending Central school in Boulder, dated 1887. Homer would have been eleven years old. It is almost certain that at some point he did live in Denver at Mrs Crulls and attended school there.

At the age of twelve Homer was five feet tall, and would remain so the remainder of his life. His deformity became more pronounced and his friends called him "little scrunch neck," but he could always hold his own in the everyday life of a boy growing up in the west. He may have been short in stature, but his mind encompassed the world with the knowledge he pursued.

Homer finished high school in California, went to Occidental College and then to Stanford University.

In place of the typical college pictures, maps of the world adorned Homer's dormitory walls. He plotted and studied all the great wars.

His one ambition was to be accepted at West Point. He saw no reason why he couldn't be of service to his country in spite of his deformity. To Homer, nothing was impossible! But it was not to be.

Homer had made friends with the Chinese students, the orient had always fascinated him. He, like his Mother, had recurring dreams of the far away land.

Alfred Lea had hired a housekeeper for Homer. At times when Homer could not stand erect, because of the pain, he was forced to crawl. At

these times the housekeeper, who was very unkind, would feed him as one would feed a beast.<sup>23</sup>

Other servants, who were Chinese, would get food for him. It is thought that it was from them that he first learned the language. Although he also studied classical languages at Occidental College.

When his grandmother, Mrs. Crull, now Mrs. Start, learned how he was being treated she stepped in and corrected the situation.

Homer's manner was always gentle, and his voice soft. Yet he could get his sisters and classmates to drill for hours. A Chinese who had fought with him in the field commented, "He had eyes that could bury you nine feet under the ground, if you disobeyed him."<sup>24</sup>

In spite of, or perhaps because of, his trials as a young boy, Homer, at the age of 23, was a general in the Chinese army. This was during the Boxer Rebellion, in which the Chinese, loyal to the Manchu throne, tried to purge China of all white men.

The Empress fled, but she was pursued by Homer Lea and his ragged army. The rear guard overcame Lea's men and he was abandoned. He took refuge in a Buddhist temple. The rebellion ended, the Empress bought off the foreign powers, but the price tag of \$10,000 remained on the head of Homer Lea. He fled to Hong Kong dressed as a french monk. In spite of this he continued in the fight.

He and Sun Yat-Sen and others returned to California. Homer raised troops and trained them. A man by the name of O'Banion took care of him, at times he carried him in his arms.

Clare Boothe, in the *Saturday*

*Evening Post*, 1942, in speaking of the close of the Boxer Rebellion:

*"...It is too much to suggest that Homer Lea and his Reform Volunteers raised that siege. But history records that, much to the mystification of the besieged white defenders, when the American troops under General Chaffee marched into Peking, a young white man dressed as a Chinese general, commanding several thousand ragged Chinese who had fought by Chaffee's side against the Boxers, entered with him."<sup>25</sup>*

Homer wrote three books. *The Vermillion Pencil*, his first book, was a Chinese novel. *The Valor of Ignorance*, published by Harper in 1909, and *The Day of the Saxon* published in 1912.

He predicted the second world war. Clare Boothe first heard of him before we entered the war and thought he was a spy, until she was informed that he was a master at the science of war. His books were required reading in the military schools of Japan and Germany and they were best sellers in those countries. In America, they were given but little attention.

There are two prefaces in *The Valor of Ignorance*. The first by Lieut. Gen. Adna. R. Chaffee, a former U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

*"We do not know of any work in Military Literature...More deserving the attention of men who study the history of the United States and the*

science of war.”

The second by Major General J.P. Story, “*The greatest unrecognized military genius America ever produced.*”

General Chaffee, upon reading *The Valor of Ignorance*, went immediately to see him and brought Major General Story with him. Chaffee said: “I have not been able to sleep since I read it.” Story said, “There is no flaw in it.”

Colonel Charles Willoughby described Homer as a scientist.

Lenin stated, “Lea knew more about world politics than all the cabinet ministers now in office.”<sup>26</sup>

Sun Yat-Sen, often regarded as China’s equivalent of George Washington, regarded Lea as one of the Great Military Geniuses of the Age.

In 1911,<sup>27</sup> in Nanking, Gen. Homer Lea saw Sun Yat-sen elected president of the Chinese Republic, while a “foreign-fashion” band played *See the Conquering Hero Comes*. He was the only white man present at the formal birth of a democracy of four hundred and fifty million people. He had made good his boast “to topple the Manchus from their Dragon Throne.”<sup>28</sup>

The Manchus however, still controlled the northern provinces and the revolutionaries were in need of recognition and financial support from foreign governments.

Yuan Shih-k’ai, a commander of the Manchu Army was favored by western governments. He had assured them that he could get the Manchus to surrender and bring on a republican government.

Homer could be rather vain, and many did not like him, so they



Colorado State Historical Society photo

Homer at age 23

questioned Sun Yat-Sens judgement in putting so much faith in the little hunch back. Sun Yat Sens main concern was that the republic survive, he cared little who was president.

Three months later he graciously resigned in Yuan’s favor. On the eve of the abdication, Homer suffered a paralyzing stroke.

Homer warned his fellow Americans, “A Nation which is rich, vain and unprepared provokes wars and hastens its own ruin... ..A nation can become so rich that its very wealth will bankrupt it in a war with a country poor but frugal and war like.”

Homer Lea died on the first day of November, 1912, in a little cottage by the sea in Ocean Park, California. His two sisters and his wife, who had

been his secretary, were by his side.

In the spring of 1969, a collection of dignitaries, including the U.S. Ambassador to Taiwan and the Premier of the Republic of China, gathered reverently at a memorial service in Taipei to deposit the ashes of Lea, who had died in that seaside cottage in California, 57 years before. Taiwanese participants vowed that Lea's remains would one day be transferred to the mausoleum of China's revolutionary leader, Sun Yat-Sen on the Communist Chinese mainland.<sup>29</sup>

The ashes of Homer Lea as far as it is known, remain in Taipei.

For more information on

Homer Lea:

Lea, Homer, 1876-1912 MS 71-1103  
Hoover Institution on War, Revolution  
and Peace, Stanford University Calif.  
Lea, Homer, 1876-1912 MS 71-1103

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*The Saturday Evening Post*, March 7th  
and March 14th, 1942

*Ever Hear of Homer Lea?* by Clare  
Booth

Smithsonian July 1993

*Ambitious little romancer - or visionary  
genius?* by Tom Alexander

Baskins *History of Colorado*

*Rocky Mountain News*

Norlin Library Boulder, Augusta H.  
Block collection

*Boulder News and Courier*, 1877

Colorado Historical Society Coberly  
mss 125 ff 1

Gladys Vote Cromer mss 941 box 1 ff 2

Wynkoop mss 695 ff2

WPA clippings Soule

Denver Court House, Clerk and Record-  
ers Office, State Archives, Denver

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> CHS WPA Clippings Soule

<sup>2</sup> RMN August 6, 1864

<sup>3</sup> Wynkoop Mss 695 ff2

<sup>4</sup> DPL WII Silas Soule mss RBV 59

<sup>5</sup> CHS Coberly mss 125

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> Denver Court House, mixed roll 1865 page 391  
recorded Sept. 23, 1865

<sup>8</sup> RMN April 24, 1865

<sup>9</sup> RMN April 24, 1865

<sup>10</sup> RMN April 27, 1865

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> State Archives divorce records case #5458  
Sarah Crull vs William Crull Aug. 29, 1881

<sup>13</sup> CHS Wynkoop mss 695 ff 2

<sup>14</sup> *ibid* Wynkoop doesn't name the assassin, he  
also says it was Lt. Cameron who he had escort  
the assassin to Denver. The paper says Cannon.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

<sup>16</sup> History of Clear Creek & Boulder Valley by  
Baskin page 650 & 651

<sup>17</sup> Coberly mss 125

<sup>18</sup> Gladys Vote Comer mss 941 ff2

<sup>19</sup> Gladys Vote Cromer 941 ff2

<sup>20</sup> Coberly mss

<sup>21</sup> Norlin Library News and Boulder Courier  
Friday May 23, 1879

<sup>22</sup> Boulder News and Courier Dec. 28, 1877

<sup>23</sup> CHS Gladys Vote Cromer mss 941 ff2

<sup>24</sup> Saturday Evening Post page 70 March 7, 1942  
by Clare Booth

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

<sup>26</sup> Smithsonian Tom Alexander

<sup>27</sup> Date given by Clare Booth in Saturday  
Evening Post. Tom Alexander in the  
Smithsonian gives 1912.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid*

<sup>29</sup> Smithsonian magazine July, 1991 Tom  
Alexander



# Over the Corral Rail

*Please send items of interest to Jim Krebs, Publications Chairman. Jim's contact information is on page 2.*

## Peg Ekstrand wins the Ward Family Prize in Public History

Peg Ekstrand, an employee of the Colorado Historical Society, was recently presented with the inaugural Ward Family Prize in Public History from the University of Colorado at Denver. She received \$1,000, which she is contributing to the books and manuscripts department at the Colorado Historical Society to fund a public history internship.

Ekstrand is the director of public relations at the Colorado Historical Society. She has also served as editor of the Society's newspaper, *Colorado History News*. She produced over 200 Colorado Historical Moments on KCNC-TV's *Colorado Getaways* program, viewed by 175,000 people weekly. In addition she conducts history preservation presentations and leads tours and treks around the state.

Previously, she was with Historic Denver, Inc. Ekstrand holds a master's degree in history from the University of Colorado Denver and is affiliated with many Denver-based organizations including Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods, the Denver Woman's Press Club, Denver Westerners, Historic St. Paul's Lutheran Church and the Colorado History Group.

As descendants of prominent Colorado pioneer families, Judy Gutshall Ward and Thomas Coombs Ward wanted to recognize and encourage historic awareness and the creative and commercial uses of history. The annual spring prize is given to a CU Denver student or alum who has done the most to promote history through educational activities, historic preservation, publications, tours and other efforts to foster a sense of place and appreciation of the past as a guide to the future.

## Warmest welcome to newest members

The Denver Posse of Westerners welcomes the following new Corresponding Members; Robert M. Anderson of Parker, CO—Mr. Anderson is a former member of the Cheyenne Corral, and is a member of the Little Big Horn Assoc. and the Custer Battlefield Museum and the Oregon/Calif. Trails Assoc. Thomas Miller of Greeley, CO—Mr. Miller enjoys northern Colorado history and is a member of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. Jean-Carol and Robert McCammon of Denver, CO—Both Robert and Jean-Carol enjoy photography and western history, and Robert is the President of the Jackson Camera Club. Cathleen Norman of Lakewood, CO—Ms. Norman enjoys mining history and historic architecture. K. Mason and Jayne Howard of Littleton, CO—Mason's interests are "varied", and Jayne lists "any and all", along with being a Board Member of the Friends of Historic Ft. Logan. Donald and Elizabeth Pulcifer of Crofton, Maryland—the Pulcifer's enjoy Colorado history and lore.

## Platte River fandango brings Denver's founders back to life

CU-President John C. Buechner, CU-Denver Chancellor Gerogia Lesh-Laurie and Dean Jim Smith have launched a Public History & Preservation Center at CU-Denver, to be led by Tom "Dr. Colorado" Noel.

To help raise \$500,000 to endow a professorship and a center, Dana Crawford and the CU Foundation are co-sponsoring the Platte River Fandango, Sunday, August 22, 1999 from 5-9 p.m., with tours, drinks, dinner, storytelling, communal river dipping and a tour of the flour mill lofts. This is a once in a millennium chance to meet and hear from Denver's founding fathers and mothers.

For your Platte River baptism, brothers and sisters, send in your check now. Congregate at City of Cuernavaca Park, 20th St. and Rockmount Dr., on the west bank of the Platte to relive Denver's puppy days. Billy Bent (Sam'l Arnold) will be up from Bent's Fort to play his mandolin. Pioneer brewer Philip Zang (John Hickenlooper) will be handing out samples. Furry-tongued William McGaa (Dennis Gallagher) will introduce his wives—Champa (Kate Gleason), Wewatta (Kris Christensen) and Wazee (Bonnie K. Miller).

You and your family will learn Denver's history first hand from Chief Little Raven (Don Walker), Elizabeth (Marica Goldstein) and Billy Byers (Eric Hammersmark), General William Larimer (Mike Smith), Gov. John & Margaret Evans (Kevin & Darcy Rucker), J. K. and Kate Mullen (Bill & Cara Convery), Countess Murat (Barbara Gibson), Judge Lynch (Judge Larry Bohning), schoolteacher Owen Goldrick (Alan Culpin), William Green Russell (Breck Grover), Mark Twain (Hugh Bingham), officers John O'Dell and Harry Thomas.

Denver's notorious dueling madames, Mattie Silks (Peg Ekstrand) and Kattie Fulton (Patty Calhoun) will re-enact their riverside duel (only the pimp Cort Thompson, who caused the fight, was injured). Phil Hernandez will tell you of Mexican Diggings and Denver's forgotten Hispanic pioneers. Augusta Tabor (Pat Quade) will explain how women made pioneer men look like heroes. Aunt Clara Brown (Kisha Small) will portray the black laundress who found gold in a wash tub. Mayor Richard Sopris (Rod Lister) will talk on the park system he created. Enos Mills (Tom Ward), the legendary naturalist, will expound on Platte River flora, fauna and bird mating calls.

For info/reservations, call Kate Gleason at the CU Foundation, ph. 303-556-3961. Make checks to "CU Foundation" for "Fandango" to Kate Gleason, CU-Foundation, 1250 14th St., Suite 850, Campus Box 174 Denver, Co. 80217-3364. \$40 for the Fandango and dinner. \$100 for Fandango, dinner and dessert in Dana's loft to howl at the moon.

### **Help Wanted**

The Archives Committee is looking for missing items to help fill in the gaps in our own history. These items include, but are not limited to; Sign-in books, membership lists, meeting minutes, programs, books, etc. Please contact the Sheriff if any items of Denver Posse history are in your possession.

### *Also...*

If you have any un-presented papers of interest, please contact the Sheriff.

## Autumnal rendezvous of the Colorado History Group

Sept. 11, Sat., 10-11 a.m.: Meet at the Gold Hill General Store, for coffee and chocolate chip cookies, 531 Main St., Gold Hill. 11 a.m.: "Welcome to Gold Hill" storekeeper Hugh Moore. 11:15: Walk to St. James Museum & Archives for Duane Smith, Ft. Lewis College: "Caribou: The Silver Saga" Silvia Petern, "Boulder County Mining Town: Then & Now" Walking Tour of Gold Hill. 2 p.m. Four-wheeler car pool departs from Gold Hill General Store for Caribou & a tour of Tom Hendrick's Gold Mine. 5-8 p.m. CHG annual drinks, dinner & song at Gold Hill Inn. \$40/\$30 students for brunch, dinner and all expenses. Make checks to "Colorado History Group" for "Gold Hill" c/o Tom Noel, 1245 Newport St., Denver, Co. 80220, ph. 303-355-0211

Dec. 4, Sat., 11-4: Noel biblioholics party at Abracadabra Antiquarian Bookshop, 32 S. Broadway, complimentary refreshments & libations, Santa Claus will be in attendance. All 24 of Tom Noel's books will be available with the author there to inscribe your copy for you or your holiday gifts. 15 % discount on all purchases. Proprietor Alan Culpin will lead us in traditional Christmas carols, ending a heavenly day for holiday gift shoppers.

Sept. 26, 5-9 p.m.: Louis DuPuy Dinner at the Fort. Call Kate Gleason for info./reservations 303-556-6779

Oct. 5: Meet Vance Kirkland Gallery, 1311 Pearl St., for Dwight Pithcaithley, NPS Chief Historian & President, National Council on Public History, "Public History in the National Parks" (reservations a must with Tom Noel 303-355-0211)

Oct. 14: Meet 7 p.m. at Mattie Silk's, 1942 Market St. for dinner, drinks, a slide show and a tour of the haunted bordellos of Market Street. Call Bobby Hulytin, Tour Director for the Colorado Historical Society for reservations and info at 303-866-4641

Oct. 22. 1 p.m.: Meet Wazee Lounge for Public History pub talk

Oct. 29, 9:30-11:30: Halloween Tour at Fairmount Cemetery. Meet Little Ivy Chapel, E. Alameda Ave. & 430 S. Quebec St. Reservations. Call Bobby Hulytin, tour director for the Colorado Historical Society, for reservations and info at 303-866-4641

Nov. 9, 7 p.m.: Meet NC 1402 for NPS Historian Jerry Green's talk, "How We Found the Sand Creek Massacre Site."





## Westerners Bookshelf



**Old Fences, New Neighbors** by Peter R. Decker. University of Arizona Press, Tucson, 1998. 175 pages. Cloth \$40, paper \$19.95.

Mr. Decker writes of Ouray County, Colorado, its history, those who have lived there, and how they have gotten along.

A transplanted easterner, Decker bought a ranch in 1974 and moved there full time in 1980. His observations and remarks have the acuity of an outsider. But his description of life on the land shows him to be a rancher. He writes knowledgeably of moving irrigation water, helping to birth a calf, roundups, and watching and surviving the regular fluctuations in cattle and ranchland prices.

The first half gives a history of the land and its peoples—the latter part talks about how life in Ridgway, Colorado, near Telluride, has changed in the past 25 years. It was a mining and ranching society and economy where everyone knew everyone else. The nature of the life required interaction and collaboration. Not to glamorize, it was poor and hard.

Since the mid 70's, Ouray County has experienced what society in general has: consolidation, automation, personal isolation, the rise of consumerism and the recreation economy. These have paid many of the county's family ranches. They have also brought in many newcomers. Now a majority in the county, these people have neither ties to the land nor an appreciation of where food comes from.

Mr. Decker nevertheless writes with humor, tolerance, and a willingness to face and make the best of change. Would that more people took such a view!

This is a book anyone wishing to understand the West of today ought to read.

--Stan Moore C.M.

**Pioneer Women: The Lives of Women on the Frontier** by Linda Peavy and Ursula Smith. The University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1998. 144 pages, photographs. Paperback, \$17.95.

"Who is the woman whose photograph graces the cover and title page of this book," asked the authors, Linda Peavey and Ursula Smith. Her identity is never discovered but that cover photo drew me into this book, *Pioneer Women: The Lives of Women on the Frontier*. In the preface of this book the authors state "mere words could never convey as much about the lives of women of the frontier as do the

visual images that are the primary focus of this book.” And so wonderful photographs abound in this book, but that is not all.

Historians often tell “his-story” in recounting journeys westward. Women are limited to being classified as Madonnas of the Prairie or at the other extreme, ladies of ill repute. Most books on women of the West are anglocentric, neglecting Native Americans, Hispanics and Asians, which is not the case here. People lived ordinary lives a large percentage of the time and so ordinary, daily experiences are stressed in this book. Although westering women could and did write diaries, letters and books, oral histories were also utilized in the research of this book, making it a “patchword quilt of pioneer life”.

The first chapter describes the journey west, every method of travel, wagons, walking, carriages, horseback is included. The necessities of living: food, shelter and clothing, are discussed by the women who made the trip. Details such as diapers for babies and adaptation of men’s wear for riding add to the delight of this book. After the ordeals of travel, a home had to be made and the women did their stereotypical jobs as well as many of the men-only labors.

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People lived ordinary lives...and so ordinary, daily experiences are stressed in this book...

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The chapter, “Behind Closed Doors”, covered marriages, divorces and the assorted problems in-between that were handled by our pioneering sisters. Many books on the women

going west only mention babies after they were born; this book looked for information on birth, birth control, and topics usually omitted.

The chapter, “The Work of Women’s Hands” not only tells of the hard lives of pioneer women, but also elaborates on nontraditional roles they were involved with, in education, medicine, law and even photography. And in the final chapter, the ability of women to be community builders was addressed. Schools and churches were major emphases for these ladies, but other causes, the temperance movement and voting rights, are also chronicled.

With a book that covers so much material, only highlights can be given. So a fantastic index and bibliography, tied together in the back of the book, provides the reader with additional information. It eliminates numerous footnotes and tire-some page flipping.

Among my favorite photographs in the book are a lady in a wheel chair on an outing, a self portrait of an early lady photographer and a Willow Creek Canyon, Colorado camper flipping flapjacks. If only one book about women in the West were available, this certainly would be an appropriate choice.

--Nancy Bathke, P.M.

**The Prehistory of Colorado & Adjacent Areas**, by Tammy Stone. University of Utah Press, 1999. 214 pp. Paper, \$17.50.

This volume is a good overview and guide to the various periods, migrations, social groupings, and habits of early regional inhabitants.

For the layman it reveals fascinating inferences from a few potsherds, bones, stone chips, and firepits. For the more serious student there are theories and footnotes galore. The occasional references to opposing doctrines and hypotheses are tantalizing.

As history this text does in fact consider the known eras of human habitation of Colorado and environs: northern, central and southern high plains; the Four Corners; the Rio Grande Valley; northwest Colorado; the San Juans; the Parks, North, Middle and South; and last but not least the hogbacks.

One confusing aspect, each region has its own particular history and also often several conflicting chronological ladders. For example, the central high plains has six periods, Archaic and Ceramic, each divided into Early Middle and Late. Early Archaic starts anywhere from 8000 BC to 3000 BC and Late Ceramic ends from 1750 to 1850 AD, depending on which of four expert's doctrine is accepted. This dissonance is seen throughout the book.

The ability to draw defensible archeological conclusions requires art as much as science. That is the appeal of this book. It is an entertaining and informative read best taken in small bites. Professor Stone explores many subjects, including: early social groupings; diet; weather patterns; projectile styles; the migration of the Utes from the Great Basin; the shifting commercial and political alliances among and between the various plains tribes, etc.

All in all, if you want a framework on which to hang your understanding of early native American goings on, this is a book to read.

—Stan Moore, C.M.

**Amon, The Man Who Played Cowboy for America**, Revised Edition, by Jerry Flemmons. Forward by John T. Montford. Texas Tech University Press, Lubbock, 1998. (Originally published 1978 as *Amon: The Life of Amon G. Carter of Texas*.) 360 pages, 40 B&W photos, index. Cloth, \$31.95.

A bit of a con man in his youth, millionaire oil man, publisher, philanthropist, confidant to the famous, guardian angel and promoter of Ft. Worth, spokesman for West Texas, early addict of air travel, patron of Texas Christian and Texas Tech Universities, initiator of towering rages, disparager of Dallas, cowboy for America, all this and much more was Amon G. Carter.

For forty-nine years til his death in 1955 the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* and its predecessor the *Star* was the vehicle for Amon's rambunctious life.

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...an entertaining and  
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To further complement his schemes and ventures, there was his Shady Oak Farm and Suite 10G of the Ft. Worth Club. It was at the Farm, where Amon regularly entertained the famous. Here the guests partied, played cowboy with their host and received their famous Shady Oak Western hats and other expensive gifts. Suite 10G was the site of marathon poker games, drinking and carousing.

The exploits of this man who counted Will Rogers and Franklin D. Roosevelt as friends are too many to chronicle in a simple book review. The reviewer heartily recommends this book on the life and times of a genuine American, as well as Texas character.

An abridged quote from the author's introduction best tells the story, "How Amon Carter and the newspaper are remembered in a thousand years is unimportant. But in the old days every one had fun. That's what everybody remembers about Amon Carter, they had fun."

--Bob Stull, P.M.

**So Much to Be Done: Women Settlers on the Mining and Ranching Frontier**, Second Edition. Edited by Ruth B. Moynihan, Susan Armitage, Christiane Fischer Duchamp. Reprinted by University of Nebraska Press, Omaha, 1998. 353 pages, selected bibliography. Paperback \$16.95.

This collection of first-hand accounts of women's experience on the western frontier was first published in 1990 as a volume in the *Women of the West Series*. This second edition contains four new selections, including Colorado pioneer Augusta Tabor's remembrance of accompanying her husband Horace to West Kansas Territory and grubstaking his gold and silver mining efforts by running a boarding house, operating a restaurant, and doing laundry. The book provides insight into settlement of the American West and how individual women coped. For those who have read it before, the book is worth a second read. It can be perused as a series of "slice of life" perspectives or serve to delve into various historical topics.

*So Much to Be Done* draws from a variety of primary sources, including journal excerpts, correspondence, memoirs, and travel articles. Each reveals the writers' personalities, and how their sentiments of fear, courage, or optimism colored their pioneer experiences. The book is divided into three geographic regions—the Pacific West/Nevada, the high plains and mountains, and the desert southwest. This organization allows readers to compare and contrast the various terrains, and how climate influenced the environment and pioneers' situations.

The editors introduce each account and describe how the type of source material influences the tone, details, writing style, and accuracy. Memoirs and magazine articles paint a glowing account in which the narrator may take on an almost heroic status. Diary entries may also be intended for a wider audience than just the writer. For example, Carrie Williams' playful literary style indicates that her journal entries were meant for others' eyes. In addition to chronicling her daily chores of sweeping, mopping, sewing, cooking, and baby tending, Carrie tells about

reading ancient Roman history, designing her own gowns, and going to a “grand ball” in the gold camp of Nevada City, Colorado. Carrie confides feeling abandoned by her husband’s avid involvement in a band, “tooting his odious horn,” as she calls it.

The frontier experience differed greatly depending upon a woman’s financial class, marital status, age, and personality. A woman’s experience could range from a droning complaint of household drudgery to an enthusiastic celebration of freedom and adventure to mortal fear of the unsettled western wilderness. An ethnic minority’s perspective is provided by Sarah Winnemucca Hopkins’ remembrances of attempting to defend her people and by Apolonaria Lorenzana’s descriptions of life in the southern California missions.

The book shows how women coped, but also provides insight into social customs and other aspects of daily life. Abigail Dunway, writing for an eastern magazine, describes club parties, public balls, private card parties, and dinner parties in Virginia City, Nevada. She tells how: “We are all very gay and fashionable, exhibiting our diamonds and lace to the eyes of rival mine and millmen’s wives and daughters with as much eagerness as would a New York or Parisian belle.”

Not surprisingly, these accounts are filled with references to fashion and dress on the frontier. An Arizona school-teacher described “my pet dress for hot afternoons, a white lawn with delicate pink flowers made with a ruffle and edges with lace.” Others wore more practical garb: “Mother Hubbards happened to be in style at that time and a veritable God’s blessing they were. Made of a material called cheese cloth, they were very cool and comfortable.”

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The narratives also offer perspectives on more universal historic themes, such as the range of attitudes toward Native Americans. Mrs. E. A. Van Count’s describes feelings of annoyance and fear towards California’s Digger Indians. Angeline Mitchell Brown confronts with the unfriendly Apaches in the Arizona desert. Sadie Martin describes friendship with the Native Americans hired to labor on her families Arizona homestead.

Frontier architecture and community building are depicted as well. Sister Blandina describes building a schoolhouse, church, and other adobe structures in Trinidad. Carrie Williams records the cost of lumber and other building materials, and exact dimensions of her dwelling. Mrs. Nat Collins recalls helping her father as a young girl, hauling logs to build one of the first cabins in the territory. Sadie Martin describes the “comfortable, rambling house with a dirt roof.”

The book extensively treats women’s traditional roles—homemaking parenting, nursing, schoolteaching, and running boarding houses, but lacking are first-hand accounts of non-traditional female roles. On rare occasion, women were employed in “male” occupations such as photographer, carpenter, civic leader, stock broker, or physician. One hopes that the editors might include a non-traditional

narrative, if one exists, in their Third Edition. The book also would benefit from more photographs.

--Cathleen Norman. C.M.

**Wind River Adventures - My Life In Frontier Wyoming**, by Edward J. Farlow with forward by Sharon Kahin. High Plains Press. Glendo. 1998. 254 pages of text, photos, index and author history. Paperback. \$14.95.

"Ed Farlow seems to have been present at every important historic event in the West. If he wasn't, he knew someone who was." So says the jacket to this obvious labor of love from the Fremont County (Wyoming) Museums Board.

This is the first publication for a set of memoirs recording Farlow's life before 1931 which he wrote between the late '30s and early '40s (though he lived another 20 years to age 90). The final seven pages that recount the author's life history from a 1998 perspective show a true man of the West whose life would make an interesting movie.

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Farlow was born in Iowa, but was captivated by stories of Wyoming told by a visitor to his home who had worked for pioneer stockman Tom Alsop south of Laramie. In 1876, Farlow and a friend set out for Wyoming by hitching rides on passing freights or walking when they were put off the train by a

brakeman. His later words spoke of a man in love with the rugged country he had traveled so many miles to reach. "The trip across the plains that beautiful day was one of the most enjoyable days of my life. We were young and strong and full of life and we had not a care on earth and this was all new to us." Putting perspective on the worth of money in those days, Farlow states that "...Alsop told me if I was any good he would pay me \$35 a month. When I left Iowa they were hiring the best farm hands for \$17 a month..."

Perhaps some of the most impressive information in this book lies in the many footnotes that clarify or correct details that Farlow may not have remembered correctly. An example is while Farlow is discussing a murder scene, a footnote is tacked on to try to locate where it occurred. "The site of the killing can no longer be pinpointed precisely but it was somewhere near the route of Highway 287, approximately six miles southeast of Lander. A monument erected in memory of the three men stands next to the highway as it passes through what is now known as Deadman Gulch."

Farlow discusses Sacajawea, Chief Washakie, the Hole-in-the-Wall Gang, Cattle Kate, the Custer battle and Chivington's Sand Creek attack (among other things). While not "politically correct" in the 1999 sense, Farlow's love and deep-seated respect for his native-American brothers comes through as when he addressed

a comment from a minister who felt that God must have wanted the Indian "civilized." "...there is no doubt that the white man has made greater and more intensive use of this country than the Indian...but if you look at it from the standpoint of right and justice and honesty and fair dealing, it takes on an entirely different appearance. Suppose there came from the west a race of people as much more numerous and powerful as we were over the American Indian and they swept us back into the Atlantic Ocean, setting our remnants aside on reservations...Do you still see the hand of God as clearly as you did before?"

Perhaps the most interesting sections may be near the end of the book. First Farlow speaks of his involvement with establishing "in 1894...what is believed to be the first paid admission rodeo in the world...on the outskirts of Lander." This continues to this day as Lander Pioneer Days. Another interesting section is the 1922 organization by Farlow of the Indians for the million dollar silent movie *The Covered Wagon* at the recommendation of Colonel Tim McCoy. McCoy would also get him involved in six other movies with Farlow squiring bands of Indians across the U. S. and to Europe to give live introductions to these movies.

This book is quite an interesting if not a scholarly read and is highly recommended.

--George W. Krieger DDS, P.M.

**The Royal Road: El Camino Real from Mexico City to Santa Fe**, by Douglas Preston and Jose Antonio Esquibel, photographs by Christine Preston. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque. 178 pages, 86 color photos, 3 maps, genealogical appendix. Paper, \$26.95, cloth, \$55.00.

The authors take us on a journey by car, horseback and on foot over the more than eighteen hundred miles of The Royal Road. (El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro.) While the Camino Real is largely forgotten by Americans and Mexicans alike, it is renewed through the wonderful photographs of Christine Preston and the prose of her husband Douglas Preston. Also included is an interesting genealogical appendix by Jose Antonio Esquibel tracing the "five waves" of Hispanic families who have journeyed up the Royal Road. Included are a number of excerpts from historical poetry that help portray the historical individuals in Esquibel's summary.

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Preston takes the reader along as a passenger with Juan de Onate in his 1598 legendary "blazing" of the trail. The route followed historic Indian trails that later came to be called El Camino Real, a road which profoundly effected both Mexico and the United States. Douglas Preston states that "trails are always symbolic of something else, and [that] the Camino Real is no exception. It is, first of all, a symbol of the profound historical connection between the United States and Mexico, a reminder that the Hispanic part of American history has had a powerful effect in

shaping our country from the very beginning. But even more than that, the Camino Real is a symbol of the eternal human desire to explore, to move, to discover and settle new lands." Preston goes on to assert that the settlers of the Southwest "came because of hope, because of a dream that ran far deeper than desire for wealth, status, and comfort. In their spirit they felt the tug of las sierras azules, the distant blue mountains, beyond which lie unknown lands."

Douglas Preston skillfully weaves history, geography and contemporary descriptions of the trail. The reader's vision of the ominous terrain is illuminated by the wonderfully crafted photos by Christine Preston. The daunting task of crossing the Jornada del Muerto is made real by the photos of this forbidding landscape. The photos along with the extensive captions bring appreciation for the timelessness of many of the landmarks along the trail. In four hundred years since they were first documented by Europeans, the landscape has not changed significantly.

Accompanying each of the photos is an adeptly chosen quotation taken from literature, historical record or contemporary commentary, each of which helps to breath life into the facing color plate.

The short introduction to the Camino Real, the longest-lived American trail should be a welcome addition to the more extensive histories of the Southwest. Preston's survey of Oñate's struggle to establish a colony in la tierra nueva and the subsequent blazing of the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, which would link New Mexico and the outside world for two hundred years is a beautifully crafted photo journey to connect our past with the present.

--Jim Donohue, P.M.

**Thomas Varker Keam, Indian Trader**, by Laura Graves. University of Oklahoma Press, 1998. 342 pages. Cloth, \$28.95

Keam, a Cornishman, was born in 1842. He went to sea as a boy but forsook the shipboard life in 1862 when he joined the California Volunteer Cavalry. His duty was in present day Arizona and New Mexico. He stayed and made his life in the southwest, returning to Cornwall only at life's end.

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...Keams started the trading business by swapping , calico, pots and pans for wool...

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On leaving the service in 1864, he married a Navajo and settled near Fort Defiance. This was the site of the Agency for the Navajos who had just returned from Bosque Redondo. It was near present day Window Rock, Arizona. Keam opened a trading post with several locations, meanwhile trying to become the

Indian Agent at Defiance. He picked up the Navajo and Hopi languages and learned the ways of the natives. He never was successful in his quest to become Agent. While qualified in the sense of understanding the country, the peoples and their



needs, he was eminently unqualified in the eyes of the Presbyterian Church, (which for all intents and purposes ran the Navajo Agency). Reason: he never underwent a Christian marriage ceremony, and worse had fathered children. About 1870, Keam and his wife went their separate ways. With his younger brother he consolidated to one trading post at Keams Canyon. This location, well watered and sheltered, is in Hopi country, west of Ft Defiance. (Kit Carson camped there in his 1864 Navajo campaign.)

Long story short, Keams started the trading business by swapping coffee, calico, pots and pans for wool. He soon branched out, encouraging Navajos to make blankets from their wool and Hopis to make pots with traditional designs and Kachina dolls. Fortuitously he was the right man at the right place—he spoke the Hopi language, had the natives' respect, and also could help people from the Smithsonian and other eastern establishments with expeditions and ethnographic studies. He essentially controlled economic and social access to the Hopi tribe from the mid 1870's to the mid 90's. He probably did more to expand the economic base of the Hopi tribe than anyone. By about 1895 there were a growing number of tourists and expeditions to Hopi land. Further, other traders were starting to work the area. He ultimately lost out in a power struggle with the headmaster of the school for Hopis that he himself had founded, and returned to Cornwall in 1902.

Depending on whom you asked, Keam was viewed as a vaguely menacing, dictatorial manipulator of Indians, as a pioneer of southwest ethnography, as a friend of the Hopi, as an astute businessman who was able to bring benefits to himself and his customers. He died in 1904 at age 62.

This book is helpful in understanding the late nineteenth century life of the Navajo and the Hopi, especially their integration into the white mans' world of commerce. It adds more brushstrokes to the picture of how "southwest" came to be a recognized art form.

*--Stan Moore, C.M.*

**Colorado Givers: A History of Philanthropic Heroes**, by Thomas J. Noel, Stephen J. Leonard and Kevin E. Rucker. University of Colorado Press, 1998. 105 pages, appendix, bib., end notes (about authors), 50 B&W photos, 13 color photos. Hardcover, \$24.95.

This book touches a subject not often written about, "Philanthropy". Tom Noel and Stephen Leonard credit research to Kevin Rucker, although one doesn't have to look far to see their fine touch in this book. Philanthropy is depicted as donating time or money on a volunteer basis, and dates to the beginning of mankind. The focus on philanthropy takes us from early pioneer days to the present. The book defines charities, foundations, and noteworthy citizens who helped refine philanthropy in Colorado, starting with the Indians who gave of themselves unselfishly to the pioneers. In the early days, motivation came mostly from the distaff side of the

family. Elizabeth Sumner Byers organized the Ladies Union Aid Society, Colorado's 1st Women's organization. When Governor John Evans stated, "We shall do all the good we can," his wife and daughter joined him in this philosophy. Margaret Evans founded a chapter of the YWCA. Their daughter, Anne Evans promoted Native American and Hispanic art and culture, many years ahead of her time. Among the early "givers" were; Aunt Clara Brown, born a slave, who became the 1st black woman to come to the Colorado gold fields. Mrs. John Routt, wife of Gov. Routt and Mrs. John Wesley Iliff, were among the 1st "givers" as well. The

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...the book ends with a bright hope for the future and mentions 200 charitable foundations...

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Visiting Nurse Association was started by Ms. Hattie Corey in 1899. In 1916, Emily Griffith started the Opportunity School, renamed for her in 1933. Father Machebeuf and many nuns helped improve the quality of life in Colorado. Most notable of these was Mother Cabrini.

In 1884, the Salvation Army started the St. Lawrence mission in Denver and the Volunteers of America was established in 1893.

Denver Rescue Mission was started in 1900 as was the Jewish Relief Society, and in 1917, Goodwill Industries was started as well. There were many other well known philanthropists in the State.

In 1916 the Revenue Act was passed, opening the way to allow citizens to donate up to 15% of their income and in 1932, the Gift Tax Act allowed deductions for transfers to philanthropic institutions. Pres. Roosevelt's 1935 Revenue bill limited corporate donations to 5% on net income. In 1969, the Tax Reform Act changed regulations on how the foundations operated, and required them to pay a minimum of 5% of their assets to non-profit organizations. These changes in tax laws led to the creation of many new foundations. Most notable were: the John K. Mullen and Col Albert E. Humphreys foundations. In 1998, Colorado ranked 4th in the growth of non-profit charities among all the states. In Colorado, 10,000 non-profit organizations are registered, along with 8 of the countries largest non-profit organizations. The book ends with a bright hope for the future and mentions 200 charitable foundations that benefit community development and re-development such as: libraries, museums, shelters, schools, zoos, and the homeless. It is hoped that the millennium will bring more prosperity and in turn, more Colorado givers.

--Dolores A. Ebner, C.M.



### **Westerners International**

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The Denver Posse of Westerners, Inc. is pleased to present the 1999 *Merrill Mattes Brand Book, The Cherokee Trail*.

The Cherokee Trail is researched, written and photographed by Denver Westerner Lee Whiteley, and edited by the Publications Committee. Lee spent many days and miles traveling and photographing the Cherokee Trail, from Bent's Old Fort in southeastern Colorado, to Fort Bridger in Wyoming. A biography of Merrill Mattes, and a bibliography of his works, are contained in the Westerners' Brand Book edition.

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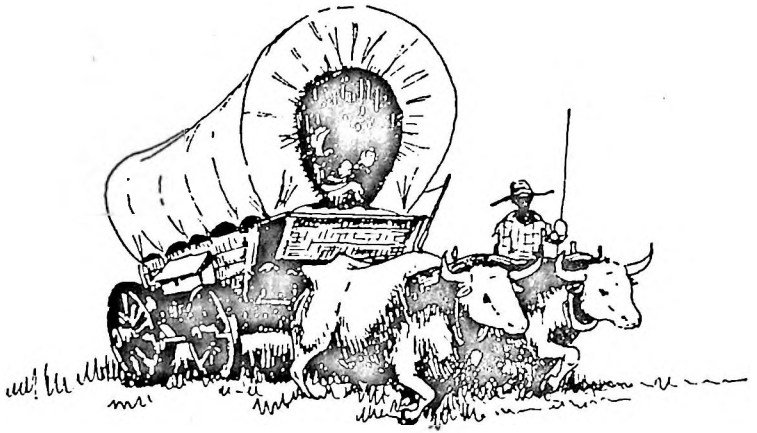
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*The* DENVER WESTERNERS  
**ROUNDUP**

MAY-JUNE 1999



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The Field Party of 1864

## **The Great Diamond Hoax**

by

**Gordon Bassett, C.M.**

(Presented June 23, 1999)



## About the Author

Gordon C. Bassett, C.M., grew up in Minnesota, and has been fascinated by American history as long as he can remember. His first exposure to Western history came on vacation trips to Arizona. This interest was further aroused at lectures by Professor Osgood at the University of Minnesota. He is also interested in American military history and railroads and railroad history. As an Army officer, he taught American military history to juniors at Texas Western College in El Paso.

Bassett is a charter member of the Pikes Pike Posse of the Westerners where he served as Tallyman for 15 years. He is also a member of the Colorado Midland Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.

Bassett retired from the Army in 1976, and has lived in Colorado Springs since 1971. He has two grown daughters. His wife Carolyn encourages his interest in trains and history.

On the cover, "The Field Party of 1864". Left to right: James T. Gardner (King's lifelong friend and assistant), Richard Cotter, William H. Brewer, and Clarence King.

# THE DENVER WESTERNERS ROUNDUP

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# The Great Diamond Hoax

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**Gordon Bassett, C.M.**

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This is a story of a classic western mining swindle and of the man who exposed it. I first read about it in a 1956 issue of *American Heritage*. I had forgotten the story until Carolyn received a copy of *Sage Brush Country* from our Pikes Peak Posse *Possibles Bag*. There was a passing mention of the story, which sparked my renewed interest in the subject.

Originally I planned to tell a straight-forward story of the hoax as it developed. But then I realized that the hero was an interesting man in his own right. A man who John Hay called "the best and brightest man of his generation", Clarence King is now nearly forgotten. While still in his 20's, his scientific exploration of the west brought fame and honor. At age 30 his exposure of the diamond hoax was the climax of a brilliant career. But from there, his life sank into relative failure and obscurity. So to honor a forgotten man and better explain how and why he burst the bubble, we will start with the story of Clarence King.

King was born in Newport, Rhode Island in 1842. His family came from England in 1640. Clarence's grandfather was successful in the China trade. His father, James King, spent many years in China managing the company's affairs. James died in China when Clarence was six years old. His mother raised Clarence alone until she remarried in 1860. Clarence had little

interest in foreign trade. At the age of eight, he found a fossil in a stone wall. He was fascinated, and his family was unable to answer all of his questions. Clarence was hooked on geology from that moment on.

In high school, his closest friend was James Gardner. The two were inseparable, and Gardner would be his right hand man and closest associate in the years to come. King dropped out of school in 1859 without receiving his diploma. He went to New York City, to work as a clerk in a flour merchant's office. In 1860 he entered the Yale Scientific School, studying chemistry and geology. The study of science was a new idea at Yale, and students of the science school were looked down at by "real" Eli's. They did not have to (or were not allowed to?) follow the venerable traditions and rituals of regular students. King made rapid progress, and received his Ph. B.—Bachelor of Philosophy—degree with honors in just two years.

In April 1863, King and James Gardner decided to see the Great West. They traveled by train to St. Joseph, where they joined a wagon train going west via South Pass, Fort Bridger, Salt Lake City, Carson City and Sacramento. In San Francisco they met William H. Bowen, a professional geologist. Through him they joined the Whitney Survey party, exploring the high mountains of California. In 1866

King led a party to survey northwest Arizona, but the project was canceled due to Indian trouble. Throughout this period King and Gardner worked together, King working on the geology and Gardner doing the mapping.

### **Explored 800 miles**

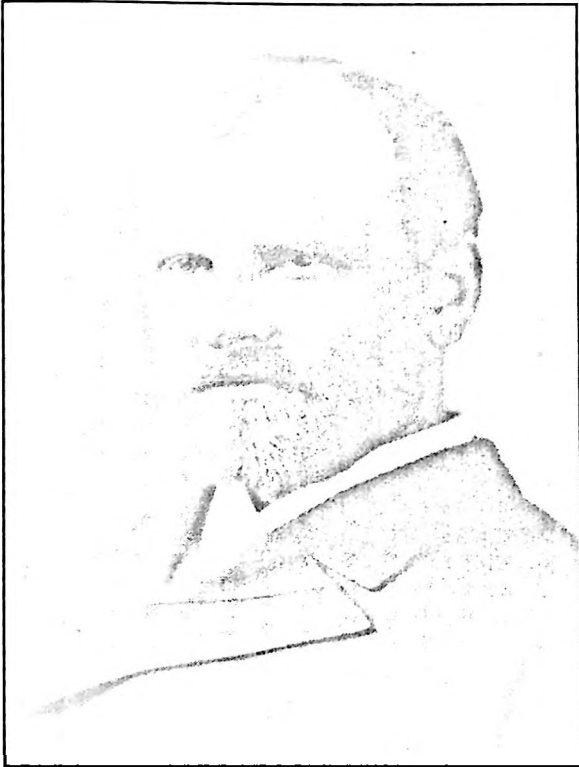
In late 1866, King returned east, bearing recommendations from senators, state officials and scientists. King proposed a massive survey of the area along the Pacific Railroad, to study and report on geography, geology, natural resources, weather, and wild life. His plan would explore an area 100 miles wide and 800 miles long from the Continental Divide to the California border. In January 1867, the proposal, along with recommendations from the scientific community, including the Smithsonian Institution, and bearing the endorsement of the Army Chief of Engineers, went to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. On March 2, 1867, (remarkably quick action) Congress passed a bill calling for a "geological and topographical" exploration of the territory between the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada. At 25 years of age, King was named the "US Geologist in Charge of the Geological Exploration of the 40th Parallel". Secretary Stanton advised him to get out of DC—he was too young to be seen with this appointment. Four Major Generals were jockeying to take his place! King had a \$100,000 budget and a salary of \$250 a month. The party included geologists, topographers, "specimen collectors", a photographer, camp helpers plus a military escort, about 35 men. King was to report directly to the Chief of Engineers.

In May 1867, the party sailed for San Francisco. By June they were camped near Sacramento preparing for work. Soon they traveled over Donner Summit, observing construction of the Central Pacific Railroad along the way. On July 15 they were at the present site of Reno, Nevada, ready to begin. The first summer's work covered 12,000 square miles, from California to the Shoshone Mountains. The first task was to map the area. An atlas was compiled of maps scaled four miles to the inch. They worked in the field until November, then spent the winter in Carson City, preparing their reports. King took time to explore the Comstock Lode at Virginia City, and later compiled a complete report of the mines there.

In May 1868, King's party started out to cover central and eastern Nevada. They completed Nevada and worked to the Snake River in southwestern Idaho. In October they gathered in Salt Lake City. The party had completed its work as far east as the Great Salt Lake. King went east to report, accompanied by 50 crates of specimens.

In two years King's party had covered 2/3 of the area but funds had run out. Congress passed the Army appropriation bill, but neglected to fund the Survey. King went to Massachusetts Senator Ben Butler for help. Butler had been a Civil War political general known as "Spoons" Butler, for allegedly stealing silver from residents of New Orleans when he commanded there. When Butler heard that King was in complete charge of the project and there were no West Pointers involved, he pushed an appropriation to complete the work, and give King a raise to \$360 a month.





*Denver Public Library - Western History Collection*

The portrait is undated, but it is Clarence King, probably taken when he was Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, about 1880-1881

In May 1869 the group started the survey of Great Salt Lake. During the summer they worked into the Wasatch Mountains. Having completed the work in Utah, they moved back to Nevada to close some gaps, and recheck data. The winter was spent on reports.

King spent the summer of 1870 studying volcanoes along the Pacific coast while his teams continued their field work. He explored the area around Mount Shasta where he claimed to be the first to find a glacier in California.

He was not the first, but he was the first to study and report on glaciers in the United States.

In 1871, King wanted to explore and study glaciers in the West. The Chief of Engineers disapproved. General Humphreys had seldom interfered in the Survey, but this time he ordered King to finish the survey across the Continental Divide. The group set up a base near Fort Bridger and teams fanned out to complete the work. Clarence King took time out to

try to climb Mount Whitney. He took a wrong turn and climbed the wrong peak. He did not realize his error, and took some ridicule for the mistake. After this excursion, he went back east to see his book, "Mountaineering the Sierra Nevada", published. The book told about the mountains of California and King's adventures in exploring them. It was a great success. Returning west in August 1871, King worked until November finishing up the field work. The strain of this last "campaign" was very hard on King, and he returned to San Francisco a sick man. After resting for two months, King took a leave of absence. In February 1872, he boarded a ship for the Sandwich Islands. He spent six restful weeks in Hawaii. Returning to San Francisco at the end of March, King and Gardner prepared for their last season in the field. In October, they returned to San Francisco to finish their reports.

### **Mountain of Diamonds**

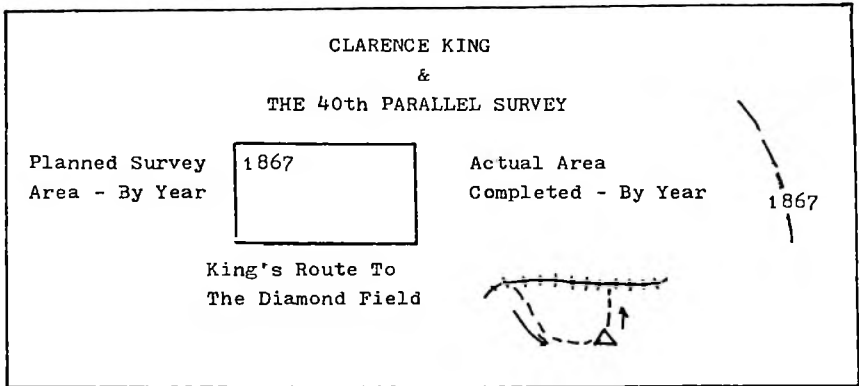
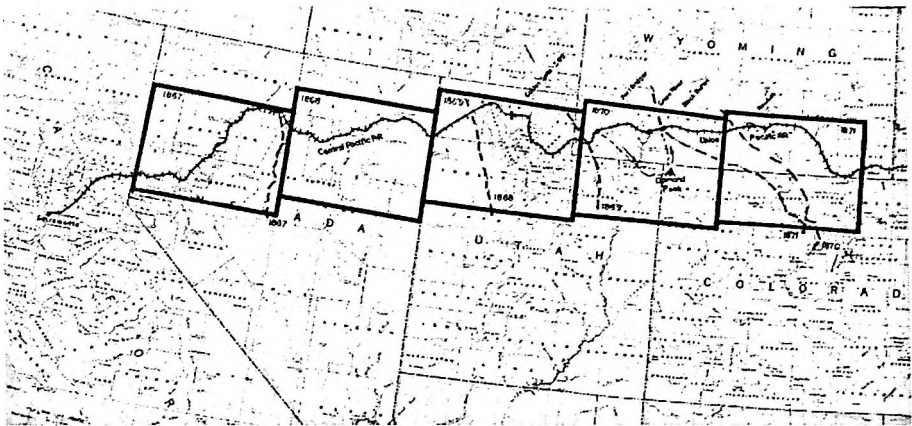
Upon their return they found the city in an uproar. That fall, no one paid any attention to the leaders of the great 40th Parallel Survey. All of California was thrilled by the report that two lucky prospectors had stumbled onto a mountain of diamonds somewhere in the Great American Desert. A leading banker, William C. Ralston, had set up the San Francisco & New York Mining and Commercial Company. Twenty-five of the town's leading business men had each put \$80,000 into the venture. They were joined by Baron Ferdinand Rothchild of London, Charles Tiffany and Horace Greeley.

King was shocked by the news. They had spent five years exploring and

studying the geology of the West. Their reports said there were no precious gems in the area. He realized if the story was true, it would destroy the credibility of their work, and the survey would be worthless. King and Gardner went to the Pacific Union Club, the gathering spot of California's leading business men, bankers and mining experts. They soon met an old friend who told them a long and amazing story.

In February two grizzled "desert rats" were seen touring various saloons, holding long and hushed conversations. After a period of being seen around town, they went to Ralston's bank, where they presented a heavy canvas sack for deposit in the vault. The cashier locked it up, and learned that it contained hundreds of uncut diamonds, plus a quantity of rubies, sapphires and emeralds. The news that someone had discovered a fantastic diamond mine reached William Ralston in ten minutes.

The sack remained safe in Ralston's vault for several weeks, while people tried in vain to learn the secret. Eventually George Roberts, an ex-Army officer, learned that one of the men, Arnold by name, was a former employee. Naturally, General Roberts made haste to meet him. Arnold seemed glad to meet someone he could trust. The other prospector, Slack, was a silent type who let Arnold do all the talking. The two acted afraid to share the secret, but desperate for advice. They told Roberts they had stumbled upon a mountain of precious stones. Diamonds and emeralds were scattered all around. They said their sack of gems didn't begin to deplete the supply.



Arnold would not divulge the location, but dropped hints that it was in Arizona.

Of course rumors spread quickly, and groups set out to roam Arizona in hopes of stumbling over the diamond-studded mountain. Meanwhile, Roberts convinced Arnold and Slack to meet with William Ralston. Ralston was a persuasive man who painted a picture of a vast industry, with the two as important executives with great salaries. He talked them into

letting two mining experts examine the find. Arnold agreed, but insisted the experts be blindfolded for the final approach to the area. Upon their return the experts were dazzled. They had no idea where they had been, but Arnold had shown them diamonds littering the ground. They brought back a second sack of gems, to be deposited with the first, which had now been appraised at \$125,000.

William Ralston saw visions o

a diamond empire based in San Francisco, controlling the world market. Still, he was cautious. He insisted that the gems be submitted to Tiffany of New York, the ultimate American authority. If they passed Tiffany's scrutiny, Ralston would choose an expert of great reputation to make a final examination of the mine. Arnold, with Slack's silent assent, agreed.

With the prospectors' agreement, Ralston moved to form a corporation. David Colton, a California native, was named president. Ralston would be the secretary-treasurer. General Roberts was a director. Samuel Barlow, a successful New York lawyer, would handle affairs on the East Coast. For Congressional liaison, Senator "Spoons" Butler joined the legal staff.

### **Tiffany's appraisal**

Tiffany's appraisal of the sack of gems was a well-organized show. Barlow and Butler arranged the meeting, with a noted audience including: General George B. McClellan, Whitelaw Ried of the New York Tribune, and leading New York bankers and investors. With dramatic flair, Barlow dumped out a large bag of gems on a tablecloth in front of the expectant audience. He explained that he had brought samples of a great discovery for Tiffany to evaluate. Tiffany examined them with care, and said they were very valuable, but he wanted to have his experts examine them more carefully. Two days later the meeting reconvened, and Tiffany announced that the lapidaries valued the gems at over \$150,000. Barlow had presented only a tenth of the gems on hand, indicating that over \$1.5 million worth had been skimmed

from the ground at the diamond mountain.

The next step was the expert's trip to the mine. Henry Janin was probably the most respected mining consultant in the country. He agreed to appraise the mine, asking \$2,500 and expenses, plus an option to purchase 1,000 shares at a nominal price. Again, Arnold and Slack took the party to the site, blindfolding them carefully. Janin found diamonds galore, with rubies and emeralds as a bonus. He estimated the mine could produce one million dollars a month for years.

This story greatly perplexed both King and Gardner. They had studied the geology of the West as no man had done before. They knew that diamonds required different conditions than rubies and sapphires, and they could not believe that the three would be found mixed together. They were sure that the proper conditions didn't exist in the West. Either they had missed something in their explorations, or was "something rotten in".....the Great Basin? Both professional curiosity and their reputations required an answer. The San Francisco & New York Mining Company was making big news. The new San Francisco office was busy, and the officers were turning down huge offers for claims in the area. In New York, investors were demanding to buy stock. A report that a half-million-dollar gem had been found started a stampede to southwest Arizona. Baron Rothchild was plotting to grab control of the firm. King and Gardner still believed the mine was a fake, and must talk to Henry Janin. They didn't think Janin would want to talk, so they "staked out" his

favorite restaurant. When he appeared, King invited him to dine with them. Much to their surprise, Janin was openly proud of his findings, and immediately turned the conversation to the diamond mine. He told them all about his trip with Arnold and Slack. He had been blindfolded and he knew their course was erratic, and he sensed that the prospectors were confused. They argued about the position of the sun. Once, Arnold left the party to climb a mountain and search for landmarks. Finally, they arrived at the site, and the blindfold was removed. Janin remarked that it was a curious place, a conical mountain rising out of the desert. They began to scratch around, and within ten minutes, someone found a diamond. Soon they found diamonds all over the area, with some rubies, garnets, sapphires and emeralds.

When Janin finished, King began asking serious questions. No, Janin did not know exactly where he was. They traveled by train about 36 hours, and got off at a lonely unattended station. They were blindfolded, mounted horses and traveled for two days. King idly commented that it was a shame the weather was so bad. Janin replied that the weather was splendid, almost too hot, and that the sun was in their faces most of the time.

After diner, King and Gardner discussed the case. King pointed out that riding 36 hours on the Central Pacific RR would have taken them past Salt Lake and into Wyoming. They knew that Nevada and western Utah had been deluged by heavy storms at the time, and only a part of eastern Utah and southwestern Wyoming had fair weather. Janin had said the sun was in

their faces, so they must have headed south from the railroad. In spite of the twists and turns, two days on horseback would have taken them south into Utah or western Colorado. Certainly the party had not gone to Arizona, as the prospectors had hinted. Janin's description of the mountain rang bells, so they studied the maps they had made for the great survey. Sure enough they found a peak in the Unitah Range, which they had surveyed only the year before.

### **Secret route questioned**

To insure secrecy, King sent survey members Sam Emmons and A. D. Wilson east on the next Central Pacific train, supposedly on Survey business. He followed the next day. They had reason to believe the Janin party had gotten off at Rawlins Springs (now Rawlins, Wyoming) but his group went to Fort Bridger, where they had pack horses and supplies. The six-man party left Fort Bridger on October 24 in miserable, freezing weather. They crossed the Green River at the Browns Park ford and pushed up Vermillion Canyon. Emmons said that ice frozen on the horses legs clattered like rude castinets. After a 150-mile journey they reached a high barren plateau. On November 2, they camped at the western base of a conical mountain, now known as Diamond Peak. It is located north east of Browns Park in the very northwest corner of Colorado. As they neared their goal, they found a scribbled water-rights notice signed by Henry Janin. The next morning they broke their camp, sent the helpers out hunting while the three searched for gems. At first they found rubies, but few diamonds. There were discarded

shovels and indications that men had trampled all over the area. Soon a pattern emerged: they found 12 rubies for each diamond, plus scattered emeralds and sapphires.

A false tale of this scene is too good to leave out. Supposedly King hired an old German prospector to pack their supplies in. The German was poking around, and suddenly exclaimed, "Look here, Mr. King. This is the bulliest diamond field as never was. It not only produces diamonds, it cuts them moreover also!"

Perhaps they didn't find half-cut diamonds, but there was no doubt the field was salted. There were small holes in the ground where a diamond had been pushed into the soil with a metal rod. Ant hills were full of gems. Where gems were found in rock crevasses, there were scrape marks made by a metal tool.

At this point an unwelcome visitor approached: one J. P. Berry, a mine promoter and diamond merchant. He had watched the railroad for weeks, and followed King's party to the site. His group had been watching King with binoculars. Berry rode in to ask if it was a good strike. King told him it was a fraud. Showing his true colors, Berry said "You say it is a swindle, what a chance to sell short!" King feared if he didn't get the word out, Berry would start a stampede in the dead of winter, which could result in many deaths. His plan was to send Emmons and the packers back 150 miles to Fort Bridger, trusting that Berry would follow them. King and Wilson would ride 38 miles straight north to the Union Pacific tracks. The two left before dawn, leaving Emmons to break camp later.

King reached Black Buttes station just in time to flag a westbound passenger train. He arrived in San Francisco the evening of November 10, and went immediately to see Henry Janin. Janin was staggered by the story and called in Ralston and the board of directors for an all-night session. The upshot was that King agreed to take Janin and others to Diamond Peak posthaste. This visit quickly confirmed King's report. The party returned to the railroad, and wired Ralston the facts.

Ralston immediately started a search for Arnold and Slack, who had left town in a hurry with a third of a million dollars apiece. Eventually Arnold was located in Hardin County, Kentucky. The local court refused to extradite him, figuring that any son of Kentucky that had swindled Yankees out of a third of a million was a bit of a hero. Ralston eventually got \$150,000 back from Arnold by promising to drop the matter. The banker got some satisfaction when Arnold started a bank in Elizabethtown, Kentucky, and was soon shot dead by a rival. Slack was not located, but turned up later in White Oak, New Mexico. He died there in 1898.

### Hoax exposed

By the time King returned to San Francisco, he was a national hero. Professor Whitney called him "The King of Diamonds". Papers across the country gave him more space than two other big stories of the day. Jay Gould had been arrested for his sins as president of the Erie Railroad and Horace Greeley had gone insane, but Clarence King got the top headlines. Even the London *TIMES* covered the story

extravagantly.

The *TIMES* was first to reveal where the gems came from. Amsterdam merchants recalled how two "crazy Americans" had "thrown their money away" on cheap uncut stones a year or two before the great find. They had bought about \$25,000 worth of reject gems.

### **Banker bamboozled**

In the face of disaster, William Ralston did the honorable thing. He had refused to sell any stock in the enterprise, and now he repaid each of the charter members the \$80,000 they had invested. He framed the receipts and hung them in his office. His action saved his reputation in the public's eye, but his Bank of California could ill afford the two million dollars.

There is a story that officials of the mining company offered King a large bribe to withhold his announcement of the hoax until they could sell enough stock to get their investment back. Supposedly King replied that "There is not enough money in the Bank of California to induce me to delay this announcement a single hour." Actually he said he would not delay disclosure, but it would be better if Ralston made the announcement.

Other principals in this drama suffered embarrassment but no financial losses. Tiffany had to admit that his lapidaries had never worked with uncut gems and did not realize how much was lost when a raw stone was cut. The diamond merchants of Amsterdam controlled the market, and employed all the expert gem cutters.

Henry Janin had received 1,000 shares in the company, but had sold

them for \$40,000 before the hoax was exposed. He admitted that Tiffany's appraisal and Ralston's enthusiasm had sold him. He must have been red-faced when he confessed that he was convinced the mine was real before he got off the train in the Wyoming desert. For a man who had examined over 600 mines and never lost a client a cent, it must have hurt to admit he had been thoroughly bamboozled! He even believed he had been to Arizona, when he was actually in northwest Colorado! King must have been very diplomatic about the matter, as they remained life long friends.

Arnold and Slack had played a skillful game. After "salting" their mine, they were very careful about disclosing the find. Their hints about Arizona sent many people on a wild goose chase, while their apparent simple honesty fooled investors and experts. They were probably helped by the optimistic outlook of the day—the West was full of riches, and everyone expected more fabulous discoveries.

The hoax was the start of the downfall of William Ralston. His Bank of California was the foremost financial institution on the coast. Ralston was a director of the profitable Virginia & Truckee Railroad, and an investor in many mines in the Comstock Lode. Unfortunately he (and the bank) began reckless speculation in silver mines. In August 1875 the bank closed and Ralston was dismissed. The same evening he went for his customary swim in San Francisco Bay. The next day his body was found floating in the bay. Apparently apoplexy, not suicide, was the cause of death.

December 1872 was Clarence

King's finest hour. He was acknowledged to be the greatest geologist of the time. His ingenuity and honesty in exposing the hoax made him the toast of the nation. The 40th Parallel Survey was the most complete and thorough study of the topography, geology, natural resources and climate of the West up to that time. It was an extremely valuable tool in opening the area. King was hailed as a truly modern Renaissance Man. Henry Adams predicted he would be "the richest and most many-sided genius of his day". William Dean Howells expected him to write the great American novel.

But what of Clarence King afterwards? He saw his 40th Parallel Survey completed. It had cost \$600,000, and as the diamond hoax proved, it was worth every cent. In 1873 he became a mining consultant. He published his book "Systematic Geology", a valuable reference. But at the age of 30, he was burned out. The rigors of field work had weakened him, and he was often sick for long periods. In 1879, King was appointed the first director of the US Geologic Survey. It was his last triumph. Other projects failed.

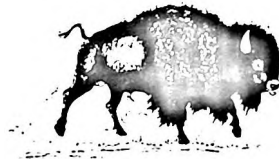
King had been engaged to a daughter of Virginia City society back in 1868, but the match fell through. In 1888 he secretly married a younger black woman named Ada Todd. King did not tell her his real name, but went by the name of James Todd. Keeping her in New York, he continued to travel on various business matters. In 1893 he suffered a nervous breakdown and was hospitalized for a long period. In 1900 King sent Ada and their five children to Canada, telling her they had a better

chance there. In 1901 he went to Phoenix in an attempt to regain his health. He died in Phoenix on December 24, 1901. At the end he told Ada his real name. Although Clarence King was supposed to be well off, he died nearly broke. James Gardner helped the family for a few years, but life was a struggle for Ada for nearly 40 years after King's death.

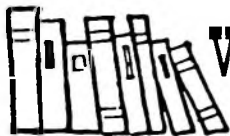
Like Clarence King, the Great Diamond Hoax is nearly forgotten. But it certainly was one of the most amazing swindles in American history. The West was full of con men, thieves, rustlers, thimble riggers, and all-round shady dealers, but few ever hatched a plan with the impact of Arnold and Slack's bag of rejected gems. And probably no other swindle was shot down so quickly and neatly by one man's intuition and deduction. I believe Professor Whitney said it best when he named our hero "Clarence, King of Diamonds"!

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## Westerners Bookshelf



**Glass Plates & Wagon Ruts**, by H. Jackson Clark. University Press of Colorado, 1998. 200 pages, illustrated. Cloth, \$29.95.

The major pioneer photographers of the Rocky Mountain West, such as William H. Jackson, are well-known to today's photo historians. But there were others who were very talented, and who were very adept at recording the life of their times. Many of these have been forgotten. *Glass Plates & Wagon Ruts* provides long-overdue recognition to two Durango, Colorado photographers, Lisle Updike and William Pennington.

The text, less than one-fourth of the pages of the book, tell the stories of the lives of Updike and Pennington, in an straight-forward, easy-to-read style that gives the reader a summary of their lives and adventurous living in the Four Corners region at the turn of the century. The young Updike left home at the age of 12 to begin his career as a photographer. The two traveled to the villages of the Zuni, Apache, Acoma, Navajo and Yuma in the Southwest, and produced striking photos. They photographed Mesa Verde under government contract in 1911, and visited the mining camps of the Colorado San Juans.

The author's grandfather's hardware store in Durango built the custom heavy-duty wagon that the photographers needed for their photo expeditions. The author grew up knowing the families, and interviewed Updike extensively before Updike's death in 1976. Clark acquired the glass-plate negatives and collected all he could of Updike and Pennington's work. H. Jackson Clark's fine documentation of truly interesting and significant early photography was published following his death in July 1997.

This beautiful presentation is recommended for the quality reproduction of the Indian photographs alone. The photo documentation of Updike and Pennington's life in the Four Corners is valuable history. The story of their lives makes fascinating reading. The format of the book is attractively presented. This book should appeal to readers for many reasons.

--Edwin A. Bathke, PM

**Sunset Slope, True Epics of Western Colorado**, by Wilson Rockwell. Western Reflections, Inc., Ouray, CO. 290 pages, 47 sketches and photos. Paperback, \$16.95.

Sometimes the author's own story is as interesting as the things he writes about. Such a situation may exist here with Wilson Rockwell and his compilation of western Colorado tales of fowl play. The book first appeared in 1956 so this is a reprint.

Not that Rockwell himself is guilty of foul play. But at 90—living at Creston, British Columbia—he is rounding out a life of controversy. Nearly three decades ago, to help his son, Dan, evade the Vietnam war draft, Rockwell sold his pioneer western Colorado ranch home and moved the family to Canada. That made the news wires because Rockwell, besides being an author, cattleman and a departing member of the Colorado State Senate, was the son of the late Robert Rockwell, former U.S. congressman who had also been lieutenant governor of Colorado in the 1920s.

The family was Republican. But like many Americans, the Rockwell's supported their son's strong aversion to the Vietnam war. When the Delta County Selective Service board in 1970 ordered the son, Dan, 19, to appear for an induction physical—or face arrest—his father sold their ranch near Maher, CO., and purchased 240 acres near Creston, British Columbia, just across the line from northern Idaho. The Rockwells have been on that ranch ever since, with son Dan caring for a small herd of cattle and his father keeping the books.

Much has happened in those 29 years. Dan became a Canadian citizen, married a Canadian girl, Angelica, and they have two children. Wilson's wife, Enid, died in 1992 and is memorialized by a room in the public library at Crawford, CO, near their former home. Wilson has no plans to stop writing.

*Sunset Slope* documents many bizarre killings from the early days in western Colorado. Some are familiar, such as the 1890 bank holdups in Delta and Meeker, CO. In both cases, as Rockwell points out, Colorado townspeople gave bank robbery a bad name by killing all the holdup men, two in Delta and three in Meeker, as the robbers tried to flee. In Delta a gun-toting merchant killed robbers Bill and Fred McCarty with expert rifle shots to the head.

Notorious characters like Tom Horn, Alfred Packer and Harry Tracy appear in these pages. But Rockwell's most valuable work is in detailing the problems of ordinary people struggling over fishing and irrigation rights on land only recently settled. There's extensive coverage, also, of the Meeker Massacre and a whimsical story of a banker in Telluride who, anticipating his bank's failure in 1929, forged checks to meet the withdrawals of his miner-depositors. He was imprisoned for six years but Telluride regarded him as a Robin Hood. A friend who had benefitted from a favorable loan gave the banker a job after his release from prison.

Rockwell has written eight books about Colorado, including a narrative of his sudden departure in 1970. But he loves Colorado and plans a return visit late in 1999. His son, Dan, in 1975 was released from U.S. draft evasion charges.

Rockwell tentatively plans another book—on his years in Colorado politics—for publication in 2000. His stories aren't highly polished, but at a time when western Colorado is being smothered by commercial development, they are valuable additions to Western history shelves.

--Lee Olson, PM

Utah's Blackhawk War, by John Alton Peterson. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 1999. 397 pages. Paperback, \$19.95.

When this reviewer looked at this book to review, there were mixed emotions. First of all, the only "Blackhawk War" that I was familiar with was the Sac and Fox war of 1832, in which Abraham Lincoln had participated. Secondly, I had lived in Utah during my high school years and had never heard of it. Of course, at that age, history was not one of my priorities.

This Blackhawk War occurred between 1865 and 1872, and according to the author, has been pretty much ignored by Utah, Mormon, Western and Indian historians. Around 1865, Northern Utes and their allies were led by an Indian with the name of Antonga. His White adversaries called him Blackhawk. Basically the war consisted of raids to steal Mormon livestock, and their efforts to recover them. As a result, many herders and those trying to protect their stock were killed. Much of the White populace took their rage out on innocent Indians who happened to live in the vicinity. These acts incited revenge on both sides. What livestock the raiders didn't use for their own consumption they either killed or drove them to a place like Santa Fe to trade or sell. Of course, some were recovered by the Mormons.

A central figure in all this was Brigham Young, president of the Mormon church, who was the *de facto* governor of the territory even though there was a federally appointed governor. Young was in charge of the political situation in Utah as well as the religious side. His years of befriending the Indians, or "Lamanites" as the Mormon church called them because they were looked on as converts to the faith, had established many Indian friends for the church. Young's major problem was not the Indian situation, but his differences with the Federal government who wanted to put a halt to polygamy and take away the church's private army, The Nauvoo Legion. Young tried to keep a lid on the Indian depredations with his "Peace Policy" which stated that "it was better to feed them than to fight them," because he did not want Federal military interference in Utah. This would have cost him power and influence over the citizens, both Mormon and gentile. His peace policy was not popular with those that had been a target of the depredations, or The Nauvoo Legion itself, which wanted to kill Indians. Finally, in 1872, a Ghost Dance religion (a precursor of the better known one of 1890) incited more Indians which eventually led to Federal military intervention and the demise of The Nauvoo Legion.

Author Peterson should be commended for filling a void in the written history of the Indian Wars. He tells the story in detail with appropriate maps and some photographs of principal characters involved. One interesting thought brought up in the conclusion stated, "Whites are castigated out of hand as aggressors, while raiding, slaving and killing on the part of Native groups are praised without com-

ment because it was their cultural heritage to act in this way”.

This reviewer learned much about an area of the Indian Wars that I was unfamiliar with. The work is not easy reading, but covers all the bases. The resulting effort demonstrates a tremendous amount of research with numerous footnotes and an extensive bibliography. *Utah's Blackhawk War* is thoroughly recommended for those interested in Indian Wars of which not much is known.

--Richard A. Cook, PM

**Water, Earth and Sky: The Colorado River Basin**, by Michael Collier. Foreward by David L. Wegner, essays by Michael Collier, John C. Schmidt, E.D. Andrews, Richard A. Valdez, Lawrence E. Stevens, Ellen Meloy. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999. 128 pages, 9" x 10," 140 color photographs. Cloth, \$ 29.95.

David Collier is a physician in private practice in Flagstaff, Arizona, with a background of 25 years of river-running experience. In recent years, his fascination with the Colorado River Basin has led him to fly his 1955 Cessna over the entire length of the Green and Colorado Rivers as well as the tributaries of both rivers. Dr. Collier is a superb photographer. The book contains magnificent color reproductions. 140 spectacular photographs culled from some 12,000 pictures he took over the years. The photographs are magnificently reproduced on Japanese Matte Art paper. The book was printed by C & C Offset Printing Company in Hong Kong. It represents still another example of incredibly fine printing being done along the Pacific Rim. The color and clarity of the photographic reproductions is the striking feature of the volume which make it an object d'art worthy of the most sophisticated coffee table.

Accompanying the photographs are essays by the author and five other writers who possess various backgrounds and skills related to the river and the Grand Canyon. Each represents a particular viewpoint of some facet of the complex system, ranging from the pure naturalistic description of solo river running by Ellen Meloy to the E. D. Andrews essay "Wet River, Dry River," which treats the history and problems of the Colorado River Compact concisely and clearly, a feature seldom found in articles or books on the Compact.

Of particular interest to me was the essay entitled *Of Suckers, Chubs and 100-Pound Minnows*, by Richard Valdez. This covers the specific impacts of various dams on the fish population of the Colorado River system. It provides such nuggets of information as the fact that of 35 species of fish in the system, 75% are found nowhere else in the world!

For those who love the canyon country, I recommend this book for the pure enjoyment of its spectacular photography. For those with libraries on the Colorado River Basin and Grand Canyon, I believe they will wish to acquire this volume for their collections.

--Henry Toll Jr., CM

**A Guide to the Indian Wars of the West**, by John McDermott. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1998. 192 pages. Paperback, \$16.95.

*A Guide to the Indian Wars of the West* is just what the title conveys. Whether you are very familiar with the Indian Wars from 1860 to 1890, or a beginner interested in learning about them, this is an important reference to have. The author is an acquaintance of this reviewer, who has heard him speak on a number of occasions. He is a retired historian and administrator for the National Park Service and he knows his subject extremely well.

The book is only 192 pages long, but is divided into two sections. The first part consists of 116 pages and is labeled "The Context." It discusses the causes, the combatants, culture, how battles were conducted, problems faced by each side, how they lived, and what literature and the arts—including motion pictures—have had to say about the Indian Wars and the public's perspective from the middle of the nineteenth century until modern times. This covers a lot of ground in a short amount of space. In general, it's an overall picture and a basic primer to the Indian Wars. While the author references many of the major historians who wrote about the subject, there are a few that were left out, such as Captain John G. Bourke, both as a soldier and anthropologist. But because of its brevity, this is understandable and it is amazing that the author accomplished what he did. However, we are not done yet, there's more.

The second portion is a listing and discussion of historic places and museums to visit in order to acquire a better understanding of the Indian Wars. There are over 117 sites in seventeen states listed. This section is divided into the following geographical areas: California and The Northwest, The Great Basin, The Plateau, The Southwest, The Southern Plains and The Northern Plains. These historic sites and museums are too numerous to mention here, but the author manages to give a brief background as to why, what happened and when, for the battles sites, and what each museum contains when discussing the latter.

There are also included, a few photographs, of major participants with one very good map pinpointing locations at the beginning of the work. An extensive list of notes with references is at the end.

This is a great quick reference book, and because of its brevity, is easy to read and comprehend. For such a varied and complex subject, the author is to be congratulated for filling a big void in all the literature now available concerning the Indian Wars. Everyone interested in this subject should have a copy of this book.

—Richard A. Cook, PM

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...an administrator for  
the National Park Service  
that knows his subject  
extremely well...

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**Covered Wagon Women, Volume 8, Diaries and Letters from the Western Trails, 1862-1865.** Edited and Compiled by Kenneth L. Holmes, introduction by Maria E. Montoya. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London. 280 pages, 5 photographs, index. Paper, \$13.00.

Although this book is volume 8 in a series of stories of Women of the West, it only points out to us the true history that can arise in researching. The feelings shared by the women in this book are eye opening and heart rendering. There was a true sacrifice. The youngest traveler is only 14 years of age, traveling with her father and sister to Colorado extending to a woman, pregnant with her 6th child, who loses her husband to an accidental shooting and must travel on alone to her destination. One of the most prolific writers, Louisa Cook, went by her maiden name, although she had a daughter. Her husband had abandoned her and her child and so she made her way to the Oregon territory and lived with Lt. Col. Reuben F. Maury and his wife and taught the children of the First Oregon Cavalry for one year at Walla Walla. She re-married around Christmas 1864, but died a year later. Her daughter Mary, went back east to be raised by her grandparents.

Not all the stories ended in tragedy. Most of the women wrote intelligent and interesting letters home. A common

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...a common thread..was  
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trips...

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thread among them was to ask their families to save their letters as a sort of document of their trips. None of the women were involved in direct confrontations with the Indians, but they came upon many persons buried at the side of the road or a campsite. Most wagon trains did not stop to bury their dead until they

camped for the night. Animals were driven mercilessly and many perished, whether they were oxen or horses, which saddened all the women. Gospel songs, prayers and occasional impromptu church services helped sustain them through their hardships and losses. One of the women, Harriett A. Loughary, who came from Iowa, took the time to re-copy her diary after arriving in Oregon. In one place, she states, "This is the 5th month since leaving Iowa and we are far from our destination". She also mentions spending a day "wandering" and returning to the previous night's campsite as they had missed the trail! Desolation overcame many. Lack of water, dead oxen, traveling over rocks, gravel and sand added to the common theme of loneliness. Mrs. Loughary and family separate from the wagon train and go to the Dalles via a small Columbia river steamer. Their fare was \$40.00. Perhaps the most interesting story is written by Harriett Hitchcock, only 13 years of age, who celebrates her 14th birthday along the trail. She accompanies her father, who is interested in mining in Colorado and her sisters travel with them. She traces their trip from St. Joseph, MO. to Denver, CO. and return, from 6/2/1864 to 2/15/1865. Her diary is written in a very adult manner and detailed with few errors. She married Oramel Wm. Lucas on 12/22/1849, who was training for the Congregational ministry. She lived until almost 78 years of age. Some of the hardships they

shared were loss of wood and even gathering grass in Nebraska to cook with. Indians constantly tried to "spook" the horses and cattle and only through patrols by the men, were they deterred. Occasionally there were antelope to kill and eat, along with sage hens and wild chickens. Many of the cattle died from drinking too much water with alkali. Every one of the women who crossed the Platte River mentioned gathering berries along the shore. Even the Mormon women who wrote about traveling to Oregon were horrified by the conditions of the "dirty children and women dressed drably" at Salt Lake. Mary Ringo, the widow left with 5 children and another one on the way, said she would not live there. She was not offered enough for her horses and team and so she hired two men to drive her team and family to California, where she lived with her sister and brother-in-law. The individual stories are each beautifully told by women who helped found this nation of the West. It is well researched and fascinating.

--Dolores A. Ebner, CM

**Susan La Flesche Picotte, M.D.**, by Benson Tong. Forward by Dennis Hastings. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999. 392 Pages, 14 illustrations, notes, bib., index. Cloth, \$29.95.

This is Mr. Tong's second published book. His subject, Susan La Flesche Picotte, has been well documented. The daughter of a deposed chief of the Omahas, her father had the most influence on her early life. He understood the importance of the white-dominated world through his association with local white missionaries. Susan converted to Presbyterianism in the 1860s and she and her sister Suzette (well known in later life as an Indian activist), did not go through the traditional "turning of the child" ceremony at age 3 or 4 years of age, where they would have been given an Indian name. Her father's decisions in her early life allowed her to see the other side of the cultural divide and its value.

Early interest was exhibited by Susan in curing people by observing practices of her tribe. She also learned early lessons in compassion and charity. In 1869, Quaker schools replaced mission schools and Susan was educated by them until the age of 15 years. Susan attended the Elizabeth Institute for Young Ladies. In 1882, Susan returned to the Omaha reservation and joined the staff of the Mission school. In 1884-86, she attended the Hampton Institute of Hampton, VA. She was proud of her Indian heritage. She then attended Women's Medical College in PA. in 1886. She was on an internship here and embarked on a speaking tour which emphasized the needs of the Indian people.

She became a Doctor for her people and an advocate as well. Even traditionalists sought her help and she did her utmost to educate and help.

She was in frail health but continued her work. She married Henry Picotte, a Sioux Indian from the Yankton Agency, who had divorced his wife. After the birth of her first son, Caryl, she was once again in a weakened condition. She did go on to have another son, Pierre, so her health must have recovered sufficiently. She was an advocate of temperance and could see the social problems it created among

her tribe. She also saw the vulnerability of her people to land grafts by unscrupulous white persons who manipulated the Indians into giving up their land holdings. Susan tried to end such tragedies with prohibition and religion. Her strong stands forced her off the reservation.

Her war against intemperance lasted through her life. In the last 15 years of her life she made significant contributions to Omaha history which helped her reclaim her stature as a tribal leader.

She was preceded in death by her husband and left two sons. In 1989 the building that bears her name, the Susan La Flesche Picotte, became a historic landmark. Her epitaph on the joint marker with her husband reads, "Until the Day Dawns". This was a woman who stood for everything she believed in. this was a long but fascinating story.

*--Dolores A. Ebner, CM*

**The Ute Indians of Colorado in the Twentieth Century**, by Richard K. Young. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman and London, 1997. 30 photos, bibliography, notes, index, etc; 362 and xiii pages. Clothbound, \$29.95.

In 1879, an event occurred that moved all of the Indians out of Colorado, or so most of the residents of Colorado have thought for years. Or as Richard Young says, "It is as if the Ute Indians of Colorado simply disappeared after the much-celebrated Meeker Massacre of 1879." Despite this, tucked away just inside the southwest corner of Colorado, are two small Indian reservations, the proud homes of the Southern Ute and the Mountain Ute Tribes.

Mr. Young tells what happened to the Ute Indians who remained in Colorado after 1879. He explores the development of these two reservations that were, for many years, jointly administered. He explores the effect of The Indian Reorganization Act and the pursuit of self-determination upon these two tribes in an insightful, thought-provoking manner. He also discusses an even less known group of Ute Indians, the "Allen Canyon Utes" who resided in southeastern Utah between Bluff and Blanding along Montezuma Creek and in Allen Canyon. They are now considered a part of the Ute Mountain Reservation.

He presents an interesting, thought provoking, view of the allotments granted to tribal members, by the tribe. It is a view that is worth consideration in today's "give me" times.

The discussion of the Ute Indians of Colorado is divided into areas by time period, before 1900, 1900 approximately 1930, the early 1930s, the mid 1930s through 1950 (Essentially the Indian Reorganization Act era), the 1950s and after 1960. The post 1960 section is further subdivided into Tribal Economy, Tribal



Politics and Tribal Society and Culture. There are interesting glimpses into the management of the Southern and Mountain Ute Indians by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Of special interest in light of the today's headlines is the Bureau's management of the reservations natural resources and its attempts to make the tribes self-sufficient.

If you want to learn more about the Ute Indians in Colorado today, this book is an excellent starting point.

--Keith Fessenden, P.M.

**An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859**, by Horace Greeley. University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books. Paperback, 386 pages, \$15.

Horace Greeley's historic stature is based mostly on his powerful editorship of the *New York Tribune*, his fight against slavery and his losing effort to unseat President Ulysses S. Grant in 1872. He achieved much for a man with a squeaky, unpleasant voice, mutton-chop whiskers and a fussy mien that defied anybody to regard him as "a good old boy."

But he had boundless energy. Typically, in the summer of 1859, he energetically traveled by train and stagecoach to the West Coast—with notebook in hand to give the nation an incisive view of what America's Great West was like, along with his analysis of its prospects. He was a careful observer; his words were authoritative.

His newspaper accounts were reprinted as a book in 1860 and have been republished since. This latest effort, by the University of Nebraska, uses the 1860 typeface and thus has quaint historical appeal.

Introducing the story is Jo Ann Manfra, professor of American history, Worcester Polytechnic Institute. She points out that Greeley was uncommonly well educated for his era. He saw the future of the West against a background of experience elsewhere.

An earlier trip to Europe enabled him to compare favorably the irrigation potential of the future northern Colorado, to the agriculture practices in the Lombardy region of Italy. His advice was taken: in 1870 New York colonists established a Colorado farming colony named for him.

Greeley wrote insightfully about Colorado's gold fields and interviewed Brigham Young in Salt Lake City. The latter piece of journalism was the first

important, full-blown interview of Young ever printed by a U.S. newspaper.

Greeley elicited the fact that the Mormon leader had 15 wives and quoted Young extensively on the structure and functioning of his church.

His visit to the Gregory diggings brought out Greeley's analysis of Colorado's gold potential. He said thousands of seekers would turn back in disappointment but added: "Yet I feel that each month's researches will enlarge the field of mining operations, and diminish the difficulties...and that ten years hence, we shall be just beginning fairly to appreciate and secure the treasures now buried in the Rocky Mountains."

These are prophetic words for a time when the wealth of Leadville, Cripple Creek and Creede was years in the future.

*--Lee Olson, P.M.*

**Lucien Maxwell: Villain or Visionary?** by Harriet Freiberger. Line drawings by Jean Kashner. Sunstone Press, Santa Fe, NM, 1999. 160 pp., notes and bibliography. Paper, \$14.95.

This is Harriet Freiberger's first book. It is an exculpatory biography of the famed Lucien Maxwell, dedicated to the proposition that Maxwell's reputation has been besmirched by the violence which came to northern New Mexico after he sold the legendary Maxwell Grant.

The author documents her case that, in fact, Maxwell's years in the Cimarron area provided stability and leadership. The lawlessness and near chaos which came after Maxwell sold the Grant to speculators is mistakenly attributed to Maxwell by historic distortion of this legendary figure. The facts of Lucien Maxwell's life are incredible enough and require no embellishment by legend.

Lucien Maxwell was born in Kaskaskia, Illinois, in 1818 to a family having a tradition of trading with the Indians of the Mississippi and Missouri region. By his late teens, he was employed at Bent's Fort which followed his life for a period as a "Mountain Man." At Bent's Fort, he began his life-long friendship with Kit Carson. Luz Beaubien of Santa Fe was 16 when she married Maxwell, then age 23. Shortly thereafter, the groom and Carson left with Fremont on his first expedition to the Great South Pass. Subsequently, he and Carson accompanied Fremont on the notorious California expedition as well. Upon returning, he and Luz settled at Cimarron on the Beaubien and Miranda Grant. Through Luz's inheritance, and through subsequent purchases, Maxwell acquired the Beaubien and Miranda Grant which came to be called the "Maxwell Grant." When gold was discovered on the Grant and other outside pressures arose, he sold out and moved to Fort Sumner with many of his followers.

In size, a Mexican Land Grant was suppose to contain no more than 147,500 acres. When the metes and bounds of the Maxwell Grant were ultimately

surveyed for its sale, a small discrepancy was found. The area determined by metes and bounds encompassed 1,750,000 acres of real estate along the Colorado-New Mexico border! As one might expect, it took years of litigation before Lucien Maxwell emerged as the owner of this enormous tract and also much litigation in the wake of its sale.

The book portrays Lucien as a kindly baron and a leader of about 40 families. He led the development of the community at Cimarron and presided over it and its environs. He was reputed to be fair in his treatment of Indians, Mexicans, and Anglos alike.

The author notes that the ultimate sale of the almost two-million-acre Grant for \$600,000.00 indicated that greed was not a motivating factor in Lucien's actions. In fact, years before he had offered it to the US Government for an Indian reservation for \$250,000.00. Many members of the Cimarron community followed Maxwell to Fort Sumner, further attesting to his status as a leader and visionary, rather than as a villain as he is so often portrayed.

The book reads well. It is carefully researched and meticulously annotated. This reviewer found much of interest about the Colonial history of northern New Mexico, the Santa Fe Trail, and the Mexican Land Grants.

--W. Toll, Jr., P.M.

**Forgotten Kingdom, The Mormon Theocracy in the American West, 1847 - 1896**, by David L. Bigler. Utah State University Press, Logan, Utah, 1998. 24 illustrations, bibliography, notes, index, etc; 412 pages. Paperbound, \$21.95.

Once every year or two, a book comes along that is noticeably distinct. This is such a book. Originally published by the Arthur H. Clark Company of Spokane, Washington, as Volume 2 of its *Kingdom in the West* series, this book explores the early, pre-statehood history of what is now the state of Utah. As the author states in the introduction, "The purpose of this work is to tell the story of Mormon theocracy in the American West and the men and women of both sides who took part in its fifty-year quarrel with the American republic, and to do so with honesty and understanding". Mr. Bigler and *Forgotten Kingdom* have succeeded in the telling. Most books on Utah and its often Mormon culture can be referred to as either "faith promoting" or "Mormon bashing". In this reviewer's opinion, *Forgotten Kingdom* is neither, it is simply an extremely well-written, informative, enjoyable book on the history of Utah before statehood.

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...this book explores the early history of what is now the state of Utah...

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The book is successful, not only because of its well-written, readable format, but because it tells the story through the experiences of less well-known individuals as well as those more easily recognized. The book offers an informative and interesting discussion of less-discussed aspects of the Mormon reformation

period such as blood atonement, catechism, and the resulting flight of Federal territorial officials from Utah Territory. The manner in which the Mountain Meadows Massacre, and the events preceding it and after it, are discussed in an exceptionally sensitive, accurate, thought provoking manner and non-finger pointing manner.

Another topic that is well addressed continually through the book is the quest for statehood by the residents of what would come to be known as the state of Utah. Many other topics that would normally only be covered in a book on Utah are discussed in a lively, readable manner: polygamy, the United Order, and the Mormon Church. *Forgotten Kingdom, the Mormon Theocracy in the American West, 1847 - 1896* is a very readable, accurate and interesting history of our neighbor to the west.

--Keith Fessenden, P.M.

**The Last Gamble, Betting on the Future in Four Rocky Mountain Mining Towns**, by Katherine Jensen and Audie Blevins. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona, 1998. 10 photos, notes, index, etc; 222 pages. Clothbound, \$45.00.

On November 1, 1989, gambling began legally for the first time in many years in Deadwood, South Dakota. Then on October 1, 1991, legalized gambling began in three Colorado towns, Cripple Creek, Central City and Black Hawk. Why, after all of the years it took to stop legal and illegal gambling in the Rocky Mountain West, did it restart? And why only in these former mining towns in the Rocky Mountains? What has happened to these four towns in the Rocky Mountain West now that legalized gambling has begun, again?

This study answers these questions and many more. Written in a scholarly style it is worthy of perusal by those interested in the changes that have occurred as a result of the restarted gambling. The study addresses how gambling has impacted these towns, the good, the bad, the ugly and the beautiful of it. It explores the effect gambling or the more politically correct term, gaming, has had upon the citizens of these towns and even more importantly neighboring towns and counties, and even

...what has happened to these four towns...now that legalized gambling has begun again...

upon the states of Colorado and South Dakota themselves. This book explores the attitudes, reasons and effects of the individuals involved in the changes made to these towns.

After reading this book, you should visit Deadwood, Central City, Black Hawk and Cripple Creek and view the changes for yourself. There are those who would declare

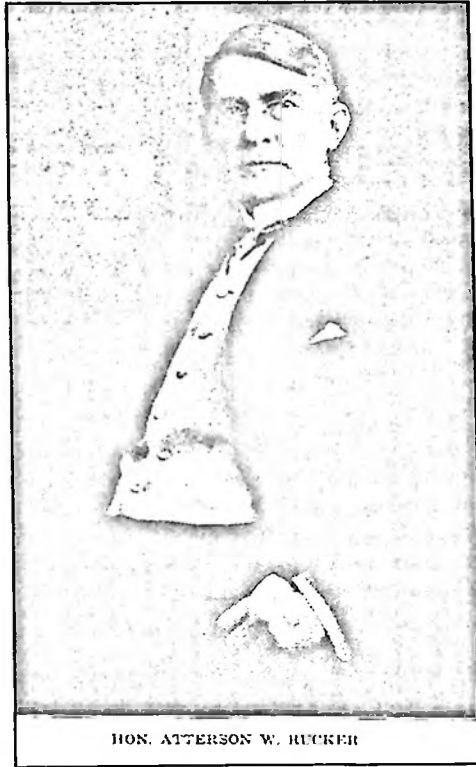
gaming a wonderful improvement and those who would declare the opposite most ardently. Is "gaming" an improvement or not? You decide.

--Keith Fessenden, P.M.



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Denver Public Library - Western History Collection

**Judge Rucker  
and the Fort Logan Water War**

by

**Earl McCoy, P.M.**

(Presented August 28, 1999)



# Judge Rucker and the Fort Logan Water War

by  
Earl McCoy, P.M.  
(Presented August 28, 1999)

Judge Rucker was mentioned as a potential good neighbor for the new "Camp Near the City of Denver," later named Fort Logan, when the first soldiers arrived in October 1887. General Sheridan had selected the site some nine miles south of the center of Denver, citing "a never-failing stream of clear and pure water" as one of the reasons for choosing the location south of Bear Creek.<sup>1</sup> The first two companies of infantrymen came from two forts in Kansas as the occupants of the new post. They camped along Bear Creek on land belonging to Mason W. Howard, not on the 640-acre reservation which had been purchased by Coloradans and donated to the Army. Colonel Brady, commander of the initial contingent, commented on the water needs: "It will be necessary, I expect, to put down an artesian well on the reservation. Judge Rucker has a fine well at his residence near the reservation and I may be able to obtain water from him until a well can be sunk by the government."<sup>2</sup> Whether the soldiers actually went to Rucker's farm to get water, or had to go down the hill to the creek until wells were drilled on the reservation, hasn't been determined.

Atterson Walden Rucker purchased land near Littleton in 1885, and built a home there. In the 1886 Denver City Directory, Rucker is listed as a partner in a law firm in Denver and

his residence is shown as "Rucker's farm nr. Littleton." By the next year, the residence was listed as "Ruckeridge" (one word) and later made into two words, "Rucker Ridge." Rucker's land adjoined the Army reservation to the south. A biographical sketch says that "Rucker Ridge, as his home place is called, is one of the most ideally beautiful places in Colorado, or for that matter, in the world, and has long been synonymous with the traditions of old-fashioned Southern hospitality."<sup>3</sup>

Judge Rucker had a Southern background, which would be appropriate for his reputation for Southern hospitality. Born in Harrodsburg, Kentucky on April 3, 1847, he moved with his family to Missouri while he was a boy. When he was fifteen years of age, A. W. and his two brothers enlisted in the Confederate Army. A. W. was captured by the Union forces within the first year, and he was paroled behind Union lines.<sup>4</sup>

Following the war, in 1867, Rucker began the study of law at Lexington, Missouri, and was admitted to practice in June 1868. He and his brother T. A. (Thomas A.) opened a law office in Baxter Springs, Kansas, and moved to Kansas City, Missouri to practice law in 1873. A. W. Rucker became active in Democratic Party politics and ran as a candidate for

Attorney General while in Kansas. (John Arkins, editor of the *Rocky Mountain News* and not a fan of Rucker, collected newspaper articles which are in his scrapbooks now in the Denver Library collection. Some of the following information is based on those newspaper stories.) After he moved to Kansas City, Rucker entered the Democratic primaries as a candidate for the Missouri legislature. Morrison Mumford of the *Kansas City Times* attacked Rucker in his newspaper, and Rucker visited Mumford to tell the newspaperman that if such an attack appeared again, Mumford would be held responsible. The next morning's *Times* contained a "severe attack" and when Rucker met Mumford on the street he beat him over the head. The rival paper, the *Kansas City Journal*, reported the affair with "flaming headlines": "The Rambunctious Rucker Mercilessly Mashes Morrison Mumford's Mug" Apparently Rucker did not get involved in any more campaigns in Missouri.<sup>5</sup>

Rucker had handled legal work related to mining in Leadville, Colorado, beginning in 1874, and he settled there in 1879. He invested in mining properties in Leadville and Aspen, and some of the investments resulted in litigation against developers such as J. B. Wheeler in Aspen. One lawsuit was in the courts for ten years, resulting in a one-million-dollar judgment in Rucker's favor, most of which he was unable to collect.



The Colorado legislature in 1881 created a new level of Criminal Court and Rucker was appointed judge of the court in Leadville by the County Commissioners of Lake County. Soon the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that the legislation creating the courts was faulty in allowing county commissioners, rather than the governor of the state, to appoint the

judges, and after five months in office, Rucker was removed as a judge. He was hopeful that Governor Grant would reappoint him as judge of the court, but Grant appointed someone else. Rucker, convinced that his old nemesis Morrison Mumford of Kansas City had poisoned Governor Grant's mind against him, challenged the governor to a duel. Rucker called on Senator Blackburn of Kentucky, an old friend, to be his second, as Rucker had been slated to support Blackburn several years earlier in a duel. Blackburn, after reviewing the information about the governor's actions, reported to Rucker that the governor was under no obligation to re-appoint him as judge, and therefore the "code duello" did not apply. Mutual friends helped to mediate the dispute, and Rucker and Grant were reported later to be good friends. Rucker carried the title "Judge" the rest of his life. Based on his five-month tenure in the court, at the time of his death a Denver newspaper reported that "His brief term in office enabled him to establish a reputation as an able jurist. His decisions evinced foresight and



acumen which placed him in the front rank of lawyers in Colorado.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1885 Judge A. W. Rucker moved to the Denver area, investing in real estate. His brother, T. A. Rucker, was a county judge in Aspen from 1883 to 1886 and then became a district judge. A. W. Rucker practiced law in Denver in partnership with others until 1891 and then had his own office until 1908. His home was frequently the site of social events hosted by the judge, his wife or his daughter, as noted in the local newspapers. Rucker was a founder of the Colorado State Forestry Association and was member of the Grangers' Association.

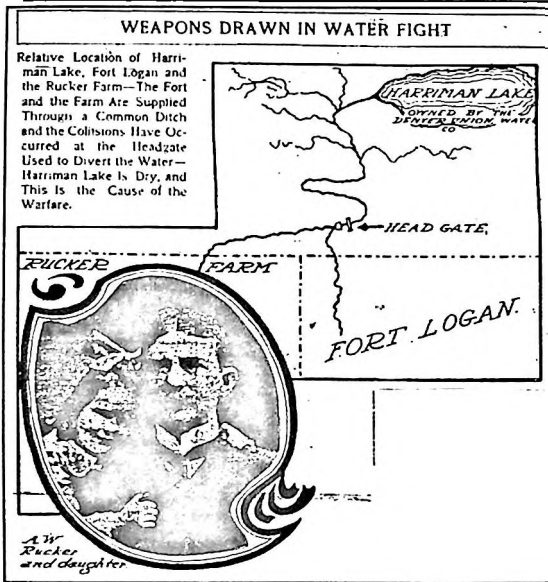
Judge Rucker was active in politics as chairman of the Democratic Central Committee in Arapahoe County, and was also active on the state and national levels. This involvement brought about a well-publicized dispute with his friend Senator Blackburn, whom Rucker had asked to be his second in a duel with Governor Grant. Rucker and Blackburn were at the White House to meet with President Cleveland in October 1888. After the meeting they were quoted in the newspapers as contradicting each other as to details that had been discussed, and Rucker accused Blackburn of calling him untruthful and, even worse, “a spy in the interests of the Republicans.”<sup>7</sup> Consequently, Rucker challenged Blackburn to a duel, reportedly enlisting as his second Colonel John C. Moore of Colorado Springs. Moore, a “Southern gentleman,” had been the managing editor of the *Kansas City Times* and was a cousin of Morrison Mumford with whom Rucker had tangled some years before. The *New*

*York World*, on November 23, 1888, printed a copy of the supposed letter from Rucker to Blackburn in which Rucker said that Blackburn’s statement about him “reflects upon me as a gentleman.” A comment from someone who read the letter was included: “Senator cannot meet this man Rucker on the field of honor, for the simple reason that the Senator is a gentleman and Rucker is not a gentleman.” Newspapers across the country carried stories about the exchange of insults and the possible duel, but apparently it all faded away after a little time, and the old friendship was restored. A doctor in Leadville, who had shared an office with Rucker when he lived there, summarized the Judge’s courage in this and other disputes: “He will fight for his honor quicker than lightning.”

### Fort Logan Water War

And now to the Fort Logan Water War, which is my label for an incident which occurred in August 1906, but which had been developing over several years. In December 1904, Judge Rucker attended a meeting of the Denver Chamber of Commerce, asking that organization to urge the Army to purchase his land south of Fort Logan as an extension of the post. He cited a report by General Baldwin, Commander of the Department of the Colorado, to the War Department that had recommended the purchase of additional lands to enlarge Fort Logan. Later that month Rucker sent a letter to the Chamber “regarding the Fort Logan matter,” and enlargement of Fort Logan was listed as a priority of the Chamber of Commerce in succeeding years.<sup>9</sup>

The Army representative who



water was to come from Harriman Lake, delivered through Harriman Ditch (also called Johnson ditch), for irrigation at the fort. Judge Rucker had rights to water from the same company but from Bear Creek, also delivered in the Harriman Ditch. Twice previously the government had brought suit against the company for failure to deliver the contracted water, and on each of those occasions the suits had been dropped when the company demonstrated that at the time of trial the water was being delivered. Rucker had also helped initiate a suit against the water company in 1903,

came face-to-face with Rucker in the incident that opened the “war” was Capt. A. S. Brookes of the 29th Infantry. From newspaper references, it seems that Capt. Brookes had a reputation as one “who always had something to say on any and all occasions as well as in and out of the newspapers.”<sup>10</sup> In the summer of 1906 there were sixteen officers and 252 enlisted men stationed at Fort Logan. Brookes’s responsibilities at the fort included: In Charge of Post Gardens and Irrigation of Grounds, Ordnance and Range Officer, Signal and Engineering Officer, Exchange and Athletic Officer, Quartermaster, Commissary, Post Treasurer, Officer in Charge of Prisoners, Commanding Company of Depot Recruits and Casuals, Adjutant.<sup>11</sup>

The government had purchased rights to 75 inches of water from the Denver Union Water Company. The

alleging that the company was taking water from the Platte River that belonged to farmers in the area.<sup>12</sup>

On August 2, 1906 the Army complained that Judge Rucker was taking all the water from the irrigation ditch, and Captain Albert S. Brookes went to the site along the ditch where the gates were located that could divert the water either to Rucker’s land or to the military post. Brookes tried to change the gate to run the water onto the fort, and Rucker drew a revolver to force the captain to give up control of the water gate. Brookes vowed to swear out a warrant charging the judge with assault with a weapon. An Arapahoe county deputy sheriff arrested Judge Rucker and released him.

The 1906 Denver newspapers had a field day with reports of the conflict. The *Denver Post* reported the initial incident that same afternoon, and

in the style of the *Post* of those days, emphasized that the Army captain had "hoisted the white flag" in leaving the field at the point of a gun.

*As a usual thing—and it is so taught at West Point—any officer of the United States Army is supposed to stand by no matter how great the danger may be. When an Army officer hoists the white flag or exhibits a broad streak of yellow when confronted by an enemy he promptly loses caste with his brother officers, and the men in the ranks refer to him with sneers. "The man who made Capt. Brooks (sic) hoist the white flag is Judge A. W. Rucker, chairman of the Arapahoe county Democratic committee, and a prominent citizen of that section. Judge Rucker does not know what fear is, and he proved this today when he not only threatened to shoot Capt. Brooks, but offered to fight the entire military force at Fort Logan in order to maintain what he believes are his rights.*

That same afternoon, about the time the *Denver Post* was distributed, Captain Brookes returned to the irriga-

tion ditch with a private; both Brookes and the private carried rifles. Rucker confronted the private about the water gate and forced him to drop the rifle. Brookes appeared from the side and made Rucker and his brother put down their guns, which the captain confiscated. This brought charges by the judge in the newspaper that Brookes had created a "murder plot" against the judge.

"MINIATURE WAR AT FORT LOGAN" was the headline on the *Denver Republican* story of August 3. Sub-heads read "Fierce Verbal Battle with Civilian Forces Routing Regulars. Judge Rucker the Enemy, While Capt. Brookes Represents the Army. Wordy Broad-sides, Real Revolver and Much Excitement Evolved in Row Over Water." The story which followed these headlines began:

*Miniature war has broken out at Fort Logan. The regulars, consisting of Capt. A. F. Brooks (sic) of the Twenty-ninth Infantry, in the first fierce onslaught of the enemy, consisting of Judge A. W. Rucker, were forced to beat a hasty retreat. But the disorganized force, consisting of Capt. Brooks, was soon rallied in fine shape and advanced proudly toward the position that it had been forced by the enemy, consisting of Judge Rucker, to vacate but a few*

*minutes previously. At last reports the regulars were still valiantly holding the position and were shelling the enemy with a hot volley of strong language. There were no casualties during the engagement although the feelings of both the regulars and the enemy were badly hurt by the hot fire of words to which both were exposed for a considerable length of time. No prisoners were taken while the battle raged but the enemy, consisting of Judge Rucker, was captured after the close of the battle by a rank outsider, Deputy Sheriff Wedow, of Littleton. He was soon released on parole (in other words on his own personal recognition.)<sup>14</sup>*

Rucker loudly insisted that he was in the right in shutting off the water to the fort, since the water company had cut off the water supply from Harriman Lake for a couple of days in order to clean the lake and exit to the ditch (this was apparently correct). The Army's position was that the government had a contract for water to be provided to the fort, and that they were entitled to the full amount contracted. An un-named Fort Logan official indicated that there had been a number of disagreements

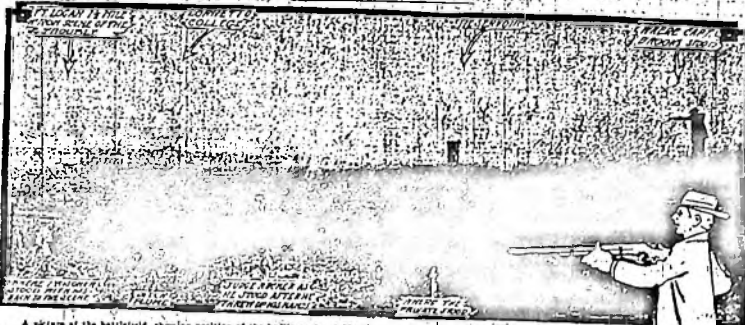
between the judge and the fort previously, relating to fences as well as water. "He claimed the right to cross the government reservation at different points, disputed the right of the government to fence in its quarter-section and when he took the matter up higher discovered that he was in the wrong."<sup>15</sup> Judge Rucker began to send messages to the Fort Commander and to the Department of the Colorado demanding a court martial for Captain Brookes. When Col. Ammon Augur, commandant of the fort, supported Capt. Brookes's actions, Rucker included Col. Augur as a subject for court martial. At the same time, it was discovered that the irrigation ditch at the place where the confrontation took place was in Jefferson County, so the Arapahoe County warrant which had been served on Rucker was invalid.

The newspapers began to treat the dispute more seriously. A trial on the charge against Judge Rucker was held on August 9, in Jefferson County, and the verdict was that Judge Rucker was in the right since the water company had cut off the supply for the fort.<sup>16</sup> It was suggested in a news story that the suit against the water company would be reinstated by Fort Logan.

An "amicable settlement" of the controversy was reached later in the month, with an agreed share of water to go to each party and the water company to report daily on the amount of water made available.<sup>17</sup> At some time the commander at Fort Logan was instructed to return the weapons to Judge Rucker with apologies, according to a later letter from Judge Rucker.

Life returned to normal at Fort Logan and Rucker Ridge. Rucker was a

# Nerve and Pistol Hold Water Against the Gallant Soldiers EX-JUDGE WINS A BLOODLESS VICTORY OVER THE ARMY



A picture of the battlefield, showing position of the buildings at the time the army captured the films and the river bank movement as Judge Rucker.

## ROUTES ARMY WITH A PISTOL

(Continued From Page One.)  
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## TAKE OVERDOSE OF QUININE AND BURETS

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## RUCKER TO KEEP WATER

(Continued From Page One.)  
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candidate for nomination by the Democratic Party for the office of governor in 1908. The *Littleton Independent* was a strong Rucker supporter, and stated in an editorial that "The candidacy of Judge Atterson W. Rucker for the Democratic nomination for governor of Colorado has aroused enthusiasm at the Glenwood Springs convention this week. Rucker, a strong advocate of Bryan principles and possessed with executive ability qualifies him to the honor of chief executive of Colorado."<sup>18</sup> A newspaper in Lamar referred to Rucker as "the hero of Fort Logan."<sup>19</sup> However, John F. Shafroth was nominated for governor and Rucker was asked to run for Congress in a district which was generally Republican. Rucker was elected for two terms, and when he was not re-nominated in the

1912 primary, he retired to the Denver area and became involved in agricultural interests until his death in 1924.

Late in 1908 the Army purchased 320 acres from Judge Rucker, with all water rights, at a cost of \$90,000, four years after the Judge had begun his campaign to sell his land. The reason given for the purchase was to have room for water storage and for drilling of soldiers, but in September 1909 Fort Logan was reduced to a Recruit Depot which did not need much space for drilling.

The Fort Logan Water War was more or less forgotten, but Judge Rucker appeared again at Fort Logan in 1921, asking to run a pipeline from the irrigation ditches on the fort land to nearby property which Rucker owned. Permission was granted at first and then

rescinded by the Secretary of War after further study of relationships between Fort Logan and Judge Rucker. An attorney for Rucker submitted correspondence claiming an absolute right under the Constitution of Colorado to connect to water ditches.

A memorandum prepared for the Adjutant General of the Army in 1924 includes the Army's version of the incident in the following "brief history of the water question at Fort Logan," indicating that the Army had not forgotten or forgiven:

*Fort Logan is located on the north face of an east and west spur known as Rucker Ridge. The irrigation ditch, known as the Johnson ditch, which supplies the post, terminates on this spur. Originally the spur was owned by A. W. Rucker, a man of notorious reputation as a thief of water. The United States bought the right to purchase 75 inches of water from the Denver Union Water Company. This water came in the Johnson ditch and was regularly stolen by Rucker. When protest was made, Rucker leveled a pistol at the officer sent. Later Rucker and his brother became so violent that it became necessary to disarm*

*them. There was constant stealing of water, acts of spite, and threats of murder on the part of Rucker. Finally it was decided to end the nuisance by purchasing Rucker's land and all his water rights to give full possession to the Johnson ditch. The commanding General, Department of Colorado stated, on March 24, 1909: "Rather than have a continuance of these exhibitions of spite, possible bloodshed and unlawful appropriation of water by an owner of adjoining property, which water supply rightly and justly belonged to the Government, a recommendation to purchase, as heretofore stated, rather unwillingly made, was submitted."*<sup>20</sup>

A written decision in April 1924, by W. A. Bethel, the Judge Advocate General, made the following summary of the history of the water dispute:

*On December 3, 1908, the United States paid A. W. Rucker \$90,000 for part of his land and all of his water rights. The purchase included*

AND THE CAPTAIN ARE HAVING THE "DOD GADGET" TIME, SO DIKE MAKES IT APPEAR, SO MUCH FOR THE CONGR AND  
HO DO THE LOOKS AND CARTOONS, NOT FORGETTING LAUREL, WHO DOES THE PHOTOGRAPHIC STUFFS—THEY ARE GOING  
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EVER POST Yesterday was 48,966.

# EVER POST.



AUGUST 3, 1906.—16 PAGES.—PRICE FIVE CENTS.

THIRD EDITION.

## DR MURDER PLOT, SAYS RUCKER

**Formally Charges Capt. Brooks With Decoying Him Into a Trap  
Where He Could Be Shot Under a Pretext of Self-Defense**

THE ICAIOLIC

320 acres of land on the crest of the ridge and including the whole of Johnson Ditch for the last two miles of its course . . . The land, at the most liberal estimate was worth, with its improvements, not over \$25,000. . . . The value of [the water rights] is not in excess of \$15,000. Hence it is evident that the United States has paid \$50,000 for the exclusive possession of the terminus of Johnson ditch and freedom from the constant nuisance which partnership in a ditch involves. [Emphasis in the original document] It appears to be poor public policy to give away the rights which it has cost the United States \$90,000 total to

acquire and bring back the nuisance of mixed water rights which was so severe that the expenditure of \$90,000 was made to get rid of it.<sup>21</sup>

The Advocate General also determined that Colorado law did not apply to land over which the legislature had given absolute control to the Federal Government. Rucker was denied access to the water ditch.

This was apparently the last episode in the Rucker-Fort Logan controversy. Whether Judge Rucker contemplated further legal action, or desired to issue another challenge to someone for a duel, time ran out. On July 19, 1924 after two weeks of hospitalization, A. W. Rucker died. The newspaper account of his death mentioned some of his accomplishments in addition to bits of his life history already reported. "His service in Congress was filled with activity and he proved himself a champion of the people. . . Judge Rucker did as much as

any other man in redeeming arid lands in Colorado. He made many trips to Europe for information as to how to preserve forest lands in this country.<sup>22</sup>

To summarize the neighborly (or un-neighborly) dispute, it seems that Judge Rucker was the over-all winner. He sold his land for an exorbitant price, and went on to higher things as a Congressman. A man who served at Fort Logan from 1924 to 1927 told me that soldiers were instructed not to lock the north and south gates, because an order from Washington allowed Judge Rucker to cross through the fort when he wanted to—even though Rucker was then deceased.

The land, which had comprised the Rucker addition to Fort Logan was sold to housing developers by the U. S. government after Fort Logan closed in 1946. The site of the reservoir, Rucker Lake, is now Bowmar Heights Park and an elementary school is located in one corner of it. In the 1960s the State of Colorado sold the water rights which were attached to the Fort Logan lands which were given to the state. And everyone has forgotten about the Fort Logan Water War in the early part of this century.

#### Endnotes

1. *Denver Republican*, March 30, 1867.
2. *Denver Republican*, October 26, 1867.
3. *Official Roster of the Seventeenth General Assembly of Colorado, 1909*, p. 161.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Denver Republican*, November 22, 1888.
6. *Rocky Mountain News*, July 19, 1924.
7. *Denver Republican*, November 21, 1888.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Minutes, Denver Chamber of Commerce, at Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.
10. *Denver Post*, August 2, 1906.

11. Fort Logan "Post Returns," Reel 642, National Archives.
12. *Littleton Independent*, May 29, 1903.
13. *Denver Post*, October 2, 1904.
14. *Denver Republican*, August 3, 1904.
15. *Denver Republican*, August 5, 1904.
16. *Rocky Mountain News*, August 10, 1904.
17. *Denver Post*, August 10, 1904; *Rocky Mountain News*, August 10, 1904.
18. *Littleton Independent*, June 10, 1908.
19. *Lamar Sparks*, quoted in the *Littleton Independent*, June 26, 1908.
20. Fort Logan Correspondence, National Archives.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Rocky Mountain News*, July 19, 1924.

#### About the Author



*Earl McCoy, who presented the paper on "Judge Rucker and the Fort Logan Water War" at the August Rendezvous at Fort Logan, is a native of Illinois. With degrees from Illinois Wesleyan University and the University of Illinois, Earl worked in community centers in Chicago, including the Hull House. From 1956 to 1959 he was director of a community center in the Old City section of Acre, Israel. In 1959 Earl came to Denver to work at Auraria Community Center; and from 1968 to 1987 was Community Coordinator at Fort Logan Mental Health Center. Earl joined the Denver Posse of Westerners in 1984.*



# Over the Corral Rail

Please send items of interest to Jim Krebs, Publications Chairman. Jim's contact information is on page 2.

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## Rendezvous Fun

*At right: The walking tour of the grounds at Ft. Logan.*

*Below: Earl McCoy (3rd from left facing camera) leads a group of Westerners on a tour.*

*Below right: Just can't keep the rain away from the Rendezvous.*





## Westerners Bookshelf

**An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the summer of 1859,** by Horace Greeley. University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books. Paperback, 386 pages, \$15.00

Horace Greeley's historic stature is based mostly on his powerful editorship of the *New York Tribune*, his fight against slavery and his losing effort to unseat President Ulysses S. Grant in 1872. He achieved much for a man with a squeaky, unpleasant voice, mutton-chop whiskers and a fussy mien that defied anybody to regard him as "a good old boy."

But he had boundless energy. Typically, in the summer of 1859, he energetically traveled by train and stagecoach to the West Coast—with notebook in hand to give the nation an incisive view of what America's Great West was like, along with his analysis of its prospects. He was a careful observer; his words were authoritative.

His newspaper accounts were reprinted as a book in 1860 and have been republished since. This latest effort by the University of Nebraska uses the 1860 typeface and thus has quaint historical appeal.

Introducing the story is Jo Ann Manfra, professor of American history, Worcester Polytechnic Institute. She points out that Greeley was uncommonly well educated for his era. He saw the future of the West against a background of experience elsewhere.

An earlier trip to Europe enabled him to compare favorably the irrigation potential of the future northern Colorado to the agriculture practices in the Lombardy region of Italy. His advice was taken: in 1870 New York colonists established a Colorado farming colony named for him.

Greeley wrote insightfully about Colorado's gold fields and interviewed Brigham Young in Salt Lake City. The latter piece of journalism was the first important, full-blown interview ever printed by a U.S. newspaper.

Greeley elicited the fact that the Mormon leader had 15 wives and quoted Young extensively on the structure and functioning of his church.

His visit to the Gregory diggings brought out Greeley's analysis of Colorado's gold potential. He said thousands of seekers would turn back in disappointment but added: "Yet I feel that each month's researches will enlarge the field of mining operations, and diminish the difficulties...and that ten years hence, we shall be just beginning fairly to appreciate and secure the treasures now buried in the Rocky Mountains."

These are prophetic words for a time when the wealth of Leadville, Cripple Creek and Creede was years in the future.

--Lee Olson, P.M.

**Lucien Maxwell: Villain or Visionary?** by Harriet Freiberger. Line drawings by Jean Kashner. Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 1999. 160 pp., notes and bibliography. Paper, \$14.95

This is Harriet Freiberger's first book. It is an exculpatory biography of the famed Lucien Maxwell, dedicated to the proposition that Maxwell's reputation has been besmirched by the violence which came to northern New Mexico after he sold the legendary Maxwell Grant.

The author documents her case that, in fact, Maxwell's years in the Cimarron area provided stability and leadership. The lawlessness and near chaos which came after Maxwell sold the Grant to speculators is mistakenly attributed to Maxwell by historic distortion of this legendary figure. The facts of Lucien Maxwell's life are incredible enough and require no embellishment by legend.

Lucien Maxwell was born in Kaskaskia, Illinois, in 1818 to a family having a tradition of trading with the Indians of the Mississippi and Missouri region. By his late teens, he was employed at Bent's Fort which was followed by his life for a period as a "Mountain Man." At Bent's Fort, he began his life-long friendship with Kit Carson. Luz Beaubien of Santa Fe was 16

when she married Maxwell, then age 23. Shortly thereafter, the groom and Carson left with Fremont on his first expedition to the Great South Pass. Subsequently, he and Carson accompanied Fremont on the notorious California expedition as well. Upon returning, he and Luz settled at Cimarron on the Beaubien and Miranda Grant. Through Luz's inheritance, and through subsequent purchases, Maxwell acquired the Beaubien and Miranda Grant which came to be called the "Maxwell Grant." When gold was discovered on the Grant and other outside pressures arose, he sold out and moved to Fort Sumner with many of his followers.

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...carefully researched  
and meticulously  
annotated...

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In size, a Mexican Land Grant was suppose to contain no more than 147,500 acres. When the metes and bounds of the Maxwell Grant were ultimately surveyed for its sale, a small discrepancy was found. The area determined by metes and bounds encompassed 1,750,000 acres of real estate along the Colorado-New Mexico border! As one might expect, it took years of litigation before Lucien Maxwell emerged as the owner of this enormous tract, and also much litigation in the wake of its sale.

The book portrays Lucien as a kindly baron and a leader of about 40 families. He led the development of the community at Cimarron and presided over it and its environs. He was reputed to be fair in his treatment of Indians, Mexicans, and Anglos alike.

The author notes that the ultimate sale of the almost two-million-acre Grant for \$600,000.00 indicated that greed was not a motivating factor in Lucien's actions. In fact, years before he had offered it to the US Government for an Indian reservation for \$250,000.00. Many members of the Cimarron community followed

Maxwell to Fort Sumner, further attesting to his status as a leader and visionary, rather than as a villain as he is so often portrayed.

The book reads well. It is carefully researched and meticulously annotated. This reviewer found much of interest about the Colonial history of northern New Mexico, the Santa Fe Trail, and the Mexican Land Grants.

--W. Toll, Jr., P.M.

**Antoine Robidoux and Fort Uncompahgre**, by Ken Reyher. Western Reflections, Inc., Ouray, Colorado, 1998. Eighty-five pages, 29 pictures & illustrations, bibliography. Paperback, \$9.95.

Ken Reyher tells the story of Antoine Robidoux, a western Colorado fur trader, and his involvement from 1824 until his death in 1860, in many historical events leading to the opening of the West. It is fascinating reading indeed.

St. Louis, the growing center of commerce and gateway to the western frontier, had become too crowded in 1824 for young Antoine Robidoux, son of a prosperous trading family, so he headed for Santa Fe. As a successful merchant of French heritage, fluent in Spanish, Antoine was accepted into Santa Fe society and politics and married the Mexican Governor's adopted daughter. He obtained the exclusive license for trade in what is now northern New Mexico, western Colorado and eastern Utah. There, he took advantage of the likes and dislikes of those he met and successfully developed a rather unique and synergistic relationship among opposing governments, tribes and traders.

The Spanish and Mexicans didn't like to do business with the brash Americans for cultural and religious reasons but wanted their goods. The Mexican Government prohibited the selling of firearms or whiskey to the Indians.

The Utes wanted to be left alone with no Mexican or American settlers encroaching onto their lands. They needed guns to protect themselves from marauding tribes, they liked Taos Lighting, and they had buffalo and beaver hides to trade for cloth and other staples.

The region was beyond the range of the British fur companies in Wyoming. Little-known to the outside world was the underground slave trade of captured women and children of various tribes used for cheap labor. Robidoux was accommodating there, too.

Robidoux was thus protected by both parties to establish and operate the only trading posts in this remote region. His family in St Joseph, Missouri was a dependable source of goods supplied by wagon train over the Santa Fe Trail; the wagons returned with furs and woolen blankets.

Fort Uncompahgre, on the Gunnison River, was his first trading post. He became quite successful in the region. However, his trading posts at Robidoux and Fort Uintah were not. Being an active man, usually he was out leading a trapping party or wagon train, leaving the operation of his trading post to others.

An entire chapter, "Roads of Commerce," is devoted to those dealing in

goods and livestock and how various routes in the 1820s were developed beyond Santa Fe to the West Coast. Robidoux was intimately involved in establishing a new cut-off to the "Old Spanish Trail" trade route from Santa Fe to southern California where the Mexicans traded their high-bred horses for wool blankets and other goods. His route from Taos via the San Luis Valley followed Indian tracks over Cochetopa Pass, through the Gunnison Valley, crossing Cerro Pass and into the Uncompaghre Valley where he established Fort Uncompaghre. This route was safe from highwaymen and fee collectors.

So what could go wrong? Plenty! And Robidoux was involved in a good bit of it. The Utes could not understand the crash of the beaver fur trade and finally realized that they had been duped on prices all along. He lost all three of his trading posts—the Utes destroyed Ft. Uncompaghre and Uintah and he abandoned Robidoux. Mexican settlers began moving into the fertile San Luis Valley. Robidoux was accused by the Mexican government of selling the arms the Indians used in their uprising, but he avoided prosecution. Americans moving into the Southwest resulted in the Texas Border Incident in 1846. He was listed as a guide and interpreter to Col. Stephen Kearney and played an important role in the peaceful negotiation whereby Mexico signed over the Rio Grande Valley to the U.S., while pursuing a Mexican contingent with Kearney and Kit Carson.

Robidoux was severely wounded by a lance in the Battle of San Pasqual near San Diego. Broken in health and financially ruined, he returned to St. Joseph by ship around Cape Horn to New Orleans. Changing circumstance had swept away the world of a man who once ruled a Western empire.

One can experience trading-post life of that period by visiting the reconstructed Fort Robidoux Historic Trading Post at Delta, Colorado. It is a living history museum owned by the city but operated under contract by people most knowledgeable of those times. Their apparel, demonstrations and furnishings are most authentic. How better to understand and appreciate those early pioneers than to read the book and walk the walk at Delta. (For information contact: Dan Douter, 970-249-8364.)

--S. Lebrun Hutchison, P.M.

**Fort Robinson and the American West: 1874-1899**, by Thomas R. Buecker. Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1999. 265 pages, illustrated with photographs and maps, appendices, index, bibliography, endnotes. Cloth, \$40.00.

This volume will be the first volume in a two-volume history of Fort Robinson, Nebraska. Before getting into specifics, the reviewer would like to say that this not only promises to be the definitive history of one of the most active of the western frontier posts, it also will become a model in the Indian War post histories. The book is well bound and has an appropriate color Remington illustration on the jacket. Book sellers finally have consistently realized that the colorful action illustrations of Remington, Russell, Schreyvogel, and others have an impact on sales.

The book is well-researched and well-written. It strikes some blows against political correctness, as well. Mr. Buecker's account of the Dull Knife Outbreak does much to discredit the fanciful writing of Mari Sandoz as to the Sappa Creek killings and the character of Captain Wessells, (played by Karl Malden in the John Ford movie "Cheyenne Autumn"). More will be written on the Dull Knife Outbreak in the future, since the memoirs of Wessells recently have been "rediscovered", and Colorado's own John Monnett has been researching a book on the subject. Additionally, Mr. Buecker seems to agree with S.L.A. Marshall that, as regrettable as the Wounded Knee affair was, it was not motivated by a sense of Seventh Cavalry "Regimental Revenge." Buecker notes an earlier incident in 1878 when the Seventh, if it had revenge on its mind, nevertheless failed to slaughter another group of Indians in the area of Fort Robinson.

In the difficult area of the "Buffalo Soldiers" and race relations, however, the book does make at least one comment that appears to be a silly salute to political correctness. After telling about an altercation and a riot, arising out of a dispute initially involving a prostitute who decided that she did not care for a particular Buffalo Soldier *on this particular occasion*, Mr. Buecker concludes that the embarrassed army "made no effort to protect the soldiers' rights." While part of the affair

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is very difficult, even for  
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may have been racially motivated (as many were), it is unclear what soldier rights were involved. Also, when the unit shot up the town a couple of nights later, that form of mutiny and riot (something even romanticized later by Frederick Remington) hardly involves "soldier's rights." But, as stated before, writing on racial issues is very difficult, even

for an able historian, as Mr. Buecker is.

The book is highly recommended and is worth the rather hefty price. One additional and very pleasing aspect with the book's layout, which is a blessing to one who likes to check endnotes as one reads, is the placing of the chapter number on each even-numbered page. This reviewer awaits the second volume, which likely will tell more of the Buffalo Soldiers, of German P.O.W.s, and the noble efforts of the State of Nebraska to preserve the post.

--John Hutchins, P.M.

**Fifty Years and a Fight: Major Samuel Peter Heintzelman's Journal of Texas and the Cortina War**, edited by Jerry Thompson. Texas State Historical Association, Austin, 1998. 328 pages. Illustrations, footnotes, index, bibliography.

This is another example that there still is much to be published in the area of the ante-bellum United States Army in the West. Just as the 1840s and 1850s writings of Abner Doubleday recently were published (to the delight of armchair historians), this two-year selection from the many journals of General Heintzelman has been selected for a broader audience by well-known Texan and Civil War historian Jerry Thompson.

The journals go from the spring of 1859 to the spring of 1861. Therefore, they begin with the transfer of the Heintzelman household to Texas, they include army life and Indian campaigning on the frontier, and they end with the beginning of secession and the Civil War. Personalities mentioned by Heintzelman include William Emory and Colonel Robert E. Lee.

However, the most important historical information involves Heintzelman's participation in the Cortina War along the Rio Grande in 1859 and 1860. This book therefore supplements the memoirs of "Rip" Ford, and the congressional investigation that looked into this violence in Texas, which involved Mexicans, Tejanos, the U.S. Army, and the Texas Rangers. Heintzelman, in fact, tends to corroborate the feeling in Texas that Major Ford, unlike Captain Tobin, did the Rangers proud.

Jerry Thompson, who has done previous work on the Civil War in New Mexico and on Tejanos in Civil-War Texas, has done an excellent job of annotation and editing. The book is a keeper and is highly recommended.

--John Hutchins, P.M.

**Prehistoric Warfare in the American Southwest**, by Steven A. LeBlanc. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1999. 400 pages. Illustrated with photographs, map, and drawings, index, bibliography. Hardback with dust jacket, \$34.95.

As many know, there has long been a debate on why the "ancient ones" of Mesa Verde and other areas of the American Southwest, who built wonderful examples of stone architecture, simply disappeared. Was it warfare or drought? I guess I first became vaguely aware of this debate in the 1950s, when I saw a "B" Western, in which the cavalry, to fight off the pursuing Apaches, forted up in an ancient and abandoned cliff dwelling. More recently, in 1997, the debate was illustrated by two National Park Rangers I met at Mesa Verde. One, Ranger Bob Richards, schooled in European history, recognized much of the architecture as similar or analogous to that of castles of the same era. Another ranger, in contrast, believed that almost all of the discovered buildings (and children's toys) had some secret religious meaning.

Mr. LeBlanc, in a well-researched and well-written book, has presented a compelling case that the ancient citizens of the Southwest were involved, generally, in much warfare with each other. Using archeology, anthropology, and good reasoning, Mr. LeBlanc, without being elitist or strident, argues that it was this warfare and threat of warfare that influenced the architecture, the placement of settlements, and the migrations that occurred.

Although I at first thought that this book would detail specific locations of specific conflicts, somewhat like the 1978 book, *Battles of the Bible*, by General Herzog and Professor Gichon, Mr. LeBlanc, obviously lacking an historical record like the Bible on specific battles, has instead only generally used traditions or known (through archeology) examples of massacres, scalping, and destruction of settlements by fire, to support his broad thesis that the Southwest was a Hobbesian place to be at that time (where life could be brutish and short), rather than a "peace-

able kingdom” of quasi-Quakers.

This book will add to the debate and ought to be read by a wide audience. For me, it strongly reaffirmed that these areas ought to be protected from “pot-hunters,” for, unlike those silly people who want to re-bury the Indian past as soon as it is dug up, open-minded scholars like LeBlanc are using the discoveries to advance knowledge, without bowing to “political correctness.” Also, this book, which is well-bound and well-done, speaks well of the University of Utah for, while the work deals with ancient cities in America, it hardly conforms to the Bronze-Age civilization presented in the Book of Mormon.

This book is not only a keeper, I predict that it will be an award-winning classic in the field. Mr. LeBlanc has produced an indispensable book for those interested in the Anasazi, the Hopi, the Pueblos, and other native Indians.

*--John Hutchins, P.M.*

**\$10 Horse, \$40 Saddle**, by Don Rickey, Jr., with Illustrations by Dale Crawford and Introduction to the Bison Books Edition by Daniel N. Vichorek. Bison Books/University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London., 1999. Originally published 1976 by Old Army Press, Ft. Collins, Colo. 135 pages, 52 illustrations. Paperback \$19.95.

What Mr. Rickey has wrought is a fun and easy read about what it took to be outfitted as an authentic 1860s era cowpoke from chaps to union suit. The style of writing, generous pen & ink illustrations and overwide size (10" x 7") make it seem like the kind of book you would buy at a National Park gift shop on a vacation.

The author came by his information through personal acquaintance with some of the last remaining true cowpokes of the 1880s and 90s West (who stood in contrast to the Hollywood image of what a cowboy looked like). One of the nice aspects of the book is seven pages at the end of the book profiling these hard-riders. Men with names like Jake Tomamichel, George (Shy) Osterhout and the western artist Ken Ralston, provided the author with his information.

Virtually every possible item that was worn by a cowboy is detailed in separate chapters. One example is a chapter on trousers which includes details such as: “Trousers in the 1880s were cut differently than in recent times, and the cowboy had reasons for his preferences. Close fitting pants did not ride up on the wearer, and the leg was made so as to fit snugly from the hips down.”

The most pages are devoted to revolvers and give details like: “Only a fool put more than five cartridges in a six-shot revolver cylinder, unless he were expecting some fast and serious action. In normal use, the hammer was let down on the empty chamber, as a safety precaution. A fall with a revolver whose hammer was resting on the safety notch over a live shell could be disastrous. . .” These sort of practical comments may be obvious to a cowpoke, but to a suburban youngster or Westerner is fascinating.

If there is one quibble this reviewer has, it is that we suburban types reading about these things for the first time may not have a clue what a few of the items



talked about are. It would have been nice for Rickey to supply a few more details. For example, he mentions that the cowboys made their own bridles, halters and "theodores" but never mentions what any of these are used for. Still, it is hard to think of much that Rickey has not covered in this entertaining book.

--George W. Krieger P.M.

**I See by Your Outfit: Becoming a Cowboy a Century Too Late**, by Clay Bonnyman Evans. Johnson Books, Boulder, 1999. 320 pp. Cloth, \$28; Paper, \$17.00

This reviewer was intrigued by both the title of this book and the author's name. Clay is a cowboy name if ever there was one, and the outfit that a cowboy wears says a lot about what kind of cowboy he is. However, it is a cowboy's hat that says more about what kind of person he is, and, next to his horse, his most prized possession. It is also the most useful. The author grew up in the 1960s while his family lived in Denver and Boulder, Colorado. But it was while the family lived in Boulder, in the shadow of the mountains, that "the cowboy disease first infected me". From this point on, the author relates his experiences in the candid, and, sometimes, raw language of the cowboy. The author has written an easy-to-read, witty, and entertaining book as he tells his story of coming-of-age.

The author has achieved his purpose of exposing the myth of the cowboy by presenting both the romantic view and the harsh realities of a cowboy's life through first-hand accounts of his experiences with nature, horses, cattle, oldtimers, bosses, women, and other "critters".

Although the myth has been exposed, it has not been destroyed. That is a credit to the author and the way he has carefully chosen his words in relating his experiences while he set about becoming a cowboy. The author has returned "home" where he is currently a columnist and book editor for the *The Boulder Daily Camera*. He is available for interviews and can be reached through his e-mail address [rcroog@jbcolorado.com](mailto:rcroog@jbcolorado.com) or at Johnson Books.

I heartily recommend this book to anyone desiring to know what a cowboy was and is, and what it takes to become a cowboy in modern times.

The reader may be surprised how some things in the life of a modern cowboy have changed very little since the 1800s.

--Roger P. Michels, P.M.

**La Gente, Hispano History and Life in Colorado**, edited by Vincent C. De Baca. Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado, 1998. 294 pages.

This is a selection of studies, essays, and autobiographical sketches by and about Hispanic Americans in and near Colorado. It provides viewpoints which complement and occasionally contradict the conventional Anglocentric histories.

From a chapter drawing inferences about a strong and influential (to all appearances) woman in northern Mexico and southern Colorado, we learn some-

thing of the extended family. We see how little is really known about such social structure and relationships. We also learn about 1842 "El Pueblo" and ranching in what is now northern New Mexico.

The chapter on the Ludlow troubles is an interesting blend of Hispano perspective mixed with mining lore, Rockefeller, and labor law. It is eye opening to see how many families were torn, with some members being mine guards while others were strikers.

Corky Gonzales and the Crusade for Justice rate a chapter; there is also one on "internal colonialism". The final chapter treats Chicano farming as a product of acequia irrigation, riparian long lot land ownership patterns, and watersheds as a common property resource. This is interesting underpinning for other reading.

This book is fascinating for its historical voices heretofore unheard. Some of the later chapters seem more a polemic than history. Even so, this book is a worthy read to gain some understanding of the historical perspective of many Coloradans.

--Stan Moore, C.M.

**Beyond the Great Divide, 101 True Stories of Western Colorado**, by Abbott Fay. Western Reflections, Inc., 1999. 223 pages.

One hundred and one stories, each about a page and a half, make for interesting browsing. Consider:

-The elephants which pushed the DS&P circus train up Boreas Pass in 1883.

-William Marshall, a member of the Wheeler Survey who left the party in the winter of 1873 because he had a toothache and had to see a dentist. He and his guide went through a pass at the head of the Gunnison Valley. It seemed a good railroad route and, in fact, became Marshall Pass of D&RG fame.

-The Telluride Pinheads.

-The Nunn brothers, who envisioned and built an AC plant to light the Gold King mine and the town of Telluride. They started the "Telluride Institute", to train engineers in the harnessing and use of alternating current. It is now located in the Telluride House at Cornell University, New York.

This is entertaining reading with miscellany and trivia for most every Western history buff.

--Stan Moore, C.M.

**Santos: Enduring Images of Northern New Mexican Village Churches**, by Marie Romero Cash. University Press of Colorado, Niwot, Colorado, 1999. 221 black and white photographs, 16 color photographs, bibliography, chapter notes, index, 4 Appendixes. 296 pages. Clothbound, \$39.95.

As I have grown older, and aware that perhaps I am not immortal after all, I have begun to appreciate religious artifacts and symbols. Many of the religious works of art that were relatively inexpensive a few years ago are now often price-

less and found only in museums. Created, painted and carved as works of devotion and love over the past several hundred years the bultos, altar screens, santos, retablos, etc. created by the Santero of New Mexico often are now difficult to find. This book is the culmination of years of work and it is well worth reading if you appreciate the work of the Santos. The wealth of information found here is overwhelming. The author, Marie Romero Cash, has spent years lecturing and writing on the New Mexican santero and the traditions and cultures of northern New Mexico. She is also a nationally known folk artist and santera.

In this volume, she provides a focused, detailed view of the santero of New Mexico and their work. She has divided the approximately first two hundred years of the santeros and their surviving works into three periods, The Early Santero and His Role in the Churches, The Classic Golden Age of the Santero and The Late Period of the Santero. She has chosen six prominent and talented santeros as representatives of each period and addressed their lives and work. For each santero she provides a brief biography, describes the surviving works (and a few that didn't survive) attributed to each, and she tells where each surviving work can be seen. There are multiple photographs of examples of each santero's work. She provides information on how to recognize the style of each santero and often differentiates their style between retablos and bultos.

While this book would be valuable as a reference solely for this information, it also contains much other information of interest and value. For example, the chapter on the art of the santero provides an excellent overview of the santero, his craft and the cultural environment wherein the work of the santero flourished. One chapter discusses the relatively rare santero paintings on hide, canvas and paper. Another chapter discusses the disfavor of the santero's work by the Catholic Church after Bishop Lamy came to New Mexico. She explains what happened to the santos that were in the churches then. Later she advises the reader on where to find and view santos in churches and collections today.

Of special value are the book's five appendices. They cover such widely disparate topics as "Art Restoration at Holy Cross Church in Santa Cruz", "Native Materials and Methods used by the Santero", "The 1776 Dominguez Survey and the 1987 Santos Survey" (this describes those items found in the 1776 survey that were still found in 1987), "The Confraternities in New Mexico Before and During the Santos Period" and a "List of Images in the 1987 Santos Survey".

Ms. Marie Romero Cash is to be congratulated for having written this highly informative book. *Santos, Enduring Images of Northern New Mexican Village Churches* is well written, informative, and adds significantly to the literature on the santero, but it is not light reading for a rainy afternoon. It is a valuable reference for information on the Santeros and their work and would be of interest to those interested in santos, Catholicism in New Mexico and the early culture of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado.

--Keith Fessenden, P.M.

**Women and Nature: Saving the "Wild" West**, by Glenda Riley. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1999. 368 pages, 34 illustrations, index. Cloth, \$60; paper, \$24.95.

As early as 1900, an American Indian woman said "White people plow up the ground, pull up the trees, kill everything....the spirit of the land hates them". As long ago as 1701, the Pennsylvania charter required that for every five acres cleared, one acre had to be left forested. Hispanic women incorporated nature into everything from art to rugs to houses. Early environmentalists learned much from Indian and Hispanic peoples. Colonial women showed an interest in studying and classifying aspects of nature. In 1757, Jane Colden of New York City compiled a catalogue of more than 300 local plants. Many women, meeting in the privacy of their homes, collected and classified botanical specimens. In 1824, botanist Amos Eaton stated "More than half the botanists in New England and New York are ladies".

Some of the early women who were into nature are: Maria Martin, who did watercolors for Audubon; Phyllis Wheatley, transcendentalist Margaret Fuller and Kate Turbush, who was a botanist who spent the last 35 years of her life collecting and classifying in water colors, the flora of Maine. During the late 19th and early 20th century, women began to have a voice in social reform, families, religion, and cultural and racial groups, and widened their sphere to nature and preservation. John Muir's mentor was a woman named Jeanne Smith Carr, wife of Ezra Slocum Carr, with whom he retained a strong friendship. Nebraska legislator Julius Sterling Morton introduced the bill establishing Arbor Day in 1872, inspired by his wife Caroline. By 1902 a little known botanist, Elizabeth Knight Britton, established the Wildflower Preservation Society of America. The impact of English women in natural history, encouraged American women to study the environment and the Women's Suffrage movement helped put women on a more equal footing with men.

Among the many women who ventured west, Isabella Bird wrote about the "glorious Rocky Mountains where the air was intoxicating and wildflowers gorgeous". Alice Eastwood was one of many botanists and conservationists from the early 1890s and into the late 1940s. Botany became a "must" for educated American women. The first women's clubs started after the Civil War and they mushroomed across the U. S. They became literary clubs, as well as garden clubs evolving into saving structures and areas, and supporting the establishment of the National Park Service.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs operating since the 1890s, urged wise water usage and addressed such issues as industrial pollution, and conservation. In 1917, Esther and Elizabeth Burnell, engaged by Enos Mills, became nature guides at Rocky Mountain National Park. The photos in the book are a collection in themselves and are well done. Early mountain climbing clubs constitute a chapter in history and are well detailed in the book. The Sierra Club (1892) The Mazomas (1895), Mountaineers in Washington State (1907) and the Colorado Mountain Club (1912) were some of the earliest clubs where women members were welcomed. American women began to reject killing live animals. Even Annie Oakley switched from live birds to clay pigeons while doing her act. Juliette Low, founder of the Girl Scouts, became a role model for young women interested in the outdoors. Women's history and environmental history are woven together in the fabric of this nation. This is a very detailed and well documented book, one of a series of "Women in the West".

--Dolores Ebner, C.M.



*The* DENVER WESTERNERS  
**ROUNDUP**

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1999



*Nebraska State Historical Society*

**Mari Sandoz: Writer of the West**

by

**Jane Valentine Barker**

(Presented October 27, 1999)

# THE DENVER WESTERNERS ROUNDUP

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## About the Author

A fifth generation Coloradan, Jane Valentine Barker has written two nonfiction books and thirteen books of historical fiction for children and young adults. Barker's books have won Top Hand Awards from the Colorado Authors League, and awards from the National Association of Press Women, and Colorado Press Women. Her fourteenth book, *MARI*, a novel for adults, was released by the University of Colorado in September 1997.

Barker is a founding member of Women Writing the West, and has served as a board member since the organization was established. She is a member of Western Writers of America, the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, Colorado Author's League, Colorado Press Women, the National Federation of Press Women, and Westerners International.

Barker lives with her husband in her hometown of Boulder, Colorado. They have two sons and four grandchildren.

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# Mari Sandoz: Writer of the West

by

**Jane Valentine Barker**

(Presented October 27, 1999)

I am delighted to talk about author Mari Sandoz, a founding member of the New York Posse, and the first woman member of Westerners.

The Denver Posse and Mari Sandoz have much in common. Your corral and Sandoz were born in the West, you celebrate the West, and you have nurtured the Western heritage. While many people have written about this land west of the Mississippi River, I want to tell you why I believe Sandoz was exceptional as a writer of the western experience.

Though I did not have the pleasure of meeting Mari in person, our paths crossed in many ways. As a child, growing up in Boulder, Colorado, I had the opportunity to visit the VanVleet Arabian Ranch west of Nederland. Every Sunday during the summers in the late 1930s and 1940s, Lynn W. VanVleet, millionaire Colorado businessman and owner of the ranch, presented horse shows, free to the public. The ranch was the second largest Arabian stud ranch in the United States. The horses VanVleet showed were magnificent animals. Famous guests at the ranch were invited to ride the horses in the shows—but only if they were expert riders. Mari Sandoz was one of the selected few.

I remember a handsome woman, with bright auburn hair, putting VanVleet's favorite stallion, Shariff, through his paces and tricks, then riding like the wind around and around the

ring with the ranch horsemen for the Grande Finale. I was told the woman was Mari Sandoz, "a very famous New York writer."

When I was in junior high school—in the days of the Lone Ranger radio programs and the Saturday afternoon movies, with Gene Autry and his singing cowboys—I read *Old Jules*. Sandoz wrote of a true-to-life West. Her story was real, not fake like the movies, and I was hooked on Sandoz.

Some years later, after I had read all her books, I began to research Sandoz's life. Many people helped me. Caroline Sandoz Pifer, Mari's sister and archivist for the Sandoz family, allowed me to read materials in her collection. She and Flora Sandoz, sister to Mari, offered me hospitality and gave valuable insights into Mari's life and personality. Blanch Sandoz, widow of Fritz, Mari's brother, provided useful information.

Former University of Nebraska archivist Joseph G. Svoboda and members of his staff were helpful as I researched materials in the Mari Sandoz Collection at Love Library. University of Nebraska archivist Michele Fagan and her assistant, Lynn Porn, and curator Martha Kennedy and curatorial assistant and Elizabeth Mota of the Center of the Great Plains Studies Art Collection also assisted me.

Others who provided help in their areas of knowledge and expertise were Robert M. Bradfield, Peter W.

Dart, Dr. L. R. Metzger, Wesley Blomster, Carrie Jenkins-Williams, the staff at the Nebraska State Historical Society in Lincoln, the librarians at Chadron State College, and volunteers at the historical societies and museums in Gordon, Rushville, and Hay Springs, Nebraska. Dr. Helen Stauffer's biography of Mari was helpful.

In order to bring you into Mari's life and times, I shall tell you a story. The time is the early 1900s. The place is the barren, isolated region of northwestern Nebraska known as the sandhills. A little girl lives with her parents and three younger brothers in a small, frame farmhouse. The father is a fruit grower. He spends much of his time tending his orchards and experimenting with his fruit trees, but when he is not busy in his orchards, he reads.

The little girl watches her father as he reads. She longs to be able to read too, but when she asks her father to teach her, he just snaps, "Girls don't need to know how to read."

She is nine years old before she starts to school. There she learns to read, and reading becomes her greatest pleasure. She writes little stories for her teacher, and even dreams that, one day, she might become a famous writer.

One of her stories is chosen to be published on the school page of *The Omaha Daily News*. When the teacher shows the little girl the printed story, the little girl is thrilled. She takes the paper, and races home to show her father.

The father glances at the paper, reads quickly through the story, then flies into a rage. He rips up the page with the story, strikes the child, and shouts, "No Sandoz ever writes such

trash. Fiction writers are the maggots of society!"

The child was Mari Sandoz; the father was Jules Ami Sandoz, or, as he was later called, "Old Jules." This man became the most influential person in Mari's life. From him she inherited a fine mind, a goal-oriented personality, a creative temperament, and steely determination. From him she learned fearlessness, independence, a sense of—and respect for—history, and a need to communicate knowledge and ideas. Throughout her life, Mari struggled with intense feelings of love and hate for this man who was her nemesis and her inspiration.

Born in Neuchatel canton, Switzerland in 1859, Jules Sandoz was raised by upper-middle-class parents who wanted him to have a good education. Gifted with a brilliant mind, yet possessed by a volatile temper, Jules studied to be a doctor at the University of Zurich. After completing many of his courses, suddenly, in a fit of anger over his parents' refusal to sanction his marriage to a girl they considered inferior, Jules left the University and set out for America.

### **Stakes claim in Nebraska**

Arriving on the shores of the United States in 1881, he then traveled west to Nebraska, where land was available for homesteading. After a few years in Knox County, he again headed west. Some three hundred miles from his first homestead, Jules staked a claim on the north bank of the Niobrara River southeast of Chadron. He became the first homesteader in the area later known as Mirage Flats.

It was harsh country, with severe blizzards in winter, and scorch-



ing heat in summer. Yet, there was beauty to be found. Little lakes dotted the landscape in springtime, miles of grass-covered hills undulated like ocean waves in summer breezes, and in the fall came migrations of sandhill cranes.

Jules Sandoz was a dreamer. In a region which for decades had been used as ranch land, he envisioned section after section of cultivated fields. He wrote to his brothers and sisters, cousins, friends, and acquaintances in Switzerland urging them to come to America to take advantage of the free land. Because of Jules' efforts, and the government's publicity about opening up the land, settlers began to arrive. Jules saw a niche for himself, and became a "locator." For a fee of twenty dollars, he located the official corner markers of properties.

On his own land, Jules envisioned, not just field crops, but orchards. Fruit trees of all kinds, and new varieties of fruit that he, himself would create! He sent away to the Department of Agriculture for scientific pamphlets on fruit growing and land conditions. He ordered sapplings, and planted them and tended them with meticulous care.

### **Hated by Ranchers**

Sandoz and the other settlers put up fences and established homesteads, thus cutting off vast chunks of what had been free government land which the ranchers had used for running their cattle. The cattlemen hated the homesteaders, perhaps none so much as Jules Sandoz, whom the ranchers believed had single-handedly brought in the newcomers. The largest landholder in the region was Bartlett Richards, owner of the huge Spade Ranch. It was believed by Sandoz that Richards

carried on a personal vendetta against him.

Knowing there could be trouble, Sandoz was neither discouraged nor intimidated. He was an expert with guns—a deadeye shot—and he built and repaired guns for himself and his customers. He was determined to achieve his own goals.

While carrying on a running feud with the ranchers, Sandoz developed close ties with the old trappers and the Sioux from Pine Ridge who came through the area and visited in his home. Fluent in languages, Jules learned a little Sioux, but mainly carried on conversations with his friends in sign language. In later years, he described to Mari how appalled he was to visit the site of the massacre at Wounded Knee. This graphic description remained with Mari throughout her life.

A change came over Sandoz in the years between the time he left the University until the time he became Mari's father. No longer the immaculate dresser, he ceased to wash, cut his hair, or trim his beard. When he fell down a well and broke his ankle, due to a prank by friends, he would not let his mangled foot—left too long untreated—be removed. Ever afterward, it seeped a putrid-smelling yellow pus.

Always a man of violent, hair-trigger temper, he had three wives before he finally found one who would stay married to him. Mary Fehr, a native of Schwyz canton, Switzerland, became his wife in 1895. A year later, their first child, Marie, was born. (Note: She did not begin using "Mari" until she started publishing professionally, but, for the sake of consistency, I'll use

the latter spelling.)

Mari was the eldest of six children. As the new babies came along, three boys (Jules, James, and Fritz), and two girls (Flora and Caroline), it became Mari's job to tend the younger children. When Mari was six, her maternal grandmother, who had lived with the family, died. From then on, Mari was expected to take on more responsibility with cooking, and housework, while her mother worked in the fields, and took care of the livestock. Old Jules, always wrapped up in his own interests, experimented with grafting fruit trees, working on guns, and going hunting.

Jules spent hours reading and writing articles to the government publications to which he subscribed. (The articles later brought him fame among horticulturists—who called him the “Burbank of the Sandhills”—and from the University of Nebraska which elected him to the College of Agriculture Hall of Fame.)

#### **Father's violent temper**

From the time she was a tiny child, Mari experienced the effects of her father's violent temper. When she was three months old, he beat her senseless because she was crying. A few years later he broke her hand by hitting it with a chokecherry-tree club. Mari also watched as Old Jules, in a fit of temper, beat her mother with a whip made of wire fence stays. As a result of the beating, her mother attempted suicide by swallowing strychnine that Old Jules kept for poisoning wolves. At times such as these, Mari feared and hated Old Jules.

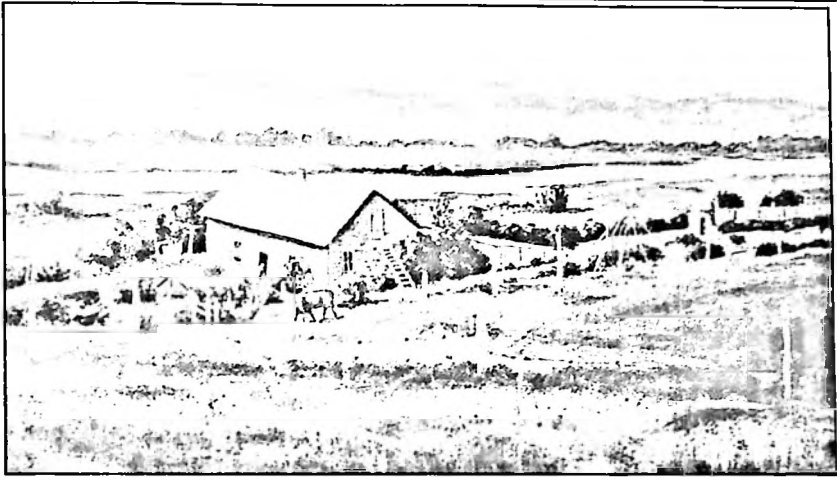
Despite his treachery and brutal ways, Old Jules opened a fascinating

world for Mari. He told her of the early days out on the Niobrara River, which he called by the Indian name, the Running Water. He talked of vigilante justice and feuds, of freighting, trapping, and tending to wounds. Because of his early training in medicine, he was even, at times, asked to deliver babies. As Old Jules fed her vivid imagination, Mari respected and loved this puzzling man.

When Mari was nine, she was finally allowed to start school, but there she found a language barrier. Her mother, from the German-speaking part of Switzerland, spoke only German, the language the family used in the home. Jules, from the French-speaking part of Switzerland, was multi-lingual, speaking French, German, English, and a smattering of other languages. By hearing her father talk with friends, Mari had picked up enough English to understand, but not to speak the language. Though ostracized by her schoolmates, who thought her stupid, she continued to work hard to learn. She was a bright pupil, and her teacher gave her extra help so she soon caught up with, and surpassed, other students her age.

Her schooling consisted of only a few months a year, because she was needed at home, a priority to which Old Jules adhered. Fortunately, a neighbor, who had a good collection of books, loaned Mari a steady supply of classical literature. Mari was careful to hide the books from her father, who thought reading fiction a waste of precious time; and, though she continued to write stories, she took pains to keep her father from knowing about it.

In 1904, the government



Jules' homestead in Nebraska

opened up additional land in the western plains region. This area in Nebraska was miles away from the Niobrara River, deeper into the sandhills, and more barren than Jules' first homestead. Yet, because the Kinkaid Act passed by Congress allowed 640 acres per claim, as compared to 160 allotted under Homestead Act, Jules decided to move his family to a "kinkaid." There was a small, ramshackle building on the claim, which he thought he could remodel into a house, so he began to take loads of lumber to the new place.

In the summer of Mari's thirteenth birthday, Old Jules took Mari and her ten-year-old brother, James, to the "kinkaid" and left them there to protect the lumber from being stolen. Leaving them a rifle, a shotgun, and ammunition, Jules assured them he would come over once a week with fresh supplies.

Mari was terrified at the prospect of being so far from home

without her parents to protect her and her little brother. She knew it was rattlesnake country. She knew it was snakebite here a few years earlier. It was a place where prairie fires exploded from lightning strikes or careless campers, for she had heard of two children who had died of suffocation while their parents were fighting flames. Perhaps what frightened her most was that the "kinkaid" was right next to the Spade Ranch boundary line.

Old Jules' brother, Emile, who had homesteaded in grazing range country, had been shot and killed by a gunman. Though it was never proved, the Sandoz family believed that the killer had been hired by the cattlemen. Mari reasoned that, because Bartlett Richards of the Spade was the most powerful cattleman in the region, he would plan to get rid of unwanted neighbors.

The summer turned out better

than Mari had envisioned. The only danger the children encountered was a prairie fire, which Mari and James survived, partly through the efforts of the Spade cowboys who plowed wide rows of ground for a firebreak. Mari remembered her father's instructions to not try to outrun a fire. As the fire neared, Mari took James to the firebreak, where they lay flat on the ground, with their faces in little air pockets in the soil.

The fall after Mari was fourteen, the family left the "river place" and moved to the "kinkaid." Young Jules was now thirteen, and James was eleven—both of them old enough to be substantial help in the fields and orchards, and with the livestock. Mari continued to be in charge of the younger children, who were now seven, three, and three months old. She also baked, cooked the meals, washed, ironed, and tended the house. Mari often felt overwhelmed by the amount of work, and was bored by the monotony. She longed to get away from home, and from her domineering father.

During the next few years, Mari, and the two older boys, attended school spasmodically. It was not until she was seventeen that she had completed enough work to graduate from eighth grade. She knew Old Jules would never consent to let her go to high school, so she did what she considered the next best thing.

Having read in the Hay Springs newspaper that an examination would be held for candidates for a rural teacher's certificate, she slipped off to Hay Springs to take the exam. When she received word that she had passed, she announced to her parents that she

was going to leave home and teach school. Old Jules replied that she could teach school at home, in their new barn.

After a year of teaching, under the watchful eye of Old Jules, Mari decided to marry Wray Macumber, a rancher who had been courting her. She was not in love with him, nor with the idea of marriage; she had watched her mother slave for Old Jules, and had seen the abuse her mother had taken. Mari did not want children of her own; she had had enough of tending babies. Yet, marriage was a way of getting out from under the thumb of Old Jules.

### **Married alcoholic**

The marriage was a disaster, because Macumber turned out to be an abusive alcoholic. Mari left him after five years, and return to her parents' home. Old Jules was happy to help her get a divorce, but her mother was mortified that Mari would leave a husband who had given her food and a roof over her head.

Realizing she could not remain at home and have the freedom to pursue a writing career, and determined to make a final break with her father, Mari left the sandhills and moved to Lincoln. She enrolled at a business college, and took a part time job as a "pill counter" at a pharmaceutical company. It was her, and other workers' jobs, to divide pills into packages. Though it was hourly pay, and stultifyingly monotonous. Mari took it as a challenge to see if she could out-package other pill counters.

Lincoln offered exciting opportunities to a young woman who had never before traveled farther east than Gordon, Nebraska. There were libraries, museums, art galleries, and

concerts, undreamed of in the remote sandhills region. Collections at the Nebraska Historical Society were of special interest to her for the insight they gave into the overall sweep of history of the Great Plains. Stories she had heard from Old Jules were put into perspective.

After a few years, when she found she could afford to cut her working hours to part time, she entered the University of Nebraska as a "special student." She signed up for classes in literature, Western history, and creative writing. Her favorite classes were in the English Department where Professor Louise Pound and a young instructor named Melvin Van Den Bark recognized her talent. They agreed that her strength was in writing about the life she knew, the West she had experienced.

One of her short stories, entitled "The Vine," was chosen as the lead story in the first issue of the campus literary magazine, *The Prairie Schooner*. After that success, Mari began to send her work to New York publishers, but the stories came back with comments such as, "too sordid" and "too depressing." What the New York editors wanted was the romanticized West, but Mari did not write pretty little pieces about handsome heroes and fluttery ladies.

She wrote about strong, tough, sometimes crude women and men who fought blizzards, drought, prairie fires, and often fought each other. Her characters were like people she had known. Though often depressed by the rejections, Mari refused to change her style of writing.

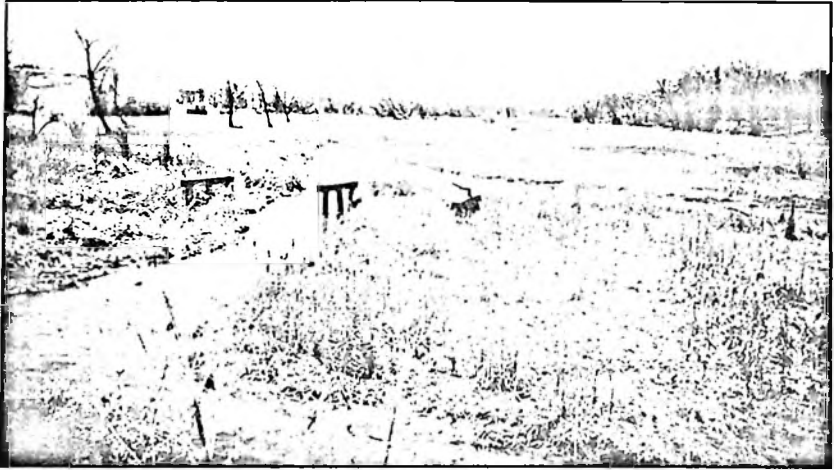
### First success

Continuing her courses at the University, Mari met a history professor named Fred Morrow Fling, who had pioneered in the source approach as a way of separating historical fact from hearsay. He had also devised an elaborate method of cross-indexing research files. After learning Dr. Fling's system, Mari began filing her three-by-five index cards in this way. In later years, when her work was concentrated more upon nonfiction writing, she sometimes used as many as thirty or forty cards for one page of research notes.

Gradually, Mari's short stories began to be accepted. Her first great success came in 1935, with her book, *Old Jules*, the story of her father. After thirteen rejections, and subsequent revisions of the manuscript, she had entered it in a contest sponsored by the Atlantic Press. Out of 582 entries in the nonfiction category, her manuscript won the prize, publication by Little, Brown, and Company. The winner's prize included \$5,000 from *Atlantic Monthly*. Mari received another \$5,000 when the book became the Book-of-the-Month Club selection for November of that year.

For years, Mari had fought to get away from her home and father. She had tried to escape by teaching, by marrying, and by moving to Lincoln. Yet, in order to achieve her dream of becoming a successful and important writer, she had to return to her native region, and to Old Jules for her inspiration.

Mari continued to stand up for her belief in writing about the real West. She fought with editors and publishers who wanted her to remove



Remnants of Jules' bridge over the Niobrara River

Western colloquialisms from her writing; she had runs-in with readers who objected to some of her language and the violence in her books. She kept on writing about intelligent, dynamic, capable women.

When commissioned by a woman's club of Lincoln to write a paper on "Women In Pioneer Literature," Mari came back to the group and told them that in researching the subject, the only references to women that she could find were stereotyped Indian princesses, dance hall girls, and "those mere bits of icing added for romantic interest."

Mari's second novel, *Slogum House*, was banned in McCook and Omaha. Another novel, *Capital City*, brought her threats and harassment in Lincoln from townspeople who thought she meant to cast an unfavorable light on the politics in their city.

As a precaution against retribution. Mari had the locks on her apart-

ment door changed. She also noted that some people crossed a street to avoid passing her on the sidewalk. Whether her decision to leave Lincoln and move to Denver in 1940 was influenced by her treatment in Lincoln is unknown. It is certain that she wanted to use the resources of the Denver Library Western History Department and the Colorado State Historical Society for researching the Oglala Sioux and the Cheyennes.

She took an apartment at the corner of Tenth and Sherman streets, and was quickly accepted into Denver's authors' community. Caroline Bancroft became a good friend, as did Thomas Hornsby Ferrill and his wife, Hellie. Other friends included Ruth Beebe Hill; Mary Chase; and Alan Swallow, then a professor at the University of Denver, and later publisher of Swallow Press.

After three years in Denver, Mari moved to New York to be closer to her publishers. There she developed

friendships with numerous writers. She was popular among her group of friends, but they knew that when Mari had her "Busy" sign on the door, she would not tolerate being disturbed.

Though she never returned to Nebraska to live, she made trips back to see her family and to do research. Adept at drawing, she made meticulous maps of the Great Plains region that she wrote about. She spent weeks on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud reservations interviewing old Indians, to whom she had personal introductions. She visited sites of the battles of which she later wrote.

In 1963, Mari's novel, *Cheyenne Autumn*, was made into a major motion picture. John Ford was director, and an all-star cast included James Stewart, Richard Widmark, Karl Malden, Sal Mineo, Delores Del Rio, Ricardo Montalban, John Carradine, Victor Jory, and Edward G. Robinson. Unfortunately, the screen writers turned Mari's powerful story of the flight of a small band of Cheyennes from the reservation to their homeland on the Yellowstone into Hollywood fluff. They rewrote the story, added characters, deleted others, and even put in a sappy scene with Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday. Mari was furious. It was her first and last experience with Hollywood.

During the last twelve years of her life, Mari fought a long, heroic battle with cancer. After each of her two mastectomies, she sat, bare to the waist, in front of an electric fan while she worked at her desk. She had read reports that, in Kansas in 1870, Colonel Grenville M. Dodge had ordered soldiers, with stubborn wounds, to sit

without shirts so the dry wind might heal the wounds.

Mari was in the process of finishing her last book, *The Battle of the Little Bighorn*, when she died in New York City in 1966. It was just a few weeks before her seventieth birthday. According to her wishes, her body was taken back to the sandhills of Nebraska, and buried on the hillside above Old Jules' apple orchards.

During her career, which spanned thirty years, Mari published nineteen books, both fiction and nonfiction, and hundreds of short stories and nonfiction articles. Following her death, two of her books were published by her sister, Caroline Sandoz Pipher. Many scholars believe that Mari's nonfiction Great Plains Series is her finest body of work. The books include *Old Jules*, *Crazy Horse*, *Cheyenne Autumn*, *The Buffalo Hunters*, *The Cattlemen*, and *The Beaver Men*. She had envisioned a final book in the series dealing with the oil industry. Though she had researched the subject, she had not started writing the book.

Some historians criticized Mari's use of fictional techniques in her Indian books and in *Old Jules*. They contended that the books should be called "novels" instead of "biographies." Mari dismissed her critics by stating that it doesn't matter what an author calls a book, as long as the book is good enough to keep the reader turning pages.

Mari received many honors and awards during her lifetime. She was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame, awarded an honorary doctorate of literature by the University of Nebraska, and received the National

Achievement Award from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. Theta Sigma Phi, National Fraternity for Women in Journalism, gave her the Headliner Award in 1957; the following year she became an honorary life member of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

In 1961, the National Cowboy Hall of Fame presented her the Western Heritage Award for her nonfiction article, "The Look of the Last Frontier." In 1963, Western Writers of America awarded her the Spur Award for best Western juvenile book, *The Story Catcher*. This book also won the prestigious Levi Strauss Golden Saddleman Award (now called the Owen Wister Award) for best Western novel. In 1964, *The Beaver Men* received the "Oppie" award for best book of the year in the category of Americana.

### **First woman Westerner**

Westerners International gave Mari important recognition. In 1955, she won the Westerners National Achievement Award for of the cultural background of the American West. In 1958, the Chicago Corral polled all posses across the country to choose the "100 Best Books of the American West." Sandoz had four books on the list, more than any other author. These books were *Old Jules*, *Crazy Horse*, *Cheyenne Autumn*, and *The Buffalo Hunters*. That same year, the New York Posse presented Mari the Annual Buffalo Award of the New York Westerners for *The Cattlemen*.

After Mari became the first woman member of Westerners, founder Leland Case explained that, in the beginning, Westerners was strictly a

men's organization, because it was felt that women tended to make a corral a social club. It was, however, perfectly proper to include Mari Sandoz, since she was a "real pro."

I believe Mari Sandoz is exceptional among writers of the American West. First of all, she was born on the frontier, and grew up there. Her father was a frontiersman, who brought new homesteaders to the region, and who turned his own land into a fruit-growing oasis in the sandhills. Mari wrote about the people and the life she knew.

Secondly, Mari was exceptional because she bucked the system. She waged an uphill battle to get her work accepted by New York publishers; and, later, fought a running campaign against editors who wanted to soften the harshness and cruelty in her writing, and to rewrite her Western colloquialisms.

Thirdly, Mari was courageous and innovative. She was not afraid to write nonfictional accounts of the Great Plains from the Indian point of view. One of the earliest writers to take this position, she used the Indian approach of looking at life from the outside in, rather than from the inside out. She also incorporated the verbal cadences of the Sioux and Cheyenne languages into her writing. Her accounts of, and stories about, women were another area where she forged her own way beyond the established norm.

As Mari revered the past, she felt a great concern for the future. In *Love Song to the Plains*, she expressed her fear for what the future might bring. She stressed that man must not clutter



the sky with "mechanical monsters." The Western view must remain of daytime skies of depthless blue, and nights filled with millions of stars "scarcely beyond arm's reach."

### Books by Mari Sandoz

*Old Jules*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1935.

*Slogum House*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1937.

*Capital City*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1939.

*Crazy Horse: The Strange Man of the Oglalas*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942.

*Foal of Heaven*. (Published posthumously.) Gordon, Nebraska: Caroline S. Pifer, 1993.

*The Tom-Walker*. New York: Dial Press, 1947.

*Winter Thunder* (unabridged version of *The Lost School Bus*.) Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1945.

*Cheyenne Autumn*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953.

*The Buffalo Hunters: The Story of the Hide Men*. New York: Hastings House, 1954.

*Miss Morrissa: Doctor of the Gold Trail*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955.

*The Horsecatcher*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1957.

*The Cattlemen: From the Rio Grande Across the Far Marias*. New York: Hastings House, 1958.

*Hostiles and Friendlies: Selected Writings of Mari Sandoz*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1959.

*Son of the Gambler Man: The Youth of an Artist*. New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1960.

*These Were the Sioux*. New York: Hastings House, 1961.

*Love Song to the Plains*. New York:

Harper and Row, 1961.

*The Story Catcher*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963.

*The Beaver Men: Spearheads of Empire*. New York: Hastings House, 1964.

*Old Jules Country: A Selection From Old Jules and Previously Unpublished Works*. New York: Hastings House, 1965.

*The Battle of the Little Bighorn*. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1966.

*The Christmas of the Phonograph Records*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966.

*The Cottonwood Chest and Other Stories* (Published posthumously ) Edited by Caroline Sandoz Pifer, Mari Sandoz Corporation. Crawford, Nebraska: Cottonwood Press, 1980.

## Over the Corral Rail

Westerner **John Dailey**, according to an article and photograph in the Nov. 24, 1999 issue of *The Denver Post*, has been appointed by Gov. Bill Owens to the Colorado Court of Appeals. Dailey has been in the Attorney General's office since 1978. He will serve an eight-year term.

Westerner **Frances Melrose** gives a very favorable review of fellow Westerner **Tom Noel's** new guide, *The Montclair Neighborhood*, in the Dec. 5, 1999 edition of *The Rocky Mountain News*, calling it, "this fine little book offering a slice of Denver History."

Please send items of interest to Jim Krebs, Editor.  
Jim's contact information is on page 2.



## Westerners Bookshelf



**More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Oregon Women**, by Gayle C. Shirley. Falcon Publishing, Helena, Montana, 1998. 139 pages, index, bib. photographs. Paper, \$9.95.

The history of the American West moved into the area of women's studies in the 1960s and 1970s. It has since developed into a fertile field of publication, plowing up stories of individual accomplishment and uncommon bravery. Gayle C. Shirley started her *More Than Petticoats* series in 1995 with her stories of women in Montana. She added another volume about women in Washington and has now offers us those from Oregon. The series offers readers an appetizer of stories of women's impact on the development of the West.

More than a quarter of a million Americans crossed the continental United States between 1840 and 1870 in one of the greatest migrations of modern times. The men of the rugged frontier have become an integral part of our history and folklore, but pioneering was, in fact, a family matter, and the westering experiences of American women are central to an accurate picture of what life was like on the frontier.

Shirley gives us an entertaining, brief look at some of the influential female characters that left their imprint on the development of Oregon. Mary Leonard, one of Oregon's first female lawyers, found herself on both sides of the law. There is the almost unbelievable survival story of Tabitha Moffat Brown traveling across the continent in 1846 at the age of 66, losing all her belongings en

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...Shirley limited her search to those born before 1900...

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route. She opened an orphanage that would grow to become Pacific University. Abigail Scott Duniway traveled west with her family and became a newspaper editor in Oregon, fighting for women's suffrage. Governor Oswald West called Abigail the "architect of woman's suffrage in Oregon" when the state became the ninth to give women the vote. Abigail cast her first vote at the age of seventy-eight. Some of the profiles Shirley chose accomplished less physical feats. Hazel Hall was confined to a wheel chair, but published some highly praised poetry.

To help cull down her choices to her chosen number of 10, Shirley limited her search to those born before 1900. She then chose a cross section of those making their marks in fields as diverse as medicine, law, writing, business and even a university founder. Shirley uses some autobiographical information kept by these historical figures, but relies mainly on secondary sources and articles written by others about her subjects. The stories are entertaining and a good short read but only

gives us a glimpse of the lives of some ordinary and extraordinary women of the early days of Oregon.

A more comprehensive look and analysis of the impact of women on the opening of the western United States can be found in Lillian Schlissel's *Women 's Diaries of the Westward Journey*. The book presents stories of the flesh-and-blood women on the Overland Trail. Although she believes that the two sexes saw the overland trek with different eyes, her method in this book has not been simply to draw conclusions or to drive home her argument. Rather, the great value of the book is that it permits the reader to experience through the writings of more than a hundred women what it was like to make the trip across the continent to Oregon or California between 1840 and 1870.

--Barbara Gibson, C.M.

**Expedition To The Southwest - An 1845 Reconnaissance of Colorado, New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma**, by Lieutenant James William Abert. Introduction by H. Bailey Carroll, new introduction by John Miller Morris. The University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Neb., 1999. 133 pp., Illustration, map, index. \$10.00 paper.

It is certainly difficult to imagine traveling in a world with no maps or prior knowledge as to topography, no labels on rivers or established roads. This journal requires the reader to place themselves back into such a world in 1845, as the U.S. and Mexico were drawing close to war over Texas. The government mounted expeditions to look at these areas with James William Abert undertaking such a journey from Bent's Fort through Raton Pass then east through present-day New Mexico, Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle. The mapping portion of the trip ended at Fort Gibson with the troupe finally ending up at St. Louis. This wholly took from August to November and was undertaken on mule and in wagon train.

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...imagine traveling in a world with no maps or prior knowledge as to topography...

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This was previously published in 1941 in a volume of the *The Panhandle Plains Historical Review* and featured extensive footnotes by West Texas regional historian H. Bailey. These footnotes are interesting (and frankly account for at least half of the text). but at times get rather tedious as Bailey Carroll endeavors to explain everything (ex. "For further information on the killdeer plover see Audubon. *The Bird of America*".)

Abert is a keen observer of nature which is interesting. but may not be of much interest to the casual reader. Still, there are fascinating descriptions of a hailstorm, an encounter with a herd of buffalo and the many Indian tribes met on the trip. Perhaps of interest is that Carroll disputes every longitudinal reading as being off by a few miles from the actual site. Generally the trip followed the Canadian River. This is a short and enjoyable journey to the past for the Westerner.

--George W. Krieger DDS, P.M.

**Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth**, by Kristen Iversen. Johnson Books, Boulder, Colorado. 1999. 320 pages, black and white photographs. Cloth, \$30; paper, \$18.

With a foreword by Muffet Brown, this book strives to give the story of the real Margaret Tobin Brown. Molly Brown, as we know her. The book opens with Margaret Tobin Brown on the deck of the Titanic and takes us through her day into that fatal evening onboard, when the ship hit an iceberg. At 12 midnight, Capt. Edward Smith yelled, "Uncover the lifeboats". Margaret dressed quickly and with foresight, put seven pairs of woolen stockings on in preparation. She climbed to Deck A and met her friend, Emma Bucknell. At 12:45 a.m. the first of eight distress rockets was fired. Five minutes later another was fired and noted by two members of the ship, The Californian, who decided that it was nothing important.

The story continues in the lifeboat where Margaret thanked God that her daughter, Helen, had stayed in Paris. Her face and hands were numb as well as her legs, which were in icy water. After rescue by the Carpathian, Margaret used her resources to help the poorer women on board. Her brother Daniel met her upon her arrival in New York and helped her start the Survivor's Committee. Much is written about the Titanic and the difficulties encountered during the evacuation and after-

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...sets to rest the many rumors and innuendos about "Molly" Brown...

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wards. Although Margaret died in 1932, two highly fictionalized stories of her life surfaced the same year. Gene Fowler's book, *Timberline*, and Caroline Bancroft's book, *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*, came to be accepted as fact. The MGM movie of 1964, promoted Molly Brown in the eyes of the public.

The "real" Margaret Tobin Brown was born in Hannibal, MO on July 18, 1867 to John and Johanna Tobin. Until the age of 13 or so, she attended school and in 1886, her brother Daniel sent money to Margaret and her sister Helen to come to Leadville, CO. She soon tired of keeping house for her brother and got a job with Daniels, Fisher, & Smith in the carpet and drapery department. She was remembered years later by co-workers as a good worker.

In Leadville she met James Joseph Brown, 13 years her senior. On Sept. 1, 1886, they were married in Annunciation Church in Leadville. They moved into J.J.'s cabin on Iron Hill. One of their goals was to be better educated in literature and the arts. Their first child, Lawrence Palmer, was born in Hannibal, MO, and their daughter Catherine Ellen, nicknamed, "Helen", was born in Leadville.

The story continues on with J.J.'s reputation as a top mining authority and led to his investment as a minor stockholder in the Ibez Mining Co. When Pres. Cleveland repealed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act in 1893, panic struck. Many left town, but the farsighted Ibez mining company re-opened, looking for gold, and found it in the No. 1 shaft of the Little Johnny Mine. With J.J. Brown as superintendent, 135 tons of gold ore per day were shipped and the company paid \$1 million in

dividends. J.J. was rewarded with 12,500 shares of Ibex stock. In April of 1894, they moved to 1340 Pennsylvania Avenue in Denver.

Although they were listed in the Social register from 1894 to the early 1920s, they were still excluded from the sacred "thirty six". Margaret worked with Judge Benjamin Lindsey to establish the first Juvenile Court in the county. She became active in the Denver Women's Club and in 1896, she became an associate member of the Denver Women's Press Club as well. Members of the Denver Country Club, J.J. also enjoyed male benefits of the Denver Athletic Club. He was philanthropic in his own way. At the age of 46 years, J.J. was exhausted and transferred the Denver house to Margaret. They moved to Ireland where they tried to put their differences in their marriage behind them. After a year they returned to Denver. Through the years, the relationship between them deteriorated as J.J. became more distant, they separated. Margaret continued with her charities and was recognized by the French government receiving the French Legion of Honor for her work in WWI. In 1909 and 1911 Margaret made a "run" for the Senate of the U.S. The beginning of WWI changed her mind but she looked forward to running after the war. She went to Paris to help with the American ambulance system. In 1922, J.J. died and settling of the estate brought a division between Margaret and her children. She continued to do fund raising and to study and teach acting, (her passion), from 1930 to 1932. At this time she complained of headaches and she died of a brain tumor. She left her money to her family. Margaret's home "The House of Lions" was purchased by Historic Denver in 1964 and is restored as a museum today. This is a book that is long overdue and sets to rest the many rumors and innuendos about "Molly" Brown. Dr. Iversen has identified the real Margaret Tobin Brown.

*--Dolores Ebner, C.M.*

**Chimayo Weaving: The Transformation of a Tradition** by Helen R. Lucero and Suzanne Baizerman. The University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1999. 8 x 10, 256 pages, 96 color plates, 109 half tones, 2 maps, cloth, \$80.00, paper \$39.95.

The weaving tradition of northern New Mexico has been an intrinsic part of the culture of the people who migrated from the late 1500s along the Rio Grande River into what is now New Mexico and southern Colorado. The roots for this craft can be traced back to Spain and the period of Moorish influence combined with the influence of indigenous Indian Cultures of the new world and goods imported from the Far East.

The primary thrust of this work is to study the Rio Grande Hispanic weaving tradition from 1870 to present.

Starting in approximately 1870, the relative self-sufficient Hispanic village culture was being forced to shift to the cash economy of the rest of the United

States. It was during this period that commercially prepared yarns and chemically manufactured dyes became available.

With the area formally becoming a part of the United States, the Anglo influence both good and bad was felt by the Hispanic people. From this pressure the maintenance of language and craft became essential to their cultural survival.

By the turn of the century, the rise of tourism in the Southwest, with its attendant interest in collecting curios, created a new market for weaving. Curio dealers from primarily Santa Fe contracted with weavers through out northern New Mexico and southern Colorado to create pieces to fill the need of the tourist and curio industry. This created cash for the Hispanic population and gave rise to what has become known as "Chimayo Weaving". The term Chimayo rises from the name of the village which was and continues to be the center of weaving activity.

For a period, since this weaving was a new non-Hispanic market, guided by contractors to fill a need for the Anglo view of Native Americans, the product was held in low esteem. Consequently, little attention was paid to the art of this period.

The influx of Anglo artists in the 1920s drew some of the local weavers into the fine art market. While much of this influence could be considered paternalistic, the Anglo interest invigorated the craft and pride of the Hispanic weavers.

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...of value to the  
academic community  
and the serious  
afficionado...

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During World War II because of the demands placed on Hispanic men to serve in the armed forces or related industry, many women entered the craft. The return of tourism following the war again spurred the weaving industry to new levels. Similarly, social activism, and increased interest in crafts brought heightened Anglo support efforts

reflected by government programs, art fairs, and gallery and museum exhibitions. Lastly, the New Mexican Hispanic people themselves have grown to recognize Mexican and Native American contributions to their history separate from a European-Spanish ancestry.

To illustrate the transitional trends of Chimayo weaving the authors traced the weaving traditions of three families: the Ortegas of Chimayo, the Trujillos of Chimayo and the Martinezes of Mendanales.

This volume proceeds with an excellent discussion of the technical aspects of weaving tools, materials, styles and design characteristics. The conclusion is a scholarly summary of the "transition of the tradition."

This book is of value to both the academic community and to the serious aficionado of Southwestern cultures. The color plates illustrating the various phases of Chimayo weaving are fantastic.

--Bob Stull, P.M.

#### Correction

*My computer made a mistake! Please note: On page 9 of the July/Aug issue, in the second paragraph of the second column, the cost should read \$90,000.00. It is listed correctly on pages 10 and 11. This was changed once, but somehow the computer forgot that byte.*

**Holding Stone Hands - On The Trail Of The Cheyenne Exodus** by Alan Boye. The University Of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Neb. 1999. 347 pp. 9 photos, map. \$29.95 cloth.

Reading an historical fact conveys the actuality of the event, but cannot possibly convey the emotion and hardships surrounding that fact. This book seeks to color in the pain and sorrow associated with the 1000-mile flight of around 300 Northern Cheyenne from Indian Territory in Oklahoma. The author backpacked from Ft. Reno in mid-Oklahoma through the states of Kansas and Nebraska retracing the route followed by Dull Knife in 1878 while trying to lead his people back to their traditional home. While Boye's trip basically ends at Ft. Robinson in northwest Nebraska (with a small foray into South Dakota), he does touch on the further trip of Little Wolf further north to Montana.

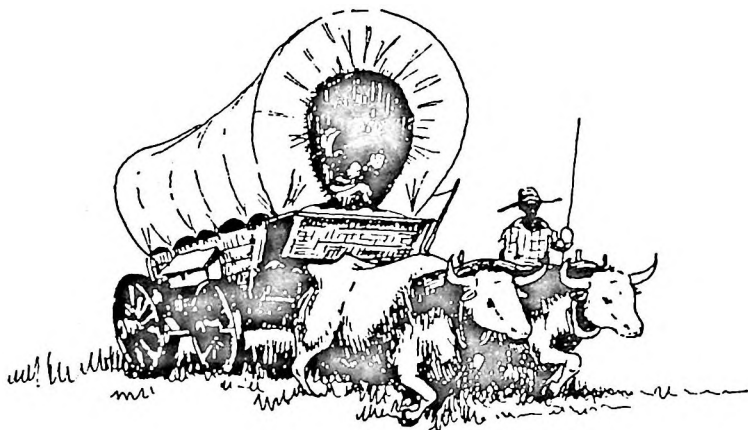
This is a wonderful book with well-written passages that evoke feelings, not simply facts. "Someone enters the restaurant. She is a doughy woman, her plumpness not disguised by the ill-fitting dark dress suit she wears... Her eyes immediately seek mine. They are the eyes of a frightened deer, about to fight for its life against a pack of wild dogs."

Essentially this is composed of three books the reader follows simultaneously. The history of the 1878 event is spelled out while the author recounts his own walk plus any feelings and encounters that they evoke. The events that occurred in 1878 are pieced together from several sources and are made to feel as fact though some is perhaps speculation. This is one of two small gripes this reader had with the book. The other gripe is that when the author encounters Indians along the way (he walks with a few of Dull Knife's descendants) he falls into the *Dances With Wolves* trap of "Indians are wise and noble, white men are foolish and evil." Neither gripe, however, spoils the enjoyment of this fine book. In fact, the author addresses the fact that many know history only through the eyes of what is shown them in movies like *Dances With Wolves*—a scary thought.

Walking across three states, with roads, freeze-dried food and proper walking shoes, is a monumental task ("Except for rattlesnakes, tornadoes, and lack of water, the greatest danger in this wilderness is my own self-doubt"). It truly is remarkable to imagine what the Northern Cheyenne had to endure making the same trek in 1878. The author seeks to put the reader in a world uncluttered by bits of man's (in)humanity—no candy wrappers or fast-food cups stuck to the fences wiring the prairie.

Boye gets a PG rating for a couple of salty words uttered by his companions, but they also contribute some telling documentary. "What happened to us nearly wiped out an entire race. What happened to the Cheyenne people no one ever cried over, but it's the same as that bomb in Oklahoma City."

--George W. Krieger, DDS, P.M.

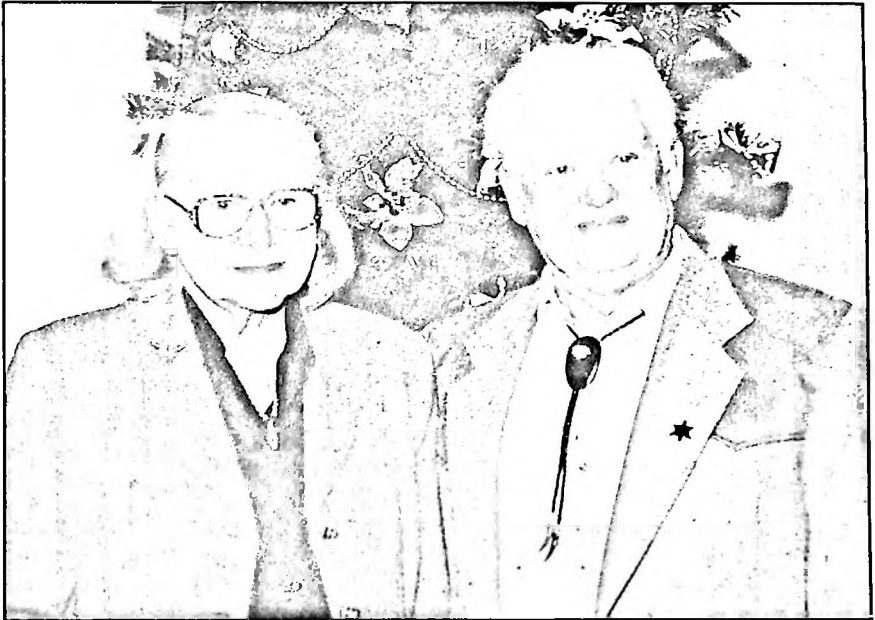






*The* DENVER WESTERNERS  
**ROUNDUP**

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1999



**C.R. "Bob" & Florence Staadt  
Rosenstock Lifetime Achievement Award  
1999**

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*Feature paper*  
**Como and the Tenderfoot**  
by  
**Bob Lane, P.M.**  
(Presented November 24, 1999)



# THE DENVER WESTERNERS ROUNDUP

VOL. LV NO. 6



November - December 1999

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## About the Author

Bob Lane has been a Posse Member since July 1989. He served as the "Keeper of the Possibles Bag" for 7 years. In 2000, Bob is the Denver Posse's Deputy Sheriff. He has presented four previous papers to the Denver Posse, the last being on the U.S. Army 25th Infantry bicycle Corps in 1998.

Bob is a native of Denver and a graduate of South High. He served in the Navy in the South Pacific during the end of the Vietnam War.

His historical interests include preserving historical trails in the Rocky Mountains. He is a long-time member of the Colorado Assoc. of Four Wheel Drive Clubs, where he volunteers many hours towards trail restoration.

Bob lives in Aurora with his wife, Pat.

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# Como and the Tenderfoot

by

**Bob Lane, P.M.**

(Presented November 24, 1999)



*My Latest Portrait  
A Very Sincerely Yours,  
G.W. McPherson*

Courtesy of Yonkers Publishing

**Dr. George McPherson**

Those fortunate to talk or listen to Dr. McPherson left with the feeling that to know him was to know the truth. Honor him for his fairness and dread him for the keenness of his blade.

George McPherson grew up in the valley of the Margaree Range on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, with a very large family, fourteen siblings, ten brothers and four sisters.

His father, Norman, was a hard working farmer with no more than a fourth grade education. Yet he was able to quote any Bible passage you asked for. This astounded many theologians who tested his ability many times, when he was called upon to settle a dispute about a passage in the Bible, and yet he claimed no religious denomination. His mother Sarah was a sizable woman with many ambitions and a

deep religious belief in the Baptist community.

While work was plentiful on the island, George had a yearning to leave the island in search of adventure in the United States. His older siblings had left earlier, in hopes of opportunity and to some day attend college. But it was not long before each one returned with unfavorable words about living in the United States or elsewhere in Canada. But this did not stop George from wanting to try his luck too.

After receiving blessings from his family and friends, George left the Mackeene Valley, by wagon, to the Strait of Canso, 70 miles away. Here he had to board a train. George stood on the platform with great anticipation of seeing a train for the first time. The sound of the whistle blowing and the steam shooting out the sides as it pulled in fascinated him. He had never boarded a train before and was hesitant at first, so he watched while others climbed aboard before he took his turn.

As the train pulled away bound for St. John, it started to squeak and shake from side to side. The combination of the dirty pullman car full of crying children, sickly old couples and a thick hazy concoction of cigar, pipe and cigarette smoke caused George to have his first bout of train sickness. By the time he reached his destination he could barely hold his head up.

The stop at St. John left no time for rest, as he had to catch a ferry and cross a river to board his next train bound for Boston and Gloucester, Massachusetts.

As he reached the station, a train started to pull out. He quickly boarded thinking he was heading for

Boston: Six miles out the conductor asked George for his ticket, at which time he was informed he was on the St. Stevens train going to southern New Brunswick. The conductor told George he could get off at the next stop and wait for the next train heading to Boston. Not knowing how long it would be, he decided to walk back to St. John following the railroad tracks. It was not long before the weight of his duffel and the hot sun bearing down on his back made the walk exhausting. He made it back just in time to take a short rest and have a sparse meal in a grungy, run-down coffee shop.

Soon after the train for Boston arrived, he boarded and in no time was on his way. There was little chance of sleeping through the night with all the noise and filth. He arrived in Gloucester early the next morning, where he made his way to a friends' home to stay for a few days to rest his weary bones.

While staying in Gloucester, George secured odd jobs day and night. His worst job was working for a dairy farmer seventeen hours a day. After a month he saved enough money to quit the dairy and book passage back home.

George stayed home the next two years to work for his father. He was now nineteen years old and getting restless again, as he listened to his brother David talk through the winter about the prosperity and mining activity happening in Colorado. At one time David was a conductor for the Southern division of the Union Pacific Railroad in Colorado. The stories he told excited George enough to convince him to go to Colorado. It was decided that the following spring he would travel to the

Rocky Mountains thinking this is where he might find his calling.

Poor as Job's turkey and needing traveling money, he asked David if he would loan him money with the understanding it would be repaid as quickly as possible. Not only did David pay George's fares but he decided to travel with him back to Colorado.

It was late spring and time to leave. After saying their goodbyes to family and friends they embarked on a long and difficult trip via Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Oklahoma and finally arriving in Denver in the summer of 1878.

The "Queen City of the Plains" was a prospering young city, but neither brother was interested in staying in Denver.

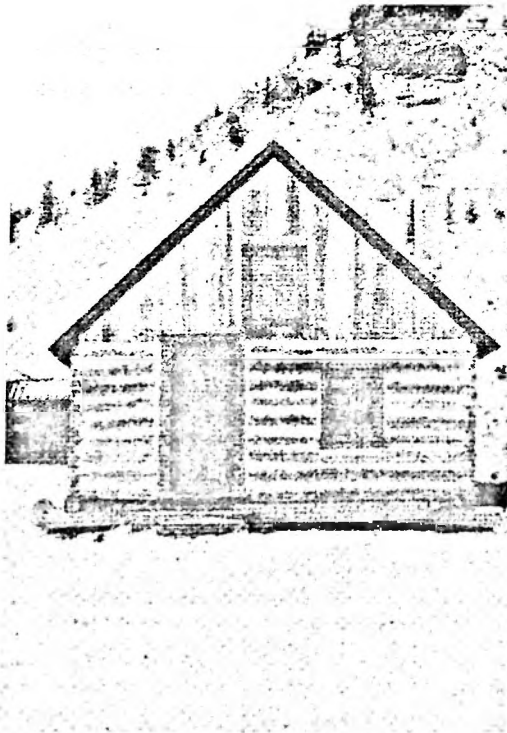
Their sights were set on the mining camps and towns scattered about the central Rocky Mountains. The brothers went to Union Station and paid fare on the Southern Division of the Union Pacific Railroad. Soon they were heading towards the entrance to the South Platte Canyon. The ride through the canyon was a harrowing experience for a first-time passenger. A twisting narrow canyon and at the same time a wondrous view of layered rock and sediment passed by as the train shook from side to side. Passengers stepped from side to side trying to get a glimpse of the hillsides. The loftier peaks showed large tracts of spruce, hemlock and pine, while the South Platte River provided a rich color of stones lining the river bed. The continuous rocking motion caused some passengers to become nauseated and soon they began to "feed the fish". By now George and his brother were

accustomed to the motion of a train and had overcome their train sickness.

Their first stop was a small shipping station called Grant, located sixty-five miles southwest of Denver at the mouth of Geneva Gulch, which happened to be the entrance to the Geneva Park Trail (later renamed Guanella Pass.) This is where the brothers parted. George knew a friend from Margaree named John Crowdis who lived in Grant, and he decided to get off and visit him to see about procuring work. David stayed on the train until he reached Leadville.

Grant was a small community, roughly a dozen cabins scattered about the hillsides and gulches. The little hamlet contained a general merchandise store stocked with the latest dry goods, as well as hay and grain. A small saloon at the back supported the thirsty men late into the night.

George secured work, but it was a very difficult place for him to make even a modest living. His co-workers made light of the young Scotsman each evening as he entered the general store to pick up his mail. Some men perched on the bar swinging their grimy boots and taking delight at inviting George to "drink with the boys". Comments were, "Ha 'Tenderfoot', come on old bum, and have a drink," or "Come, Colonel, have one on me." Other favorites were "Hello old stocking, let's get thick" and "Tenderfoot, come and get initiated." This continuous jolting put him in a difficult situation. The brash and undisciplined men were almost too much for him to withstand. He knew it was impossible to explain to the men why he would not



*Courtesy of Yonkers Publishing*

### Schoolhouse at Webster

indulge in such drinking, as they would never understand.

This refusal to socialize also made it difficult for him to hold a steady job. No one was willing to hire him.

All the heckling convinced George it was time to speak to the men about their terrible habits of gambling, drinking and their vile mouths running amuck. George had been talking to his friend John Crowdis about his dilemma, and asked for his advice. He replied, "Don't you get off on your religious craze here. If you stay at Grant we'll

take it all out of you. You come and have a drink with the boys and then you will get plenty of work, and that means plenty of money." He went on to say. "It pays to drink here and be one of the fellows. I drink occasionally with them because it pays." George replied, "I prefer poverty and a tramp existence to whiskey. Whiskey is a synonym for hell." This puritanical attitude only increased his loneliness. He began to think about returning to Cape Breton Island where there was a more sociable climate to his liking.

Even though George was neither a licensed preacher or a Layman, he still felt compelled to speak to the unruly men about their disgusting habits. After giving it plenty of thought, he was ready to test his inner spirit. It was time to deliver a sermon to the poor misguided men. George took a short trip up the canyon to Webster in hopes of securing a place to conduct his sermon. He

went to the superintendent of the school and asked if he could use the tiny one-room schoolhouse on the following Sabbath. He was surprised that the superintendent agreed so easily. George knew if he backed out now, he would be considered a coward and laughed out of town in disgrace. He was also keenly aware it was better to be beaten and get the respect one needed in such an unsavory place, than be known as a coward.

The notice that a "Tenderfoot" was going to preach to the men of Grant and Webster the following

Sunday generated a great deal of interest up in the canyons and gulches. By Saturday night, George was so nervous he stayed awake most of the night thinking about what he should say to not make a fool out of himself.

The morning sun began to shine across the tops of the trees, and George was no closer to knowing what he was going to talk about than he was several hours earlier. For starters, he'd never "Bible-thumped" before. But he concluded that if his "sermon" saved one person, then it would be worth the effort.

All the sawmills and prospect holes from Geneva Gulch to Webster and up Hall Valley fell silent that morning. Two kinds of spirits were gathering at the tiny schoolhouse: one spiritual and the other liquid.

It was time for George to head to Webster, so he "loped" up on a bronco and preceded up the wagon trail while a small group of men followed serenading him. A train of Rocky Mountain Canaries might have carried a better tune.

The time was nearing as the men stood by waiting for the young "tenderfoot" to arrive. There were so many people working their way to Webster, it looked as if a holiday had been declared. Every bronco in the valley was used. Three push carts were put into service to carry those who had no transportation. By the time he arrived, George had decided to talk to the men about Jonah.

As George approached the tiny schoolhouse, the men standing out front were waving their hats and cheering. Some shouted, "Welcome, Dominie! Come Dominie!" It looked more like a

party was taking place then a sermon about to begin. George worked his way to the front and sat down behind the teacher's desk. He took a deep breath, said a silent prayer, and then looked out over the men. It was the poorest sight he had ever seen. Every seat was taken. It was standing room only. Those not able to be inside strained to look through the windows. George knew if the women of Boston were here to see this unruly group of men, they would be shocked at their appearance. The smell of alcohol and tobacco juice permeated the crowded room. They were rough looking men, some with deep scars and long beards dripping with tobacco juice and missing teeth. Their clothes were so tattered and filthy you could see dirt fall to the floor with every movement. Some men tried to look presentable by combing their greasy hair. Thankfully, George did not care how one was dressed. The message could still be heard.

Before he rose to utter a word, outbursts of laughter and snide remarks came from the back. George said another prayer, then rose to greet the men. "Gentlemen," he said. "I thank you for coming to this service, and believing that you have reverence for things that are religious. I congratulate myself on the fact that you will, like true men, give me your respectful attention."

He started off with a well known hymn, thinking maybe a few miners might know it. Much to his surprise, and with great fanfare, most of the men sang along while others followed the person next to them thinking they knew the words. Another prayer was offered, he then began his

“flea in one’s ear” talk. It was not long before he was interrupted with such shouts as, “Good!” “Amen!” “Jehu!” “Moses!” “Good boy, Dominic!” “Wonderful, divine!” Others shouted, “Give it to them straight,” “By Alic, I’m hit!” and so forth.

By this time some of the men had fallen to the influence of the snake oil, and started to drop one by one to the floor.

It was clear by now it would be impossible to conduct a meaningful sermon while several men were face down on the floor, and the rest were holding each other up. But if he had quit, then he would have been branded a coward and would never be able to look another muckman in the eye again. He concluded the talk and pronounced the benediction. After everyone had cleared the room, George sat at the desk asking himself if it was really worth it. He decided the best thing to do was never work in such a place as Grant again. When he got back he gathered his belongings and returned to Webster.

Webster was another small shipping station for the Union Pacific Railroad. Webster Pass routed supplies up Hall Valley to Montezuma. Unfortunately, George’s stay in Webster was no better and just as short. The over-indulgence of the boisterous men was more than he could bear. Fortunately, at the same time, the Union Pacific Railroad wired him to proceed to Como and work at wiping engines and cleaning cars.

By 1879 Como had become the headquarters for the South Park Division of the Union Pacific Railroad, complete with a roundhouse and machine shop. With a population of

about seven hundred, Como supported no less than seven gin mills and as many gambling dens, with an equal number of sporting houses. In spite of all this, Como was known as a small, summer resort, located eighty-three miles southwest of Denver, sitting at the base of the Mosquito Range near the northwest corner of the South Park Plateau.

George’s dwelling was a tiny dugout located in a half-excavated side of a knoll, and was constructed out of rough logs and slabs. His furniture was modest, consisting of a two-foot-square table, a small board bed, tiny sheet-iron stove, one chair, and a kerosene lamp. His only companion that didn’t swear or ask him to drink, was a barking squirrel, (prairie dog) which came out to visit in hopes of receiving a handout. Since boarding would have cost him as much as \$40 a month, he had to be content with his dugout. He affectionately described it as, “small, but the atmosphere is always fresh, for there are an abundance of cracks in the roof through which the stars twinkle down at me through the rare crisp mountain air.”

As time went on, George continued to refuse quaffing with the boys from the roundhouse just as he had with the miners at Webster and Grant.

One evening Joe Torrence, a co-worker, said to George, “You will soon be tipping over the bar with the rest of the fellows. I guess you are a Christian. But you know Christianity does not work in these mountains. Some of these hypocrites who tried to convert me when they first arrived are now drinking with the rest of us.” He





*Courtesy of Yonkers Publishing*

### Corner tent revival in New York City.

went on to say, "There are no Christians in this state. Men come here for money, and they either leave their religion at home, or quickly part with it. They can pick it up when they return. At any rate it seems that Christians nowadays put on and off their religion like their clothes. I hope you are not a Christian."

A few days later at work, Dan Leonard, the railroad foreman, called George into his office and proceeded to inform him that he would be working on Sundays like the rest of the men. George explained to Leonard that Sunday is the day to worship and give thanks to the Lord. Leonard replied, "You must work or quit. You must do as the rest do." Even though the latter choice was grim, it did not stop George. When Sunday arrived he remained in his tiny dugout quietly resting and reading his Bible.

That same day, he decided it was time to speak to the poor, misguided citizens of Como. George spoke

to the school superintendent at Como, and was granted permission to use the tiny one-room schoolhouse for his Sunday night sermon. A few days before his speech he took a survey of the entire town to ascertain its religious bent. The results were disappointing. He found only a family of Presbyterians from Nova Scotia claiming to be church members. It was clear the family was religious in name only. They politely refused to attend his service and instead offered him a shot of whiskey. When George politely refused, the father turned to his young daughter and said, "Here Maggie, take this can and 'rush the growler' for me (go to the saloon for some beer)."

The news of young McPherson going to preach to the good people of Como, and having the nerve to even think of speaking out about religion, was the most sensational news about town. The main topic in the gambling halls, hotels, saloons, and even the

sporting houses was that "a preaching was being held in the schoolhouse by the young 'Tenderfoot' McPherson." Some co-workers saw fit to wag their tongues saying things like "Just think of it, we are to be favored by a sermon right here in this gambling center and that by a layman and a tenderfoot." Another worker said, "Think of it, the car cleaner is going to preach. The engine wiper is a theologian. Our distinguished errand boy is going to act as guide for us to heaven, Hallelujah!"

The commotion was so great, McPherson was summoned by the timekeeper to see Dan Leonard. Leonard asked McPherson if he was going to proceed and preach Sunday night. George quickly replied, "Yes, that is my intention." Leonard tried to explain to McPherson that the town would not permit it and that a great deal of trouble was brewing among the people.

But his real reason for calling McPherson in, was to tell him if he did not show up for work next Sunday, he would be fired. McPherson's reply was swift. He said, "You can discharge me now if you wish. I refuse to break the fourth commandment." Not giving Leonard the last word he turned around and walked out and went back to work.

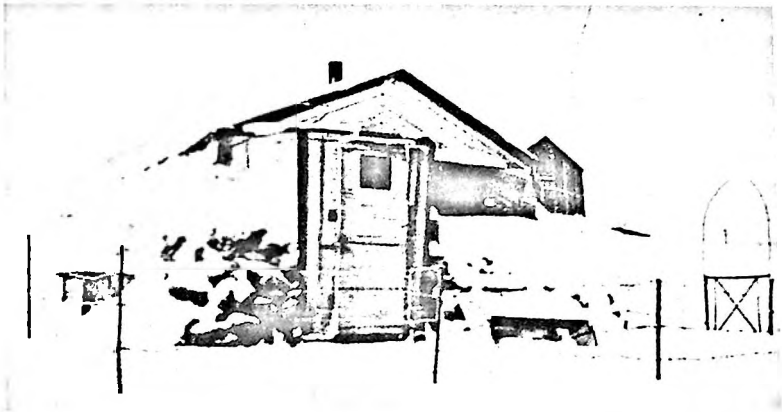
Sunday morning arrived and George kept his word. He did not show up for his shift but was on hand to deliver his sermon that evening. The scene in the tiny schoolhouse was buzzing like a beehive. To avert a potential riot, the town police officer stood at the front near McPherson with his peace maker at hand. The tension relaxed as McPherson began to speak. His sermon went off with little interrup-

tion. When he finished, several people came forward to shake his hand and thank him for his convictions and a wonderful sermon. Others were not so polite and quickly walked out.

Later that evening a strong knocking came from the door. It was his friend Joe Torrence wishing to speak to him. Joe had not come to thank him for his "silver-tongued" sermon. Instead he came to deliver a message from a group of barflies concerned about his preaching. Torrence was very clear about the feelings his elbow-bending friends were thinking. The message served as a final warning notice that he must stop preaching or something terrible might happen to him! George was not to be intimidated and ignored this latest ultimatum.

Strange rumors began to circulate about town in hopes of damaging his reputation, rumors like not paying his grocery bills or seeing him drunk about town. Others were more spiteful by spreading rumors that he was limp-wristed with the girls and was seen twice at "Mollies", the most notorious sporting house in town. Fortunately for the "Tenderfoot" the gossip backfired and he drew favor with most of the townsfolk. They even created some sympathy for him, especially among the ladies. Loose tongues raged for the next few weeks by gad-about and snoops, then died out.

One day George was working at his station when Torrence came up to him and asked, "Are you going to quit preaching?" McPherson answered him in a tone that was heard throughout the building. "I will stop preaching when



*Courtesy of Yonkers Publishing*

### The Parson's dugout at Como, CO.

the good folks of Como tell me to." A voice from the back shouted out, "Stick to your principles, young man, we are your friends!"

It was now clear he had an unknown silent number of followers and this made him all the more determined to establish a religious community in this unruly railroad town.

Sunday arrived and he was ready to preach. The text was, "Why will ye die?" Just as he was about to proceed, a group of a dozen or so men and women entered the schoolhouse and proceeded down the aisle to the front to occupy the empty seats. The group looked out of place with their sophisticated dress and air of intelligence. The men wore three-piece suits while the ladies were dressed in expensive dresses not usually seen in mountain towns. Most surprising of all was the appearance of Dan Leonard sitting with the group.

The sermon proceeded with no interruptions. Afterwards the unknown

group came forward to shake hands with McPherson. One man said, "I understand that you are working for the company. We are staying across the street in the hotel over night, and hearing of your religious work for our men we decided to come to the service tonight. I am Mr. Oliver Ames, President of the Union Pacific Railroad and these are some of my officials and members of our families." He went on to say, "I am quite proud of you. Stick to it, my boy. I wish that we had more young men like you in the company's employ. Good-bye, Mr. McPherson." George thanked Mr. Ames and bid him a good night, then started home.

As he approached his dugout, a voice in the dark shouted, "Hallo, preacher." He turned to see who was speaking to him. The voice was clocked under a mask, and the man standing behind him was just far enough away to not be recognizable. The unknown person was to deliver a distressing message. He said, "I have come to tell

you that if you continue your preaching it has been decided that you will be shot dead." The messenger turned and quickly ran into the darkness not giving George a chance to speak. Undeterred, he strengthened his beliefs, knowing that he had the support of the Union Pacific President and Dan Leonard behind him now.

Some folks feared his growing popularity would soon lead to a permanent church. To force George to leave, a plan was developed to cut his pay checks by one-third in hopes he would fight for the full amount owed to him. If he didn't, his check would be cut again and again until he was starved out of Como. As expected McPherson confronted the timekeeper about his short check. The timekeeper explained that he had sent in all the time coming to him and knew nothing about the short pay check. To add insult to injury, the timekeeper threw a barrage of vile words at George hoping he would fight. McPherson saw right through the skulduggery brewing and knew he had no chance of getting the money owed to him.

He turned and walked out of the office, and sitting on an old barrel in the yard, pondered his situation. Once again death threats were directed at McPherson. One threat went so far as to "Shoot him, low to cripple him, but not kill." This hearsay continued until McPherson appeared at the door of the schoolhouse the following Sunday evening. Again it was standing room only. Those arriving late had the misfortune of standing outside the windows, straining to hear the young Bible-thumper. This show of community involvement clearly showed how

determinedly the people of Como wanted him. Before McPherson could finish his sermon, a voice from the audience shouted out a proposal to reimburse McPherson for the loss on his paycheck and called for an offering. After the hat was passed around and handed to George, he thanked the people and tried to continue his sermon. But the folks were so worked up over the collection, he could not carry on and sat back down. When the offering was over, the sum of \$35 was handed to George. He rose to thank the people for their surprising spirit and support, then tried again to finish the sermon. But big Bill Willington interrupted to plea for another offering. Again a considerable sum of money was collected to which Mr. Willington remarked, "Trust this will be sufficient to show the 'Tenderfoot' what the decent folks of Como think of him and of that 'doggoned' timekeeper and his dirty gang. Oh, pardon me, Mr. McPherson. I don't mean to be vulgar."

### **Generous offer**

At the closing Bill jumped to his feet and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that the 'Tenderfoot' ought to become the shepherd of this flock." The vote was unanimous; some of the men went as far as to stand on the benches to make sure their vote was counted. John Stewart, a Scotsman, shouted out, "He can be my partner in my new gold mine." John's generous offer was heart warming, but his mine had not yet paid off. Dan Corbet, a rancher, offered one of his three-year-old steers. This young flock waited anxiously to hear McPherson's answer. The decision was a big one for him and he was not willing to respond so

quickly. He needed some time to think about the generous offer before committing himself to the town. The following night he received a wire from the assistant superintendent of the Denver and South Park Railroad. It read, "Take train No.9 tonight for Pitkin, Gunnison County, and work coal engines there. Train leaves Como at 12 o'clock."

The news spread quickly that McPherson would no longer be preaching in Como. Most of the townsfolk suspected the railroad authorities feared for his life, and decided to relocate him for his own safety. Several families came to his dugout to express their regret at his impending departure. By the end of the evening, he bid everyone goodbye and then proceeded to the depot to catch the train to Pitkin. Before he left, one more person came to bid McPherson goodbye. Joe Torrence came not only for himself, but for his fellow barflies. George said, "what can I do for you, Joe?"

Joe stepped in and said, "You can do nothing for me, but accept my apology." He went on to say, "The organization had a meeting in the saloon shortly after the news of your intended departure had passed around. It was an official meeting, and you were the subject of discussion. We have decided to make an apology for the way we treated you."

"Mc", he continued, "you are held in esteem by our crowd, and more, you are much respected in Como."

Joe tried to explain that the reason the other men treated him so rudely, was because other religious men came to blast them for their drinking, and within three months they too were

drinking the spirit more than speaking it. They had made it a promise to put the next "Tenderfoot" through the mill. By the end of their talk Joe insisted upon carrying George's heavy trunk up the hill to the depot.

At the depot, the two men were met by other families and friends wanting to say their goodbyes. When it was time to board there was not a dry-eye to be seen. George stepped to the last car to hear their voices singing a final song they had learned in the schoolhouse. The waving of handkerchiefs faded into the darkness as No. 9 continued its journey towards Gunnison country.

Pitkin was another boomtown, rich in silver ore, a few miles southwest of Leadville. Pitkin was like many young mining towns growing up without discipline. The town had grown to roughly 1000 people with about one hundred businesses, four hotels, eight restaurants and twelve saloons with an equal number of "Gooseberry Ranches" by the time McPherson arrived.

George was assigned to work as a "coalheaver." He declined the position and instead went to work at the Mary Murphy Silver Mine in Chaffee County as an "ore-sorter." The Mary Murphy mine is located four miles south of St. Elmo at an altitude of 11,500 feet. The bunkhouse, set in a lonesome and unforgiving place, housed roughly 100 men mostly from southern and western Ireland.

A persistent wind blew at the bunkhouse day and night. Crisp clear nights offered a stunning view of the Milky Way crossing the night sky. The quietness was broken only by the distant echo of the whistles from the

monster engines pulling freight to the Alpine Tunnel.

George knew right away if preaching was to be done there it would have to be done in silence. Talking about religion would surely invite a riot.

The bunkhouse had about thirty rooms, each contained four bunks. His roommates came from Prince Edward Island. One played the fiddle, another played the mouth-harp, one played the banjo and the fourth accompanied the others with Highland songs in both Gaelic and English. When they were not entertaining themselves with songs and music they were playing cards. The boys asked George to join in and have some fun. Again George turned down the offer. The boys thought this unso- ciable attitude to be a bit strange and took light-hearted fun at George. The boys would say things such as, "You are in the Rockies now, Mc, and when you are in Rome you must do as Rome does. You are too quiet, so wake up old fellow and dance a jig with me. Come along and let us have a hoe-down." George answered with, "You will have to excuse me, gentlemen, as I do not dance, play cards, drink, nor gamble." His answer did not satisfy his room- mates. One asked him what was his principal objection to playing cards. He finally gave in and explained the evils of playing cards. He said sooner or later it would lead to gambling and everyone knows gambling is associated with murderers, harlots, thieves, thugs and other unsavory associations and did not want to be a part of it.

At the end of his lecture the boys appeared to be taken aback somewhat, and they were speechless.

After a few silent moments one spoke up saying, "Don't worry, we shall never become gamblers." The boys went back to playing cards with occasional outbursts of laughter.

It was not long after when George entered his room one evening, and saw the boys were now playing cards with money. George kept silent about it. Later that night some boys from another room came in to play cards. Shortly after, voices turned to shouts and a fierce battle broke out. The two men were on the floor locked arm in arm, fighting like madmen. One struggled to get his knife out of his pocket, while the other escaped the clutches of his adversary and rushed into his room for his peace maker. The other men got control of the situation and calmed the two men down. In silence George felt vindicated and later the fellows admitted that his Puritanism had put them all to shame.

Those nine months at the Mary Murphy Mine were a test of silence. Seven strong men at the mine died suddenly, due to their loose living. George left the mine and went to the little village of Pine Grove in Platte Canyon, 40 miles southwest of Denver. The climate was warm and dry and more suitable than the cold temperature and blowing winds at the mine.

For all the beautiful greenery surrounding Pine Grove, it too had its dark side. Across the street from the train station sat a saloon with its countless unspeakable stories. Most untimely deaths happened at a table when some one was caught stacking the deck. The sign over the shack was painted on a plain board with the word "saloon." This was the only sign in

town.

It turned out that the saloon keeper was a former acquaintance, named John Murray. Back home Murray was a man of noble parts. Everyone knew him as a friend you could count on anytime. But the women of Pine Grove had a hatred for him and his gin mill. George was asked by the ladies to help close him down. He went to the saloon in hope of convincing Murray to sell and move back home to his waiting family. Murray was in the middle of a card game with a pile of money in front of him. He told George to leave him alone and let him play his game. George started to walk out then stopped and turned to say one last thing to Murray. He said, "I predict that judgement will overtake you right here in your whiskey den!" He walked out never to set foot in that saloon again.

A few months later, Pine Grove was aroused in the dead of night with terrible screams coming from the saloon. Inside on the floor laid John Murray in a pool of blood. He was stabbed seven times in the chest and abdomen by the same man he was playing cards with the last time George set foot in the saloon.

After Murray's death George went to Denver in hopes of securing work. Not only was he looking for work, so were ten thousand other desperate men.

### **Hardship case**

While in town George was able to board in a small downtown hotel, pleading his hardship case to the proprietor that all he had left was \$10 and asking for two weeks, credit. The gentlemen reluctantly agreed. Single rooms were scarce so George had to

bunk with another person. At that time it was not uncommon to bunk with a stranger.

Unfortunately his room mate pilfered the \$10 from under his pillow while he slept. This theft raised the level of his anxiety, knowing what happens to those failing to pay their hotel bill: a most unpleasant vacation in scenic Canon City for six years of hard labor in the prison.

Two weeks were up and George could not pay his bill and the proprietor would be knocking on his door soon. Not wanting to spend time in prison, he devised a scheme to leave before the owner came knocking. First thing in the morning George went to a friend at the freight yard in hopes he could help McPherson leave town quickly. All arrangements were made and he was to be back at the freight yard at 9 o'clock that night. During supper time George knew the proprietor would be preoccupied with eating and this would be the time for him to escape. His room was at the back and on the alley side so he dropped his valise to the ground, then walked leisurely out the front door and around the back picking up his baggage and making a rapid dash to the freight yard.

After two more years working in and about the Mary Murphy Mine, he left for Aspen in 1888. Work was plentiful and in no time he saved enough money to return to Denver and pay his hotel debt with ten percent interest. The proprietor did not remember him at first until George explained who he was. After he paid his debt the proprietor said he could stay for free the next time he was in town.

George felt more at home in

Aspen than any other place so far. He found work at Tourtelotte Park, four miles south on Aspen Mountain, pushing ore cars at the bottom of the mine. One month later he was promoted to the blacksmith shop. Two months after that he was in charge of the stationary engine, with an increase in pay. Later he was promoted again to foreman with another increase in pay.

There were no churches at Tourtellotte Park and yet there were one thousand men working at the mine. From time to time Rev. Edward Knapp came to deliver a sermon at a small hall near the mine. After listening to Knapp deliver sermons, George decided it was time he started delivering his own sermons to the men. This time he was treated with respect from the other miners.

While at Tourtellotte Park, George and a friend named Duncan Stuart, also from Cape Breton Island, helped build a small 16x20-foot cabin. One day a Scotch Canadian knocked on the door asking if he could bed down in one corner of the cabin for the night. All the bunkhouses were overcrowded. George, being the type of person to help another person in need, let him stay.

After supper the gentleman went to one of the many saloons in the area for the evening. It was about ten o'clock when he returned drunk. Upon entering he noticed George was reading the Bible where upon he said in a stern tone, "I cannot endure seeing anyone read that book in my presence in this country. You have some cheek to read the Bible in these mountains. I want you to quit!" George reminded him that the cabin was his home and he would

read any book he pleased and that he was the guest. Nothing further was said and both went to bed.

A few days later a friend approached George and asked him if he knew who the person was he was boarding. The friend informed George he was boarding the middleweight champion of the Rocky Mountain states, and he was known as a dangerous character. Twice he had been on trial for murder.

### **Defending the Bible**

That evening the stranger went to a saloon to roust with the boys and returned later that night again with the look of madness in his eyes. The first words out of his mouth were, "Do you propose to continue reading that book in my presence?" George replied, "Yes, and that man does not live who can prevent it." This infuriated the drunken man. He pulled off his coat and tossed it to the ground, grabbed a one-hundred-pound keg of nails and tossed it across the room sending the nails everywhere. Next he picked up some rich specimens of native gold and silver ore lying on the center table and smashed them on the floor into a thousand pieces. His rage was not over yet. He went over to George and asked him one more time, "Will you quit reading that book in my presence?" His reply was, "No", and suddenly the man jumped upon him like a madman. As the two tumbled about the cabin, the beds, chairs and table were broken. Their clothes torn to shreds. Finally George got the upper hand with a knee jammed into the palooka's chest backed up with a few more good blows to his bleeding face. The Champ was beaten at his own game and surrendered.



George gave him two minutes to pack his blankets and get out. The guy had broken one of his hands in the fight and could not roll or tie his blankets up. George did it for him and placed them on his back, then sent him out the door.

The next morning word spread that George defeated the Champ and from then on his nickname was "Dominie" at Tourtelotte Park. After this, George grew tired of mining and wanted to try something new. He moved to Aspen and opened a blacksmith shop. This skill was in great demand and paid double that on the East Coast.

Aspen was no exception when it came to the multitudes of sin. One of the two principal avenues was a continuous row of saloons and gambling dens, while the other avenue was known as the red light district. There was no social center, no library or a decent place in town where young men could gather and enjoy themselves without the surroundings of evil vices.

After George had established his business, he set out to organize the first Y.M.C.A. The word was sent out to the local churches that a meeting would be held the following Thursday evening in the Odd Fellows hall, to discuss the question of a "Y". The response was meager. Only thirty people attended. The local pastors were present but their response to the idea was all negative. Everyone agreed it was a good idea, but to procure the funds was believed to be next to impossible. The response was how can you support a Y.M.C.A. much less a church. Only two men from the group favored the plan, Mr. Hayes, a prominent civil engineer and a deacon in the

Baptist Church, and another gentleman who was a poor cobbler from the Methodist Church.

This lack of support from the other churches did not stop George from trying. The following day Mr. Hayes and George visited the offices of the mining companies in hopes they would endorse such a plan. After talking to several administrators and a local bank, it wasn't long before his pockets were bulging with gold coins totaling \$3,000.

With this money George was able to pay a full year's rent on a building located at 100-106 S. Mill Street. The building had a large social room with furniture. There were a parlor and chairs for the large assembly room. There was a library housing five hundred books along with tables for checkers, chess and dominoes. There was even room for a private office. Later, with the generous contributions by local business and private donations, he was able to pay a secretary \$100 a month.

After the opening of his successful operation with the "Y", and doing well in his blacksmith shop, he started getting numerous visits by the clergy in town, persuading him to come into their flock. Each had a reason why he should be a member of his church. Only one preacher was truthful, and this impressed George enough that he decided to become a Baptist. The Baptist Church was the smallest and the poorest, and yet debt-free and able to pay George a salary of \$125 per month.

George's reception into the Baptist faith was a very cold one. His baptism took place in the evening at the tiny church. The thermometer registered

thirty below zero! There was no dressing room in the chapel, so he had to use the parsonage located several hundred feet from the church. When the covering was taken off the Baptistry, the water was frozen over with a one-inch-thick sheet of ice.

The pastor looked at George and shook his head and said, "You cannot be baptized tonight." Not wanting to wait, George took a leap into the center of the ice, breaking the ice and in turn splashing water in all directions, generously sprinkling those sitting in the front pews.

George stayed with the little church for several years until the darkest period in Aspen's history arrived. The bottom fell out of the silver market and George was forced to close his blacksmith shop. Like so many others he was made a pauper overnight.

George packed up his meager belongings and moved east to Leadville to secure work. While working in Leadville he met Dr. James Townsend, the local Baptist Minister. Dr. Townsend helped George receive his license in order to be admitted to Colgate University at Hamilton, New York, to study for the Baptist Ministry.

In 1892, at the age of 26, George was accepted to Colgate University. He elected to spend one year at the Academy and three in the Seminary.

His first year was very difficult, not in the theologian sense, but in the monetary way. George worked as much as possible but still could not pay off his debts. Every church he supplied for over the following eighteen months doubled its congregation, and yet his compensation was \$5 a Sunday, one half of which was used for traveling

expenses.

About mid-winter, Professor Sisson, of the Academy, who was also the treasure of the Baptist Church where George was a member, asked for his contribution. George pledged \$5 and assured Sisson he would be paid. He went on to explain why he could not pay right now. After hearing the numerous obligations Professor Sisson said, "I cannot accept your pledge. Instead of you helping us we shall have to help you."

The professor explained to George that other students have been dismissed for failure to pay their bills and he was obliged to enforce the rules. George assured him that if the Lord wanted him for the ministry He would supply the necessary funds. George had been praying for money and insisted the Professor take his last \$5.

He refused, and said he was so inspired by George's determination to keep his promise, the professor said he would never mention his debts.

Prior to this meeting, McPherson wrote a letter to Rev. R. A. Cameron, Pastor of the First Baptist Church in Denver, informing him about his studies at Colgate. Dr. Cameron knew very well about McPherson's work in the mountains and knick-named him, "The Rocky Mountain Blacksmith."

Dr. Cameron was a close friend of Mr. James B. Colgate, who endowed the University. He wrote to Mr. Colgate telling him about McPherson and his struggle to stay out of debt and what a great service he was to the Church and it would be a terrible loss to the Church if they were to lose him.

Shortly after his talk with

Professor Sisson, George received a message from Rev. H. S. Lloyd saying, "Mac come and see."

Dr. Lloyd said to McPherson, "I understand that you are in need of financial help. Why did you not come and tell me about it?" George was too proud to ask for money, and it wasn't the responsibility of the University to pay off debts accrued by students. Dr. Lloyd had three letters spread out on his desk and asked if George recognized the handwritings. He recognized one letter being the one he sent to Dr. Cameron. The other one was a letter from Dr. Cameron to Mr. Colgate and the last one was a reply from Mr. Colgate. The letter read as such: "Stand by that 'Rocky Mountain Blacksmith' and let him take any course in the university he may choose and I will pay the bill."

Dr. Lloyd asked how much money he needed, and George said he had been praying for \$50 for sometime. Dr. Lloyd handed him a check for \$175, and said if he needed more to come and get it. Mr. Colgate was paying his way through school.

### **Formally ordained**

He spent one year at Colgate and the following three years in the seminary. After a six-week course at the Philadelphia Neff College of Oratory, he was invited to speak at a small Baptist Church in Mahopac Falls, New York. Two weeks later, he was formally ordained and began his first pastoral in that small church.

Between 1895 and 1902, his pastoral duties were quite strenuous. He accepted a call to the Memorial Church in Brooklyn, and soon learned about division and strife among the congrega-

tion. The turmoil increased, and at the same time, McPherson contracted chills and a fever, and had to step down due to his health.

George's calling was for something much bigger. He heard there was a calling for a preacher in Brooklyn, New York, in a small neighborhood Baptist Church. He stayed for eighteen months refining his oratory skills along with gaining confidence in delivering powerful sermons.

During this time, George met Miss May Belle Rockwell. Soon after, they were married and moved to Greenport, Long Island. Electric lighting was installed in the church, and the congregation doubled in size. His circuit consisted of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Vermont and Massachusetts.

In the summer of 1902, he came across an article about gospel work under the tent in New York City. The tent was pitched at the corner of West 56th, between Broadway and Eighth Avenue. Every night for two weeks, McPherson assisted Rev. S. Hartwell Pratt on the platform.

By the end of the summer, Rev. Pratt's health was failing and he was forced to step down. George was determined not to let this Tent Evangelical movement fade away. So he went to the members of Pratt's committee asking about their plans for the tent. Everyone told him not to touch it, but walk away, as it would take its toll on his health like it did to Rev. Pratt.

Another excuse was the money was already stretched too far, and could not support another mission. Again, McPherson was more than ever determined to have a tent mission.

McPherson went to a dear friend and explained his situation. Rev. Robert Stuart MacArthur was so compelled, he said he would form a committee and instructed George to go see Dr. Shaw of the West End Presbyterian Church to tell him the same story. In the end, Dr. Shaw pledged \$100 to add towards the purchase of the tent. The second person he went to was Dr. McKay. Again \$100 was donated and he too said he would be on the committee. The third person to listen to George was John S. Huyler, a well-known chocolate manufacture in the city. He was so moved by George's determination, he donated \$200. By late June the tent had been purchased and pitched in the same spot on 56th Street.

At an annual committee meeting in October 1903, George was asked what kind of a salary he would need. His reply was, "I shall never tell you, for I could not put a price on my services in the Lord's work." The committee was unprepared for such an answer. They asked again and they got the same answer. After a short break the committee decided on a salary of one thousand dollars, from May first to October first. That breaks down to about \$50 a week. George also made it clear that he was not to draw his salary until the close of the season and only after all other obligations had been met. The committee reluctantly adopted his proposition.

Things were going well until late May, 1904, when the location given to him had been withdrawn. George quickly went to one of the most prominent corners in New York City, the corner at Fifty-seventh Street and Broadway. The owners were The Fuller

Construction Company and The Island Realty Company. George went straight to the president, Mr. H. S. Black, and their corporate lawyer, Mr. Babbage, and the chairman of the Executive Committee, Mr. James M. Stillman, Sr., who was the President of the City Bank. He pleaded his case to deaf ears. But George was the kind of person that didn't take no for an answer. Six times he asked for permission and six times turned down. He was getting discouraged when suddenly he thought of Bishop Potter, of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of New York City.

George's story was so inspiring that Bishop Potter wrote a letter and told George to go see his old friend, Mr. Stillman, President of the City Bank. One more time George went to the bank and handed the letter to a clerk. In minutes George was in Mr. Stillman's office face to face. His only words were, "I shall see what I can do for you. Good day, sir."

The following day a letter arrived in his mail box. The letter requested George to go see Mr. Black. His seventh visit was much more cordial. Mr. Black said, "Mr. McPherson, it has been decided to give you the use of our ground for gospel tent work, and you will go into the office of Mr. Babbage and ask him to draw you up a lease. Tell him I requested it." Mr. Babbage was not as cordial. Without speaking a word he drew up a contract and handed it to him. One of the most prominent million-dollar corners was now leasing space for only \$1 a season. This lease was granted for the next six years.

With his great deep voice and stout body he continually packed the

tent with standing room only, seating up to five hundred people twice a day.

Later in Dr. McPherson's career, as the founder of the Old Tent Evangelical Tabernacle in New York City, he was considered the greatest preacher of the Old Tent Evangelical Faith of his generation. He preached twenty-two years under the tent when the Old Tent Evangelical was the largest organization in the world. Dr. McPherson's career spanned twenty-two years, speaking to 2,650,000 people. He also published five noted books dealing with religious questions.

All quotes are from *A Parson's Adventures*.

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# Over the Corral Rail

## Our membership numbers continue to grow

We welcome the following new members into our ranks: David Beeder of Colorado Springs. David has interest in Bent's Fort and Ft. Garland, and is a member of the Omaha Posse.—Nancy Foster of Denver. Nancy is interested in genealogy and women of the west.—Jose Gonzales of Lakewood.—James McElhinney of Denver. James is interested in military history, is an artist, a University Professor and an NPS volunteer.—Frances Melrose of Denver. Frances certainly needs no introduction. She is the respected columnist on Western History for the Rocky Mountain News. She has been writing her column, using colorful stories from her readers about local history, for 20 years.

*Please send items of interest to Jim Krebs, Editor.  
Jim's contact information is on page 2.*



### Westerners International

Corresponding Membership in the Denver Posse does not include membership in the Westerners International. If you wish to receive the *Buckskin Bulletin*, you may purchase a subscription for \$5.00/year. Contact Westerners International, c/o National Cowboy Hall of Fame, 1700 NE 63rd St., Oklahoma City, OK 73111. 800-541-4650



*Bob and Flo Staadt receive their award from Eugene Rakosnik at the Winter Rendezvous, Dec. 15, 1999.*

**The Denver Posse of Westerners' 1999 Fred A. Rosenstock Lifetime Achievement Award**

**C.R. "Bob" and Florence Staadt**

East Central Kansas is still "home" to Bob and Florence Staadt. As with many Middle-West transplants to Colorado, they still cherish roots and family back in the farm belt. Both were born near Ottawa, Kansas where they attended local public schools. They were married in Ottawa in 1941.

Bob served in the Army during World War II. In the early 1950s they moved to Canon City, Colorado where they owned and operated a wood products factory. After moving to Denver, Bob worked for Stearns Rogers Engineering. He created the doors for NORAD underneath Cheyenne Mountain. Bob also designed the 32-wheel support system for the 12-million-pound, moveable launch system for the Titan Missile at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

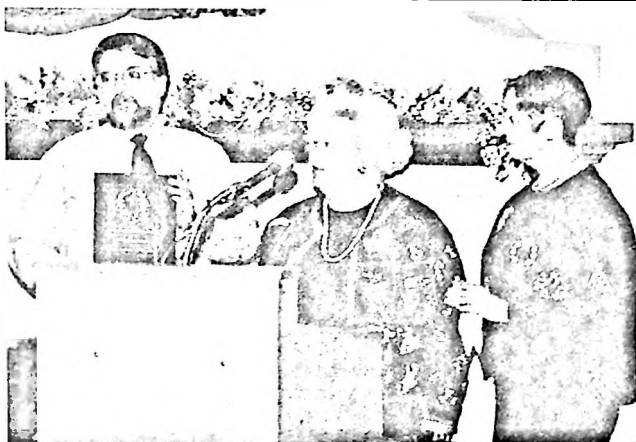
Florence has been a machinist for the past 48 years. She has had repeat orders from one customer for the last 38 years. Bob has worked for Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica and Boeing Aircraft in Wichita. He was Chief Engineer of Quickway Truck Shovel Company in Denver.

Bob and Florence raised five sons and one daughter at their spacious ranch house on Galena Street. The Staadt place is a veritable museum with machinery they have restored, ranging from Ottawa stationary gasoline engines to his collection of restored tractors.

The Staadts have supported local history in many ways. They are pioneer members of the Aurora Historical Society, where Florence served as president. Bob and Florence have been members of the Ghost Town Club since 1960. The Staadts are charter members of the Front Range Antique Power Association.

This couple, Bob and Florence, have epitomized the creativity, the generosity and the stalwart commitment of true Westerners.

*--Tom Noel and Gene Rakosnik*



*Jim Proschaka (left), and Nanette Simonds (center), receive the 1999 Fred A. Rosenstock Award for Outstanding Contributions to Colorado History, on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum, from Westerner Sandra Dallas (right).*

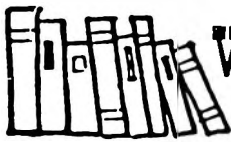
### **1999 Fred A. Rosenstock Award for outstanding contributions to Colorado history**

#### **Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum**

The Rocky Mountain Quilt Museum in Golden, Colorado was founded in 1982, to preserve and promote the art and history of American Quilts and Quiltmaking. It moved into its current facility in 1990. RMQM mounts half-a-dozen exhibits a year at the museum, along with shows in public spaces, and provides traveling trunk shows for schools and community groups' demonstrations and lectures. The organization also maintains an extensive reference library that is open to the public. One of just seven quilt museums in the country, RMQM, with a collection of 240 quilts, is concentrating on acquiring quilts from the Rocky Mountain region.

In the past generation, as Western history has broadened its scope, we have begun telling the stories of the women who came west. We see not just in their relationships with men, but as individuals in their own right, with dreams and goals of their own. Men tamed the West—women civilized it. Men searched for riches—women sought to make homes. They brought with them precious scraps from back home to make quilts, but these were more than bedcoverings. Intricately pieced and painstakingly stitched, they were women's art. Women quilted their hopes and dreams and politics into their work, naming the patterns "Log Cabin," "Rocky Road to Kansas," "Delectable Mountains." Today we recognize quilts as folk art, as domestic history, as material evidence of lives lived.

*--Nanette Simonds, Tom Noel and Sandra Dallas*



## Westerners Bookshelf



**It Happened in Northern California**, by Erin H. Turner. Two Dot: Falcon Publishing, Inc., Helena, Montana, 1999. 116 pp, bibliography, index, \$8.95.

This is a well-chronicled book and easy to read. It is concise and informative, yet written in an interesting manner that holds the reader's attention.

In 1542, Spanish soldiers under the leadership of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, and later Bartolme Ferrelo, traveled the coastline from Navidad, Mexico all the way to the Rogue River in Oregon. The Spanish officials labeled the expedition a failure because no material wealth was gained. Secret ceremonies held by the Wintun tribe, a native American tribe of California, are described in chapter two, dated the 1600s. In the early 1800s, a Russian trader forged an agreement with influential Spanish at the Presidio and thus the Russians gained access to Northern California. They brought the Aleuts with them and founded a settlement near Bodega Bay to hunt sea otters. This practice continued until 1841 when they sold the land to John Sutter, who discovered gold in 1849. The books of John C. Fremont inspired settlers to come to California. Many Americans living in Sonoma, CA, which was in Mexican territory, joined with Fremont who led them in an attempt to overthrow the Mexican government in Sonoma. Overthrowing Gen. Vallejo, the men raised the bear flag designed and sewn by William Todd over Sonoma, CA, declaring an independent nation. The war between the U.S. and Mexico ceded California to the U.S. Further stories of the Donner party and of the Reed survivors are told. The discovery of gold by John Sutter and his attempts to keep the discovery quiet are also discussed. The legend of Joaquin Murieta is told in graphic detail. A little-known story of U.S. Grant in his early Army days is also related. Many other personalities that contributed to the rich history of Northern California are told, such as the devastating earthquake and consequent fires that killed more than 3000 persons in 1906. The great singer Caruso was able to escape and board a ship to Oakland, CA. The story of Ishi, the last Yahi Indian is fascinating. Stories, from Jack London and Sarah

Winchester, to Alcatraz make this a most

interesting book. For anyone who comes from Northern California this would be a good book to add to their collection. It is concise and well done.

--Dolores A. Ebner, C.M.





**Ida: Her Labor of Love**, by Carol Crawford McManus. Western Reflections, Inc., Ouray, CO, 1999. 228 pp, photos, paperback. \$14.95.

This work illustrates well the difference between men's and women's history. McManus portrays pioneer settlement in Lake, Eagle and Garfield counties. A male author would probably immerse readers in Indians wars, mining rushes and railroad construction. Carol McManus, on the other hand, focuses on childbirth, death, a women's struggle to keep together an extended family and the daily trials and joys of pioneer homebodies.

McManus tells the story through the eyes of her grandmother, Ida Oyler Herwick. Although McManus researched newspapers, library and family sources, she found no diary or set of letters. So she reconstructed much of the details and the dialogue. Although some poor history teachers still try to get students to separate fact from fiction, fictional history is favored by most readers and even celebrated biographers such as Edmund Morris, author of the infamous new biography of Ronald Reagan.

If historical fiction can stick closely to historical fact and the spirit of the times, as *Ida* does, it certainly deserves reviews and reading. Indeed, while "real" documented history will probably be forgotten, Western history soars on in the timeless novels of writers such as Willa Cather, Mari Sandoz, Wallace Stegner and Mark Twain.

Ida's children play far larger roles in this book than her husband. He was gone most of the time, working at road building, mining, lodging, bridge building or at any new scheme promising him his elusive fortune. Once in a while he came home, hungry for food, shelter and sex. Despite her vow not to have as many children as her mother, who died in childbirth, she married at age 15 and was usually in a family way. The book is strong on a women's perspective and feelings, and men's lack of feelings. She had much to say about babies and pregnancy and even contraception, but next to nothing on sex.

After repeatedly trying to make dugouts and shacks homey, Ida lives in terror of her husband's pronouncements that she must uproot the family yet again. So she will have to start out all over again in some bleak, filthy, male-dominated new niche in the entrepreneurial frontier.

This book shines on the lives of ordinary people who never really made it. One Herwick son marries a high-class, educated woman but, as Ida's suspects, this lovely butterfly soon flies away. Ida regards herself and her family as plain folks not destined for fame or fortune. She is only on this earth to give birth, to raise children, to claw out a home and farm and to comfort the dying. This is a bitter-sweet story. Ida's meals are often seasoned by her tears. "It's chicken one day," she philosophizes, "and feathers the next."

Historically speaking, this book offers views on major issues of the day, ranging from "bastard conservationists" trying to create White River National Forest to the sheepmen vs. cattlemen wars, from pioneer oil shale exploration to the building of railroads and towns. Ida describes construction of sod-roofed log cabins,

of starting farms and ranches amid pregnancies that came rapidly and endless childbearing. Only the support of other women made life bearable, as men rarely wanted to hear and understand much about the things that concerned women. Her endless compassion extends to everyone, from her demented syphilitic brother to the abused children and women of neighboring homesteads.

Ida not only attends to dying old folks but to her dying. Until her own death in 1918, Ida is always there for the sick and dying, nursing bedside and then preparing the body for the grave. Angels such as Ida, who made a ruthless, rootless frontier bearable and humane, are unsung heroines, whom this fine book brings to center stage.

--Thomas J. Noel, P.M.

**Grand Mesa: Island in the Sky**, by Muriel Marshall. Western Reflections, Inc., Ouray. 287 pp. Illustrations, map, bibliography, index. Paperback, \$15.95.

With meager gold deposits, the Grand Mesa area east of Grand Junction, CO was bypassed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century rush to find mining wealth in Colorado's mountains. It became a 2,000-squar- mile "island," not only in a geological sense, but in historic isolation.

Muriel Marshall has corrected the oversight with a book rich in natural description, in interviews and discussions of the mesa's economic and settlement patterns. She lives in the area and has spent decades researching its history.

Besides its lofty remoteness, this two-mile-high flat-topped mountain has been the scene of much violence. Local settlers once burned down the log mansion of a wealthy Englishman who tried to monopolize the trout fishing. And there were several killings on the mesa's flanks at the turn of the century, when cattlemen drove sheepmen back into Utah, shooting and clubbing thousands of their sheep.

Capped by lava flows which protect it from erosion and heavy winter snowfalls which isolate it in winter, Grand Mesa is a natural wonderland, or as Marshall says, "(It is) like a huge ship heading into the prevailing westerlies.....in its flatness it is like a vast table (that is) always set for company, covered with snowy damask in winter, graced in summer with a cloth of all-over flower embroidery and set with hundreds of crystal blue lakes."

Marshall's research is timely. Some people who witnessed the violence of the 1890s lived into the mid-decades of this century, but were not exactly garrulous in their accounts of the early days. Only recently have some events been explained. Example: the late Ellis Blackman of Collbran, a pioneer cattleman and bear hunter, was hiking on the mesa with a younger person in about 1950. Spotting a rotting wagon, he picked up a wheel spoke and reminisced cryptically, "These make good sheep clubs."

So Marshall's hard work is helping end Grand Mesa's historic isolation. Her book could have used tighter editing but the content makes up for any deficiencies.

--Lee Olson, P.M.

**The San Luis Valley: Land of the Six-Armed Cross**, by Virginia McConnell Simmons. University Press of Colorado, second edition, 1999. 364 pages. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. Paperback, \$24.95.

In this volume, the story of "The Valley" is told broadly and in detail. This second edition differs from the first, (printed in 1979) by enlarging upon Hispanic arts, influence, and place names.

By devoting a chapter to each major developmental phase and its influences, Simmons paints an entertaining and informative picture. The subjects—some taking up a chapter, some interwoven throughout—range from geology and natural history through early European exploration, ethnic communities, water rights, the fur trade, mining and freighting communities, military forts and activities, railroad exploration, agriculture, and religion.

The author discusses the many factors which make the San Luis Valley a truly unique locale. Her discussions of the Mormon settlements and the "penitentes" are particularly interesting.

She recounts the names and lives of towns which were born of mining, farming, railhead, freighting, etc., thriving for a while with churches, saloons, and post offices but which are now merely a few overgrown foundations. There are probably no more of these in the Valley than in other parts of the West, but one doesn't think of farming towns becoming ghost towns or abandoned town sites.

Persons such as Otto Mears, John Fremont, Jack Dempsey and Kit Carson are dexterously interwoven with the stories of everyday settlers, nuns, soldiers, miners, and farmers of all nationalities and backgrounds.

The maps are plentiful and readable, the photos are appropriate and well labeled and the appendices and reading list give much material for investigation and research.

This is an absorbing and enlightening history of an old and integral part of Colorado. If one is looking for a good grounding in the history and factors of development of the area, this is the book to read.

*--Stan Moore, C.M.*

**Rainbow Bridge: An Illustrated History**, by Hank Hassell. Utah State University Press, 1999. 173 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. Paperback, \$19.95.

The largest natural bridge in the world has been, variously, a sacred place to native peoples, a holy grail to explorers, the focus of battle between conservationists and water developers, and a curiosity that Lake Powell boaters spend half an hour visiting. It remains a site of awe-inspiring and enduring beauty located amidst some of the most spectacular scenery on the planet.

The author goes over the region's geology and how the bridge came to be. It is on the flank of Navajo Mountain, the geologic structure of which is decisive in the bridge's formation. He describes how a small stream ate through a fin of sandstone, running straight thus not causing the fin to collapse into the streambed.

But the human aspects of the bridge are the interesting parts of the tale. Nasja Begay and Chief Hoskinini, Navajos who knew of the bridge, helped guide the first whites in to see it. The competition between and ultimate cooperation of Byron Cummings and William B. Douglass, two academic explorers, is chronicled. These two were both in the first known group of white men to see the bridge. John Weatherill, also in the first party, was quick to make a living by guiding parties in to see the bridge. He took in Zane Grey, Teddy Roosevelt, and others. Barry Goldwater was part owner of a lodge on Navajo Mountain which for a while was likely the most remote tourist lodge in the US. David Brower built both his reputation as an environmentalist, and the Sierra Club from a small hiking club to a political force to be reckoned with, in battles to preserve Rainbow Bridge National Monument from flooding. Floyd Dominy and Wayne Aspinall went to the mat, ultimately successfully, fighting Brower over this issue. Herbert Hoover (as Secretary of Commerce) was instrumental in negotiating the Colorado River Compact in the 1920s. Glen Canyon Dam and Lake Powell (not to mention many other dams and reservoirs) were a direct result, as they allow the upper basin states to reliably deliver an agreed amount of water to the lower basin states.

Mr. Hassell gives a good description of the politics of water development as it affected Lake Powell and thus Rainbow Bridge.

The accounts of hiking into Rainbow Bridge from the east, around both the south and north sides of Navajo Mountain, are eloquent and in places almost mystical. They make one want to pack the backpack, put on the boots, and explore this corner of the southwest.

There are maps aplenty, all easy to decipher. The scenery photos are stunning; the historical photos are informative and topical. If you like slickrock, you should read this book.

--Stan Moore, C.M.

