



*The* DENVER WESTERNERS  
**ROUNDUP**

January - February 2012



Graft townsite

**Ghosts of Baca County**  
**by Carl Sandberg, C.M.**  
**(presented January 26, 2011)**



## Our Author

Carl Sandberg is an “almost native” of Colorado; he arrived in the state when he was two months old. He grew up in Denver, and graduated from both East High School and the University of Nebraska. Carl spent twenty years in the U.S. Air Force and was stationed throughout the world. He has had a lifelong love affair with Western history, especially in Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming and Montana.

Sharing this love with others, he has given numerous slide shows and historic tours highlighting interesting historical sites in these states. Carl is a past vice-president and president of the Ghost Town Club of Colorado and a member of several other historical organizations, including the Denver Westerners.

## THE DENVER WESTERNERS

# ROUNDUP

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January - February 2012

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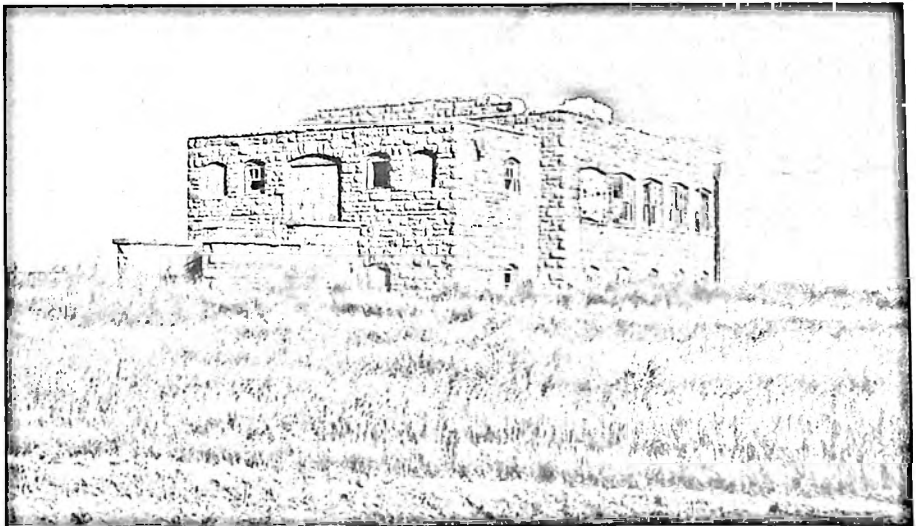
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## **Ghosts of Baca County** **by Carl Sandberg, C.M.** **(presented January 26, 2011)**

Baca County is probably one of the most overlooked and under-appreciated counties in Colorado. A wag once said that if God made Baca County, he must have done it on the sixth day when he was tuckered out from doing all of the other stuff' because it sure got the short end of the stick on a lot of things. It seems that whenever a newsworthy event occurs in the county, it is always overshadowed by a larger event elsewhere. Such as when the county was experiencing a town-killing drought in 1893, other towns in Colorado were being killed by the Silver Panic. When Baca County towns were being inundated by floods in 1965, Denver and most of the Front Range had their own water problems.

The area has a long and varied history that dates back to 1541 when the land that would become Baca County was claimed by Spain. After 1821, Mexico claimed the area when it declared its independence from Spain. In 1836 the Republic of Texas was formed and took over ownership, but lost it when they became a state in 1845. The land then was ceded back to the U.S. Government as public domain. It became part of Kansas when Kansas Territory was formed in 1854. Colorado finally gained ownership in 1861 with the formation of Colorado Territory. The area became part of Huerfano County until 1866 when Las Animas County was carved out of Huerfano. Baca finally started to



1938 WPA School, Konantz



Another Baca County dream blown away by the dust bowl

get close to becoming a county in 1888 when a proposal was put forth to divide up Las Animas County. Actually there were two conflicting ideas about how to do this. The first was to create four separate counties. In this case, Minneapolis, Boston, Atlanta and Carrizo would probably have become county seats. The second idea was to create a single large county. Some towns, like Vilas, supported the single county idea with, of course, itself as the county seat. Other towns, like Springfield, supported the four-county idea with the proviso that if that plan failed then they would become the seat of the single county.

The battle raged on for almost a year until Senator Casimiro Barela introduced a bill into the legislature to create a single county. This bill seemed to catch everyone but Springfield by surprise. When the bill passed in 1889, the fight for who would get the county seat really heated up. Threats

were made, ballot boxes were stuffed and ballots were burned. Boston threw its support to Stonington and moved a number of its buildings to that community. When Vilas and Stonington finally lost out to Springfield, things didn't really cool down a whole lot. A large Boston hotel that had been built at a cost of \$450 was bought by the county commissioners for \$6,000, and was to be moved to Springfield to be used as the county courthouse. The building never got any further than Vilas before a group of vigilantes, taxpayers enraged at having to foot the bill, rode out and burned it to the ground.

Baca wasn't even the first choice for the name of the new county. The original proposal was to name it after Juan Ignacio Alirez, but they couldn't teach the legislators to pronounce it, so they went with Baca, named after a prominent Trinidad family, one of whose members was one of the first settlers on Two Buttes Creek.



When the Homestead Act was passed in 1862, settlers began moving into the western plains. But settlement was slow to catch on in Baca County. There were two periods of settlement in Baca County. The first of these was in the late 1880's. It was during this period that all of the big name towns got started: towns like Athens, Atlanta, Boston, Minneapolis and Viena. However, for this first period of settlement, it was a case of bad timing. From 1890 to 1895 a severe drought hit the area and the towns failed. In the case of Minneapolis, people began moving out when the drought hit, and the town defaulted on its bonds. For Boston, it was a number of factors. It was a rather rough and lawless town with plenty of saloons and a number of unsavory characters that terrorized the citizens from time to time. Added to that was the loss of the chance to get the county seat. The people finally had had enough and started moving away

to more genteel locales. The others also failed for a variety of reasons, most of which were connected to the drought. Of the almost thirty towns and post offices that were established during the last two decades of the 19th century, only two remain today: Springfield and Vilas. Of course, when we talk of towns in Baca County, many of these places that popped up on the various maps were not towns in the sense that we would think of a town. Most were a collection of maybe one to three buildings, with one of the buildings housing a post office. Some of the "towns" were not even that. They were a post office that was being run out of a ranch or farm house. Lamport is a good example of that. It was originally nothing more than a Post Office that was located in a house on the Lamport Ranch.

In the early 1900s the rains returned, and with them came a second wave of settlement. In fact, the early



WPA Bridge over Bear Creek near Walsh



Midway, gas is still \$0.32 per gallon

1900s was probably one of the wettest periods in the history of the county. In 1909 a second Homestead Act was passed that doubled the amount of land a homesteader could claim to 320 acres. They could also claim an additional 300 acres of non-irrigable land. This would be land that was located in a canyon or on the sides of a mesa, etc. Also in 1909 the Two Buttes Reservoir was started with the promise of being able to bring more land under irrigation. This never really worked out, and eventually the reservoir was turned over to the fish and game department for recreational use. Today it is a State Wildlife Area.

During this period, much of the grassland was plowed under for farming. However, not much if anything was known at this time about good soil conservation practices; this lack of knowledge would come back to exact a terrible toll in the not too distant future. In less than two decades there

would come the great depression and the period know as the "Dirty Thirties," a period forever burned into America's collective memory as the "Dust Bowl." The land literally blew away. The storm of April 14, 1935, known as Black Sunday, was the one that finally caught the attention of Washington. From this came the New Deal and the creation of Soil Conservation Districts. But the damage had been done. Once again, of the over twenty towns and post offices that had sprung up during the early 1900s, only four remain today: Campo, Walsh, Pritchett and Two Buttes. After the Dust Bowl many of the farms and homesteads that had been abandoned, were reclaimed by the Government. The Government bought up over eleven million acres and attempted to turn it back into grasslands. Today the heart of the Dust Bowl is home to several of these grasslands, two of which are in Colorado. Some 600,000 acres in

Baca County lie within the Comanche National Grasslands.

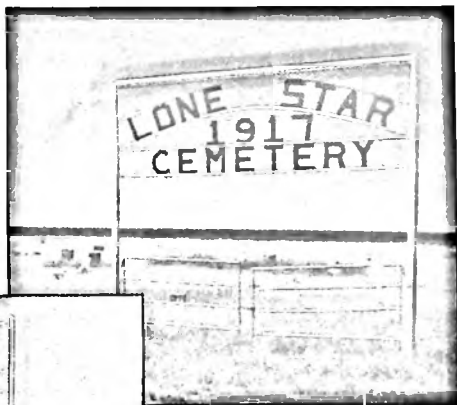
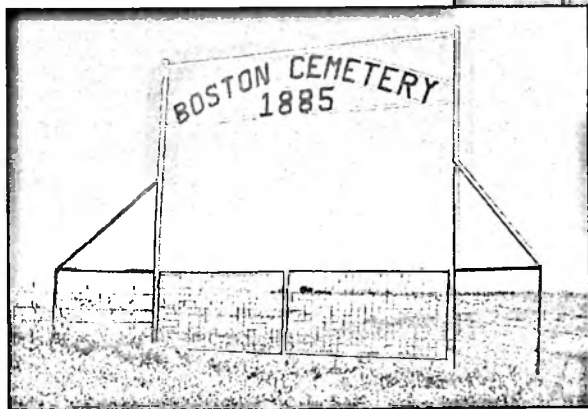
There have been droughts in Baca County since the Dust Bowl, most notably in the 1950s when the "dusters" returned. There was some soil drifting in the 1970s and again during the 2000-2003 period, but overall, the land fared much better, thanks to the soil conservation programs.

Today, Baca County is full of ghosts. Ghost towns, ghost homesteads, schools and streams. Of the dozens of creeks and streams in the county, you would be hard pressed to find water in any of them much of the time. Water, or the lack of it has always been the controlling factor in the fortunes of Baca County. Of the six towns that exist in the county today, at least a couple of them are on life support. Springfield,

the county seat, is probably the best off, being on the railroad and at the junction of the two major highways that cross the county north or south and east or west. But even Springfield has had some problems. It has lost some businesses in recent years and can't seem to attract new ones; because, "It is just too far from anyplace."

Baca County will probably continue to have its ups and downs, and may even lose another town or two. But there will always be those who chose to stay, because there's no place else they would rather be.

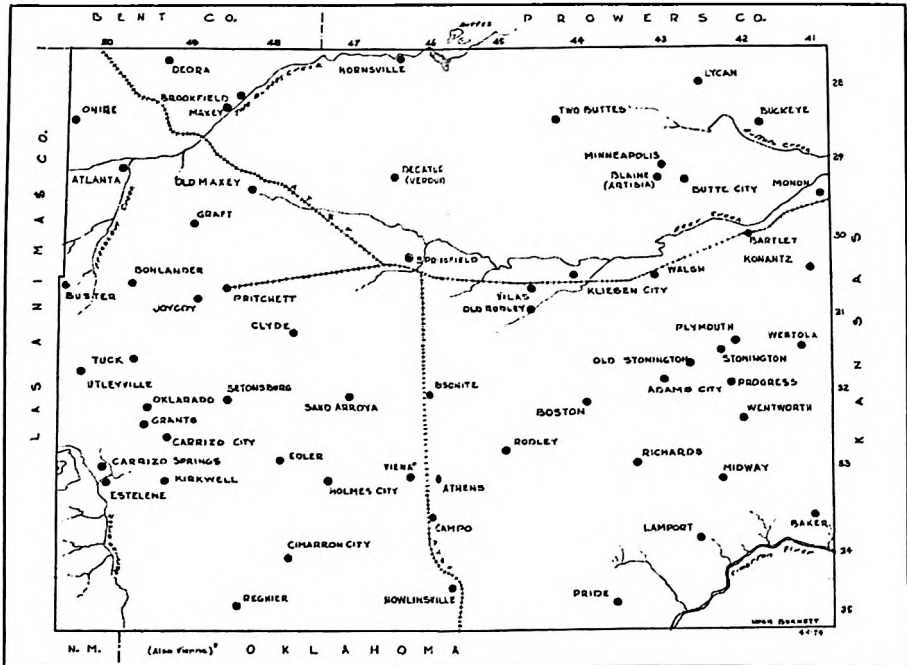
Looking for these old ghost towns can be a rather frustrating task at times. As mentioned before, a lot of these "towns" weren't really towns in the full sense of the word, but they all had names and they all showed up on



the maps. Many of the early records were lost in courthouse fires in 1910 and 1916, which complicates the task, and in some cases makes it almost impossible. Many of the maps that show these "towns" were published twenty or thirty years after the town had died, and each map seems to have a different idea about where the town was located. Sometimes towns are listed in

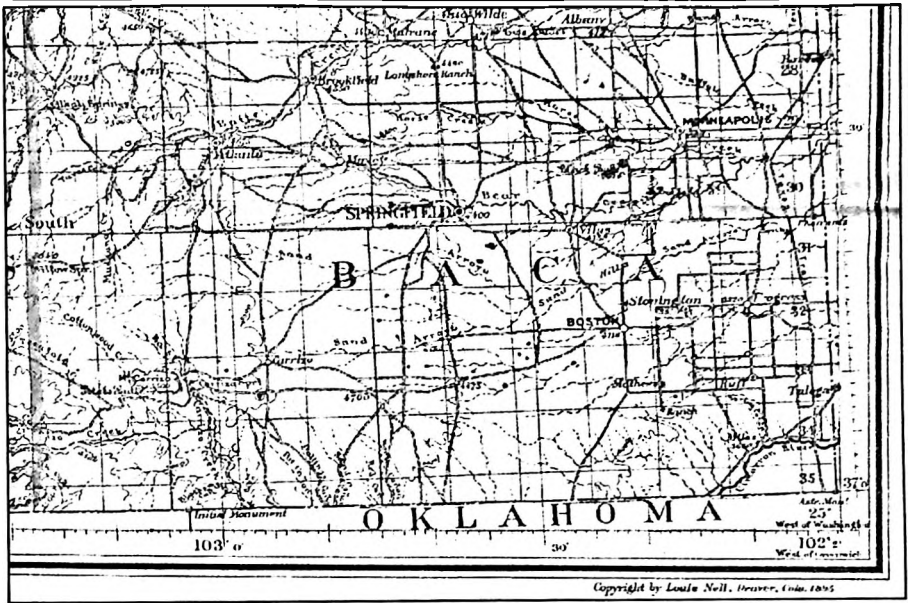
two or three different locations, either because the post office moved 2 or 3 times, or in some cases, because the town itself moved for one reason or another.

So if you should decide to go in search of Baca's ghosts, take along a good dose of patience, some really good maps, a full tank of gas and a love of solitude and dusty country roads.



*Ed and Nancy Bathke Collection*

Baca County Ghost Towns, by Hugh Burnett, in "Lost Towns of the Homesteaders," *The Denver Westerners Brand Book*, Vol. XXX



Copyright by Louis Nell, Denver, Colo. 1895

Ed and Nancy Bathke Collection

Nell's Map of Colorado, 1896, showing Baca County portion



# Over the Corral Rail

Compiled by Ed Bathke, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ed. Deadline is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the first month in the date of publication.

## Westerners Activities along the Front Range

In January Denver Posse member Bob Lane presented "A Postcard Tour of Colorado" to the Boulder Corral of Westerners. Pikes Peak Posse members Ed and Nancy Bathke presented "Charles Weittle, Photographic Entrepreneur" in Colorado Springs. The Colorado Corral of Westerners will join the Friends of Historic Fort Logan at their annual banquet, to hear Denver Posse member Jack Ballard present "Col. Henry C. Merriam and Fort Logan." Jack has authored a new book on Col. Merriam, this first principal post commander of Fort Logan. Also, Jack Ballard is the primary author of *Fort Logan*, recently published by the Friends of Historic Fort Logan.

## Denver Posse welcomes a new Corresponding Member

We welcome new corresponding members: 1) Fred and Sandra Mark, of Evergreen. Fred's father, Fred A. Mark, was a member of the Denver Westerners in the 60s and 70s. 2) Chris Lane, of Denver. Chris is the proprietor of Philadelphia Print Shop West and an expert on antique map collecting.

## Denver Posse Membership

With its inception in 1945, the objectives of the Denver Posse of Westerners have been "to investigate, discuss and publish the facts, and the color relating to the historic, social, political, economic and religious background and evolution of the American West, and to promote all corollary activities and interests." The wording of our goals has changed very little in the sixty-six-year history of the organization.

Specifically the membership classifications of the Denver Posse of Westerners are as follows:

1. **Active Posse Membership** is limited to those who have demonstrated active interest and participation in the objectives of the Posse. Such activity includes regular attendance of meetings (in May 1947 the rule was established that missing three meetings would be automatic cause for a change in membership to Corresponding status – today there is no such stringent requirement). Being literally active involves presentation of a program based on original historical research of the American West, and although not a stated requirement to become an Active Posse member, the presentation of a paper or commitment to do so is considered the primary way for election to the Active Posse. Additionally, a willingness to serve as an officer or committee member is also considered a duty of any Active Posse Member. Active Posse Members are obligated to buy a copy of

Denver Westerners publications, such as the *Brand Book*.

The number of Active Posse memberships has been limited, the number being increased to sixty-five members in 1992, when “old traditions” were changed to include women in this previously all-male group.

Active Posse membership is attained by submission of a letter of nomination, written by an Active or Reserve Posse Member, approval of the membership committee, and a reading of the nomination at two regular meetings of the Posse, followed by an affirmative vote by three-quarters of the members present at the meeting of the second reading.

2. **Reserve Posse.** Reserve Posse membership is limited to Active Posse Members who, because of their inability to be in reasonably regular attendance at the monthly meetings, request, or are recommended by the Membership Committee, to be transferred to Reserve Posse membership. Such requests are reviewed by the Membership Committee, and forwarded by the Board of Directors to the Active and Reserve Posse members for their vote of approval. Reserve Posse Members share equally with Active Posse Members in the responsibilities, privileges and obligations of Active Posse membership, except Reserve Posse Members are not required to attend meetings, and are ineligible to hold office.
3. **Corresponding Posse.** Corresponding membership is open to anyone with an interest in the history of the American West, upon submission of a membership application and payment of dues. Corresponding Members are not eligible to hold office and have no voting power, but are encouraged to take an active interest in the activities of the Denver Westerners, including attending meetings, presenting programs, becoming acquainted with the other Posse members, and learning the history of the organization.
4. **Honorary Membership.** This special category honors those who have made major contributions to the success of the activities of the Posse or who have made major contributions to the American West. An Honorary membership in the Posse is made upon recommendation of the Board of Directors and a majority vote of the Active and Reserve Posse Members at a regular meeting. This membership category has no financial obligation. Granting of this designation has been done on a very limited basis.

Election to Active Posse status in the Denver Posse of Westerners is considered an honor, and a position that has to be deserved, and has to be earned. Throughout the history of the Denver Posse, there has been discussion on the continuance of the tradition of these membership classes. But “old traditions” never die, and may not ever fade away.



## Westerners Bookshelf



**War Party in Blue: Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army** by Mark Van De Logt. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 2010. 350pp. Illustrations, photos, map, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$34.95

To historians and history buffs of the Indian fighting army, most likely the one group of Indian auxiliaries, or as they are most commonly called, Indian scouts, that devotedly served the U.S. Army that comes to mind are the Pawnee. The two men who were instrumental in recruiting these "Wolf Men" were Luther and Frank North.

In his new book *War Party in Blue: Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army*, Mark Van De Logt presents a very good and interesting account of the invaluable service of scouting done by the Pawnee for the Frontier Regulars. Even though their story has been told before in George Bird Grinnell's *Two Great Scouts and their Pawnee Battalion* and *Luther North: Frontier Scout* by Jeff O'Donnell, Logt concentrates his study by showing that the Pawnee played a major role in several military campaigns fought against hostile Indians from 1864-77. The author relates the exploits of many individual scouts that became tribal heroes and that today they have an honored place in Pawnee history. As Logt relates "scout lore in family oral traditions abounds." The descendants of these scouts have carried on the tradition of serving the military as soldiers even in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Pawnee scouts as skilled trackers battled their Native American enemies over a wide ranging area of Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, and Wyoming.

Mark Van De Logt's book is a welcome edition in the libraries of those that have an interest in the Indian fighting army or American Indian history.

--Mark Hutchins, P. M

**War Party in Blue Pawnee Scouts in the U.S. Army** by Mark Van De Logt. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 2010. 350pp. Photos, bibliography, map, index. Cloth, \$34.95.

During the Indian War era in the trans-Mississippi West, the military learned early the value of using Indians both as guides and scouts to assist them in their military campaigns. Author Mark Van De Logt has presented the unique story of the Pawnee and their connection with the military in various campaigns spanning the years 1864-1877.

Readers familiar with the Indian wars are aware of the North brothers (Frank and Luther), as they commanded the Pawnee. Their stories have been well documented over the years. Thus the story of the Pawnee Nation and its contributions has always been filtered through the story of the North brothers. Van De Logt



has attempted to advance our understanding by focusing on the Pawnee from the Pawnee perspective. He has succeeded very well.

Using heretofore untapped records from the National Archives, including individual Pawnee pension files, the author has given the reader a deeper understanding of the Pawnee Nation and its involvement with the U.S. Military. The results are not surprising: individual Pawnee saw an opportunity in joining forces with the military to do several things. It provided for them formidable weapons in which to fight their ancestral enemies, specifically the Sioux and the Cheyenne, and it further provided them opportunity to resist assimilation into white society, preserving the war component of their tribal history.

The opening chapter gives the reader a context from which one can better understand their desire to join forces with the military in taming the other Indian tribes, tribes with a long-standing history of war with the Pawnee Nation. Major Frank North first began using Pawnee scouts in the summer of 1864, along the Overland trail in Nebraska. When Cheyenne and Sioux in January and February 1865 retaliated after Sand Creek by attacking stage stations and ranches along the South Platte Trail, the military devised an expedition under the command of General Patrick E. Connor. The Powder River Campaign was the first larger military expedition that employed the Pawnee, and culminated with the fight at Tongue River on August 29. The Pawnee performed admirably, capturing hundreds of horses.

In 1867-1868 the Pawnee Battalion continued service under the leadership of Frank North in Nebraska, guarding the Union Pacific Railroad. Several clashes occurred with both Cheyenne and Sioux over these two summers.

The shining moment for the Pawnee occurred in 1869 when they participated as a formidable component of General Eugene A. Carr's 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Republican River Expedition. Carr's troops consisted of seven companies of cavalry as well as three companies of Pawnee, giving him a force of about 500 armed men, sent to find and punish an equal number of Cheyenne Dog Soldiers under the leadership of Tall Bull. Tall Bull has just made a series of deadly raids in north-central Kansas, killing several settlers and railroad workers, and taking two young women captive, both already pregnant at the time of their capture. Susanna's young daughter was also taken captive but was soon killed in the Cheyenne village. Van De Logt makes the error of saying the women were impregnated by the Cheyenne after their capture (p. 132. See *Dog Soldier Justice: The Ordeal of Susanna Alderdice in the Kansas Indian War*, pp. 96-99). Both women would remain in captivity for six weeks until Carr surprised the village in northeastern Colorado Territory on July 11. During the charge into the village, led by one company of Pawnee, Susanna was killed by her captors and Maria was gravely wounded but recovered.

After Summit Springs – the fight which broke the Dog Soldier society and ended deadly raids in Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado Territory – the Pawnee had minimal activity as military scouts from 1870-1874, but that changed with their participation in the 1874 Red River War, again bringing them in clashes with the Cheyenne, this time in the Texas Panhandle.

The Pawnee continued service in the Powder River Campaign with Crook

and Mackenzie in 1876-1877. Their motive this time was to avenge the 1873 ruthless slaughter by Brule and Oglala Sioux of dozens of Pawnee killed when caught off their reservation while on a buffalo hunt in southwestern Nebraska. Among the dead included thirty-nine women and ten children. Their significant fight then was the well-known Dull Knife battle in present-day Wyoming on November 25, 1976.

After the Powder River Campaign the Pawnee were finished as a separate all Indian unit for the military, and the Pawnee Battalion was disbanded, the Pawnee now moving to Indian territory, where the scouts now had to adjust to reservation life. Van De Logt has presented a well-crafted story of the Pawnee contribution to the settlement of the west.

*--Jeff Broome, P.M.*

**A Free and Hardy Life: Theodore Roosevelt's Sojourn in the American West**, by Clay S. Jenkinson. Forward by Douglas Brinkley. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman. 153pp. Photos, letters, numerical index. Hardback, \$45.00.

This lavishly illustrated coffee-table-style book tells the story of Theodore Roosevelt's Dakota years. It contains seventy stories, many set in the Dakota Territory, about Roosevelt's life as an adventurer, politician, and man of letters. There are over 150 photographs, some never previously published. Many of these photos are from the Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University in North Dakota, Harvard University, the Library of Congress and the National Park Service. It is an attractively designed book that does not have to be read from front to back to be enjoyed.

Theodore Roosevelt really ventured into the American West to seek authentic frontier experience and an active strenuous life style. In the process he fell in love with the badlands of what is now North Dakota. So much so that he invested a significant portion of his wealth in two badlands ranches, and he spent the better part of 1883-87 ranching, hunting, serving as deputy sheriff, writing books, and attempting to become an authentic American cowboy.

Mr. Jenkinson's introduction tells what Roosevelt learned from his sojourn in the West, including his commitment to conservation of American's natural resources. With a forward by best-selling biographer Douglas Brinkley, this book tells the story of Theodore Roosevelt's life in his own words, carefully excerpted from his 1913 autobiography.

If you are a fan of our twenty-sixth president you will read this book and respond with a hearty "bully"!

*--Max, P.M. and Donna Smith*

**Images of America Fort Logan** by Jack Stokes Ballard, PhD, and the Friends of Historic Fort Logan. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2011. 127 pages, photos, bibliography, no index. Softbound, \$21.99.

Jack Ballard and the Friends of Fort Logan have done an outstanding job in presenting a pictorial history of Fort Logan. Chapters are divided between the early years, the early 1900s to World War I, the time between the two world wars, World War II and beyond, the era of the fort served as a mental health center, and a chapter on the post and now national cemetery. Within each chapter are numerous photographs, each with a descriptive explanation, thus giving the reader a visual and mental diorama of the history of Fort Logan.

An introduction gives a brief history of Fort Logan, thus giving a context to the pictorial chapters that follow. The post began in the late fall of 1887, on October 31. A growing railroad network across the West, as well as a diminishing Indian problem led for both the closing of old forts and the establishment of posts which could utilize the railroad when needed. When President Cleveland signed the Teller Bill in early 1887, an appropriation of \$100,000 was made to establish a post in the urban Denver area. Soon eleven potential sites were selected and by March Lt. Gen. Philip Sheridan ventured out and chose the proposed site that established Fort Logan.

Permanent structures were built in 1888 which included officer quarters made of brick, a headquarters as well as barracks for six infantry and four cavalry companies. In addition a commissary building was constructed as well as a guardhouse and other buildings. The parade ground comprised thirty-two acres. Soon the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad built a spur to Fort Logan. It took until 1897 before the last building was constructed.

At first the post was named Fort Sheridan – soon that name would be given to the town that grew next to the fort – but another post already had that name, so the post was instead named in honor of Illinois senator and Civil War general John Alexander Logan. General Logan today is associated with the founding of our annual Memorial Day recognition.

Companies from the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry came to the fort on May 16, 1889, having marched 206 miles from Fort Laramie, upon the closure of that historic fort. Companies from the 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry arrived at Fort Logan later that fall. The last Sioux uprising, culminating in the engagement at Wounded Knee in late 1890, was the last and only Indian war episode involving Fort Logan troops. While they were ordered out in that expedition, they did not take part in any fights.

More troops came and went in the ensuing years, including companies of cavalry, which first arrived in 1894, from Fort Bowie, Arizona. The cavalry would remain until 1904.

Fort Logan participated in all the ensuing wars, beginning with the Spanish American War in 1898, and of course World War I as well as World War II. Indeed, it was on the conclusion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War that the fort soon closed, “declared

surplus effective May 7, 1946." But this pictorial history does not end with the fort's closing. Veteran's Administration hospital beds were utilized at the fort until the VA opened a hospital in Denver in 1951. In late 1959 308 acres of ground were transferred from the federal government to the state government, and in about a year Colorado used the fort grounds as a new mental hospital, opening the Fort Logan Mental Health Center, with the first patients arriving July 17, 1961. Thirty years later the name was changed to the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Fort Logan.

One nice thing about Fort Logan is the modern use of the original parade grounds for youth recreational activities, soccer being the most common. In addition the Field Officers' Quarters became a museum, and, of particular interest to members of the Denver Westerners, it is on the top floor of the museum that is housed the library of the Denver Westerners.

All-in-all, this little pictorial history of Fort Logan is an excellent source for information regarding this historic post. The numerous pictures with captions give the reader more than enough information to learn about Fort Logan. Anyone interested in local history, history of forts in the west or just a general history in western history should own this monograph. Jack Ballard, in addition to the assistance he received from various people with the Friends of Historic Fort Logan, did an outstanding job in putting this story together.

*--Jeff Broome, P.M.*

**Wild Horses of the West, History and Politics of America's Mustangs**, by J. Edward De Steiguer. University of Arizona Press, 2011. 248 pages. Photos, maps, index, bibliography, footnotes. Softbound, \$24.95.

Ancestral horses lived in what is now North America but died out millions of years ago. Horses did migrate to or otherwise inhabit Eurasia, and came back to the Americas via the Spanish Conquest.

De Steiguer breaks the book into three parts: "All About Horses," "Horses Return to the Americas," and "Protecting Wild Horses." He delves into the origins of the horse, horses and humans, their social nature, and so on in the first section. In the second, he traces the return, starting with the first horses brought by the Spanish. The spread of the horse and its use by Natives and Europeans throughout North America is examined from the 1500s to the 1900s. Of particular interest is how some tribes adopted and adapted to them while others did not.

Lastly the author examines the modern day "save the mustangs" movement. The interplay between nonprofits, Congress, and the BLM is adroitly explained.

The book gives an interesting and objective look at an important but often overlooked aspect of Western history.

*--Stan Moore, P.M.*

**Made In Hanford, The Bomb that Changed the World**, by Hill Williams. Washington State University Press, 2011. 190 pages. Photos, maps, bibliography, index. Softbound, \$22.95.

The story of the Cold War is starting to take shape. This book begins in WWII and laps over into the Cold War. In some ways this is a personal account: the author was a young man there in 1941; his family boarded some scientists in early 1943, before staff housing became available. This book details one of World War's II's early intellectual and technical achievements: the H-bomb factory in Hanford, Washington.

Williams weaves the selection and development of the Hanford site with personal accounts of the changes wrought in the area. He also explains – well and clearly – the theory of atom splitting, the energy that makes available, and how new elements – i.e. plutonium – come to be. Fermi, Szilard, Hahn, Compton and other physicists and chemists come to life, as do General Leslie Groves, Manhattan Project overseer and ramrod, and Colonel Franklin Matthias, Hanford site boss.

The author tells of the site development, bomb engineering, development and manufacture, and its subsequent testing (never, thankfully, was it used). Also he describes how the effort here tied in with work at Los Alamos and Oak Ridge, the other main sites of the Manhattan Project. He touches on the politics of the times, particularly 1945-52 or so. The aftermath of the Bikini and other atoll evacuations and H-bomb tests are examined. That said, this is not a political work, rather an account of the site's history and contributions to modern day science, technology and engineering.

It is an interesting technical and scientific tale, well and thoroughly researched and told.

--Stan Moore, P.M.

**Violent Encounters: Interviews on Western Massacres** by Deborah and Jon Lawrence. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 2011. 258pp. Photos, bibliography, map, index. Cloth, \$34.95.

This book represents interviews with various authors noted for their publications on violent engagements involving Native Americans, in what the book identifies as “merciless killing” in the nineteenth century. These aren't just battles, but represent violent encounters where innocent people – women, children, and elderly – “were mercilessly slaughtered.” And it wasn't always Euro-American against Native American. Included in the survey is the infamous Mountain Meadows massacre, in which mostly Mormons, disguised as Indians, attacked and slaughtered nearly 100 women and children in southwest Utah on September 11, 1857, the first very real and very deadly terrorist attack upon innocent American citizens.

The purpose for interviewing noted authors was to “discuss what it means to conceptualize a historical event, the ways in which history is used as a political tool, and the need for the incorporation of multiple viewpoints when constructing past

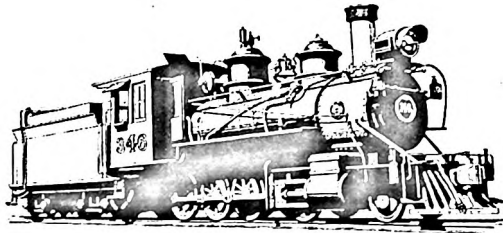
events." Included among the authors interviewed are well-known academic historians Michael Tate, Ned Blackhawk and Albert Hurtado, as well as what the authors identify as "public" historians Marc Simmons, Will Bagley and the prolific Indian war authors Robert Utley and Jerome Greene. Included too are anthropologist Chip Colwell-Chanthaphonh and journalist Margot Mifflin. Simmons covers the 1883 McComas family massacre. Mifflin is interviewed on the famous 1851 Oatman family massacre and captivity and rescue of Olive Oatman. Bagley appropriately talks about the 1857 Mountain Meadows massacre. Chanthaphonh reports on the 1871 Camp Grant massacre. Tate focuses on violence on the Overland Trails while Hurtado is interviewed on conflict with California Indians. Utley appropriately covers the Sioux wars while Greene does the same with the Cheyenne. Blackhawk talks about conflict in the Great Basin.

Each chapter includes a summary of the violent incidents and events and then the authors present a series of questions to each noted author, seeking to draw out their understanding of the incident or series of events in question. What is particularly interesting in the questions is what the authors say about their individual research findings, particularly as they incorporate a deeper understanding of the events as a result of their long interest and research.

Each chapter can be read on its own with no particular order necessary from which to begin. And in many instances the reader will be surprised to learn of new information or new understanding involving the respective event. Each author demonstrates very well his individual expertise.

If there is a complaint about the book it might be in who or what was excluded. Certainly Gregory Michno should have been interviewed, given his wide array of publications on the Indian wars, including Custer's last battle, Sand Creek as well as his encyclopedia books on the Indian wars and Indian captivity. In fact, Michno's publications aren't included in the bibliography, which is a shame. Nor are John Monnett and other well-known Indian war authors' important works found in the bibliography. But do not let this complaint distract from the book. It remains a very well-done book sure to arouse further interest in the long struggle of the Western frontier Indian wars. It represents an interesting and unique approach to gaining a deeper understanding of what we know about this important era in western history.

*--Jeff Broome, P.M.*



**The Mormon Rebellion: America's First Civil War, 1857-1858** by David L. Bigler and Will Bagley. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 2011. 384 pp. Illustrations, photos, map, footnotes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$34.95.

After being driven out of Ohio and Missouri, and facing an extermination order issued by the governor of Illinois, the Mormons settled in Utah in 1847. They wanted isolation and room to grow where "none would come to hurt or make afraid." Within a year after arrival they sent a delegation to Washington petitioning for statehood. That request was not seriously considered by Congress, yet they did grant Utah territorial status in 1850.

That was not what the Mormons had in mind. They wanted statehood that might give them the authority to create homegrown "theo-democracy" where they could practice their religion (including polygamy), where Indians would not be considered enemies but misguided brothers in need of enlightenment, and where they could control the distribution of land, presumably in a manner to keep the "gentiles" at bay. They revered the founding fathers and supported the constitution, but did not want Federal interference in how they governed themselves. They reluctantly accepted territorial status and set about to circumvent any Federal regulation that did not fit into their theocracy. Conflict was inevitable and authors David Bigler and Will Bagley did an excellent job at presenting the details of this civil disagreement.

Federal officials could not tolerate the homegrown theo-democracy practiced in Utah and, after their usual practices to establish territorial rule had failed, concluded that force was their only course. President James Buchanan ordered no less than 2,500 soldiers to enter Utah Territory and establish federal authority. They were also ordered not to attack any civilians except in self-defense. The Mormons, led by Brigham Young, were also determined to prevent bloodshed and a war of attrition ensued. For a while, the Mormons had the upper hand. They burned the army's supply wagons and drove off their stock, forcing the troops to spend a cold, hungry winter in Wyoming. Yet the Mormons knew they could not prevail against the U. S. Army and, six months behind schedule, troops peacefully entered the Salt Lake valley.

The authors place the blame for the "Utah War" on the unwillingness of Brigham Young to accept federal authority. "It was always his war," stated the authors. Others will take exception, some calling the disagreement "Buchanan's blunder" and adding that Young's theo-democracy was not sustainable from the start and military intervention was unwarranted. This debate continues and it sadly reflects on today's international events. When political principles conflict with religious beliefs, we still do not know how to resolve the conflict.

--Rick Barth, P.M.

**Eldorado! The Archaeology of Gold Mining in the Far North**, Spude, Catherine Holder, Mills, Robin O., Gurcke, Karl, and Sprague, Roderick, Editors. University of Nebraska Press, 2011. 357 pages, maps photos, tables, bibliography, index. Soft-bound, \$55.00.

There has long been a gap between historians and archeologists. Nowhere is this more clear than in Eldorado! One of the fundamentals of this gap is that archeologists go to long, extended digs to establish what the historical record already shows. This is not to say that archeology cannot add to the historical record, usually in the details of what they dig up.

Thus it is with Eldorado! There is a rich historical record of the Klondyke Gold Rush, and the early and subsequent expansions into other areas in Alaska and the Northwest Territories. And to their credit, there is a rich bibliography of such sources included in this book. One would suppose therefore that they would use their findings to confirm what is in the historical record.

There are some very well-written, well-researched chapters in this book. Chapters 6, 7, 10, and others are interesting accounts of aspects of life in the mining and supply camps of the Far North. On the other hand, chapters 2,3, and 4 consist of intellectualized sociology and other baloney. The attempt to artificially categorize and organize aspects of the Gold rushes is particularly annoying to historians.

The Klondyke Gold Rush is one the best documented rushes in history. Live accounts were provided by a number of journalists, as well as letters, journals and later books written by the participants. The historical record tells us in great detail how the prospective miners organized, traveled, and worked the diggings. It tells us how they lived, played, got rich or not, and died. Apart from providing lists of artifacts recovered from cabin sites, middens, and depositories along the trails these archeological studies add little to the record.

The book is not well organized – Chapter 5, *New Perspectives from the North* should have followed Bob Spude's Historical Introduction, instead of the *Archeology 101* lessons of Chapters 2-4. There are, perhaps inevitably some inaccuracies, the least forgivable of which is Bob Spude's claim that Skookum Jim discovered the first gold near Dawson. People who were there usually give Robert Henderson credit, and it was he who suggested that George Carmack and Skookum Jim, et al, go investigate the site on Bonanza Creek that ultimately led to the rush.

Finally, the total lack of foot or endnotes, very poor maps, and often small photographs add to the low quality of this book. It will appeal to those who are interested in artifacts, but probably not to those interested in the history of gold mining in the Far North.

--Alan Culpin, P.M.





The DENVER WESTERNERS  
**ROUNDUP**

March - April 2012

### Kile's Signatures

12/9/65

*John Kile*

11/23/66

*John Kelly*

7/24/67

*John Kile*

6/2/70

*John Kyle*

6/9/70

*John Kile*

**The Soldier who almost killed Wild Bill Hickok:  
John Kyle, John Kelly or John Kile?  
by Dr. Jeff Broome, P.M.  
(presented February 23, 2011)**

*The Allen of Eden*



## Our Author

James Jefferson ("Jeff") Broome is a fifth-generation Colorado native. His great-great-grandfather, William A. Watson, came to Colorado in 1859 and settled down as a rancher near Wetmore.

Jeff received his BS (1975) in philosophy/psychology at Colorado State University at Pueblo; his MA (1976) in philosophy at Baylor University, Waco, Texas; his MA (1993) and Ph.D. (1998) in philosophy at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He has taught specialized courses in history at Arapahoe Community College, where he has been since 1985.

Jeff has four children, the youngest of which, James "Kile" Broome, born in 2008, is named after John Kile. (In photo.)

Western history has been a lifelong interest. *Dog Soldier Justice* was his first book. He has also written *Custer into the West* (2009) as well as Hume's "New Scene of Thought" and *The Several Faces of David Hume in the Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (2009) and several articles on the Indian wars in magazines and journals. He is writing two other manuscripts.

This is his 5th presentation with the Denver Westerners.

## THE DENVER WESTERNERS

# ROUNDUP

VOL. LXVIII NO. 2



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## **The Soldier who almost killed Wild Bill Hickok: John Kyle, John Kelly or John Kile? by Dr. Jeff Broome, P.M. (presented February 23, 2011)**

Soldiers at Camp Sturgis had ended another repetitious day with the final tattoo in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry camp, located about two miles down Big Creek from Fort Hays, and not far from the bawdy railroad town of Hays City. July 17, 1870 was a typical Kansas summer day in the monotony of a soldier's life on the frontier, with the exception that on that day eighty-four new recruits had arrived earlier for various company assignments into Brevet Major General George Armstrong Custer's cavalry regiment. First Lieutenant Tom Custer's Company M would receive some of the recruits. Tom's two Medals of Honor, awarded for hand-to-hand fighting in the capture of two Confederate battle flags in the Civil War in 1865, led his more famous brother, in command of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, to opine that it ought to be his brother Tom who should be the general and himself the junior officer.<sup>1</sup>

Three weeks before the arrival of so many new recruits, another new enlistee, John Kile, had arrived for duty and was soon transferred from Company I to Company M. Kile was in his second enlistment, or so his papers showed. He ended his prior enlistment in the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry as a 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant. Like Tom Custer, he too had a Medal of Honor, awarded the summer before for heroic action in the Republican River Expedition while serving under 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry commander Brevet Major General Eugene A. Carr. New enlistee Kile had reason to celebrate his recent good

fortune in reenlisting into the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, and the saloon across Big Creek was just the place to take this celebration. Along with fellow trooper Jerry Lonergan, they patiently waited until the camp grew still and then left their tented bunks and quietly slipped out of camp and down to the bridge that took them over Big Creek and into Hays City. Kile had tucked his Remington service revolver under his belt, pulling his shirt up a bit to cover the weapon. Perhaps he wanted to have it ready in case their celebrating got a little out of hand and it was needed for protection.

Arriving on Main Street about 9 PM they went to a favorite haunt of the soldiers, Tommy Drum's Saloon. Kile's cause for celebration had to do with the fact that he had just been exonerated from being charged as a deserter in Company M, under the alias John Kelley. He was one of the company's corporals when he left Custer's command in the summer of 1867, during Custer's first Indian campaign, hunting hostile Brule Lakota and Southern Cheyenne warriors. Custer was informed soon after Kile's arrival as a new recruit that he had been a deserter from Custer's command when the soldiers three years earlier had camped near Fort McPherson on June 20. When Kile was brought to Custer's tent shortly after reporting to Camp Sturgis and shown his meritorious papers and Medal of Honor - awarded in 1869 - Custer listened to Kile's explanation as to why he had

earlier deserted, believed his disappearance had been unintentional, and absolved him of arrest and court-martial. He then reassigned him from Company I, where he had been randomly assigned upon re-enlisting on June 9 and placed him back to his original Company M. Unknown to Custer at the time, Kile had the year before spent eight months of hard labor as punishment for an earlier desertion from the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. Custer absolving him of his 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry desertion was cause for celebration.

The two soldiers had been drinking long enough to get drunk and no doubt boisterous, probably two to four hours of merrymaking. Famed frontiersman Wild Bill Hickok was also in the saloon. Having lost his election as Ellis County sheriff at the end of 1869 - Hays City was the biggest town in Ellis County - he was now employed as a deputy U.S. marshal. This was his first and only visit back to Hays City after losing the election. When he had served as sheriff the year before Hickok may well have had some run-ins with Kile's comrade, Jerry Lonergan. Kile's career prior to 1870 did not cross paths with Hickok so there was no reason for a feud between him and Hickok. But there was for Lonergan, for he had been stationed near Hays City since his enlistment and arrival to Company M in early 1868. Some propose that the brawl began with a number of soldiers - including Lonergan - taunting Hickok for his long hair and making fun of his reputation built off of an earlier *Harp-er's Weekly* account of Hickok's wild fracas at a stage station in Nebraska where he had killed several men in a shootout.<sup>2</sup>

Some combination of both

accounts may ultimately be correct. Lonergan had a reputation as a pugilist with a quick temper that soared when drunk and Hickok may well have subdued him with the butt end of one of his pistols the year before. Now, with enough alcohol in him to fuel his resentment against Hickok, he might have started the brawl with taunts against his earlier foe. Regardless as to how it started Lonergan quickly threw himself upon the back of Hickok, who was probably leaning against the bar counter. He quickly took Wild Bill down, holding his arms from the back, preventing Hickok from freeing his hands. But Lonergan couldn't keep him from pulling a pistol out of his holster and trying to fire behind him. Kile, seeing Hickok gaining the advantage against his comrade, quickly pulled his Remington from his waist and put the barrel against Hickok's ear. To Wild Bill's fortune the shot misfired and before Kile could get off a second shot Hickok pulled his trigger, the bullet striking Kile in the wrist. A second shot soon followed, piercing Kile through his stomach from one side to the other. With Kile collapsing on the ground mortally wounded, Wild Bill got off yet a third shot - this one striking Lonergan in the knee and thus freeing him from the soldier's grasp.<sup>3</sup>

With that, Hickok sprang to his feet and jumped through the window and into the night, never again to appear in Hays City. Of course, had Kile's revolver not misfired few people today would know of Wild Bill Hickok. But instead, the drunken brawl in 1870 became one of the famous fights Hickok managed to win in his impressive array of incredibly violent encounters on

his way to lasting fame as probably the most accurate, lucky and uncanonically brave of all the American plainsmen who endure today in the legacy of famous gunfighters. Private John Kile, on the other hand, was doomed to be the usually misnamed, if named at all, victim in Hickok's blazoned path to Western glory and folklore.

Unraveling the facts of the brawl is not easy to accommodate. The first biography coming out after Hickok's demise from an assassin's bullet on August 2, 1876 in the new mining town of Deadwood, Dakota Territory, sought to embellish the brawl with more fiction than fact, saying the fight involved fifteen soldiers and began in Paddy Welch's [Walsh's] saloon a few doors east of Tommy Drum's Saloon. A drunken and unruly sergeant challenged Wild Bill to a fight in the street. Wild Bill easily was winning the fight against the sergeant when fourteen of his comrades rushed to his defense, leaving Hickok powerless to their battering when the saloon owner handed Wild Bill his revolvers. One soldier was quickly killed, soon three more were shot dead and another two were mortally wounded. Wild Bill himself took seven shots to his body but was able to escape and recover.<sup>4</sup> This story got repeated by Hickok biographers until 1933 when another biographer decided to change the story. Now the perpetrator of the brawl was not a sergeant but rather General Custer's own brother, Lieutenant Tom Custer. According to this version Tom Custer liked to get drunk in the town when Hickok was the sheriff. Hickok always arrested him but Custer's famous brother always got him off the hook. Finally Tom got drunk yet

another time and ran his horse into a saloon. When he couldn't get it to jump on the billiard table - something Hickok would occasionally do with his horse - Custer shot his horse dead in the saloon. Hickok again had him arrested, and now, a year later when Hickok visited Hays City it was Tom Custer who was behind the soldiers conspiring to kill Hickok.<sup>5</sup> Biographers couldn't even agree as to when the brawl took place, some saying it happened on New Year's Day or even in February 1870.<sup>6</sup>

The more accurate account, however, was written by a soldier who knew the men involved. John Ryan's account was not discovered until 2000, though a version had been printed in an obscure Massachusetts newspaper in 1909. It is consistent with military records and reminiscences as well as the newspapers which also reported the brawl. Ryan, who in 1870 was a sergeant of Tom Custer's Company N was the soldier who had served as a fellow corporal with John Kile when Kile earlier used the alias Kelley. In fact, the two corporals, along with the company bugler, deserted together on the same night in 1867. Ryan turned himself in, was court-martialed and exonerated, having argued that he had become lost in a dense fog that prevented him from finding the cavalry camp after trying to retrieve water before a morning march.<sup>7</sup> No doubt that same story was what Kile shared with Custer upon returning in 1870 and was part of the reason for him being reassigned back to Company M. Ryan's long-lost memoirs, however, never acknowledged his own 1867 desertion, though he did take credit for helping Kile get restored back to Company M.

The Facts	Dec. 9, 1865	Nov. 23, 1866	July 24, 1867	June 2, 1870	June 9, 1870
Name/ Alias	Kile	Kelley	Kile	Kyle	Kile
Unit/ Enlistment	5th Cavalry Nashville	7th Cavalry Cincinnati	37th Infantry St. Louis	1st Infantry New York	7th Cavalry Chicago
Place of Birth	Cincinnati	Cincinnati	Troy, New York	Cincinnati	Troy, New York
Age/ Birth Year	Age 19 1846	Age 21 1845	Age 21 1845	Age 25 1841	Age 24 1846
Eye color/ hair color	Hazel eyes sandy hair	Gray eyes red hair	Hazel eyes sandy hair	Hazel eyes sandy hair	Hazel eyes sandy hair
Height	5'7"	5'5 ¼"	5'5"	5'5"	5'6 ¾"
Desertions/ Discharges	Nov. 20, 1866	June 20, 1867	May 1, 1868 Dishonorable discharge	June 3, 1870	Killed July 18, 1870

Unraveling Kile's own personal story that brought him to the barroom floor of Drum's Saloon, however, reveals a personality with experiences that probably no other soldier of the Indian war era could match. His full story has remained hidden in the National Archives in Washington DC. His fatal night with Hickok did make itself into the writings of both General Custer, in *My Life on the Plains*, and his wife Libbie, in *Following the Guidon*. Wrote Libbie: "With the free hand the scout drew his pistol from the belt, fired backward without seeing, and his shot, even under these circumstances, was a fatal one. The soldier dropped dead,..."<sup>8</sup> General Custer recalled: "I have a personal knowledge of at least a half a dozen men whom he [Wild Bill] has at various times killed, one of those being at the time a member of my command."<sup>9</sup>

Kile, however, did not drop dead on the floor of Drum's Saloon. Mortally wounded, he was taken back across the creek and into the post hospital at Fort Hays, where he succumbed the next morning. His fatal exploit was recorded in the diary of a young woman visiting the fort that summer, Annie Gibson Roberts, who would later marry one of Custer's officers who perished near him at the Little Bighorn six years later. Annie Roberts:

In the middle of the night we were aroused by a man wanting a priest, Father Swembergh to go over to the town with him – for 'God's Sake' - that two men were shot. He went over – 'Wild Bill,' a celebrated Desperado shot them. One died this morning [July 18] – there were shots fired backwards & forwards across the bridge.<sup>10</sup>

John Kile, in addition to being identified as John Kelley, has also been identified as John Kyle. Ryan's *Mem-oirs* explain: "I was informed later that his right name was Kyle, and that he belonged either in Chicago, Ill., or Cincinnati, O."<sup>11</sup> Military records prove, however, that his real name was John Kile. The different names of this same soldier has even led one author to declare that Hickok killed two soldiers in the brawl, one named John Kile who died on the barroom floor and the other named John Kelley who died the next day in the post hospital.<sup>12</sup> The truth couldn't be further from the claim. John Kelley and John Kile/Kyle was one and the same person. Enlistment records show that John Kile first enlisted as a teenager in the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry on December 9, 1865. On November 20, 1866 he deserted. Three days later, on November 23, he re-enlisted as John Kelley into the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. On June 20, 1867 he deserted the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry (with Ryan and the company bugler, as mentioned before). On July 24 he re-enlisted as John Kile into the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry. On May 1, 1868 he was court-martialed and given a dishon-

orable discharge as well as a three-year prison sentence. He was never escorted to prison, no doubt escaping. He then turned himself in - in Tennessee - on August 19, 1868 to face a court-martial for his 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry desertion of 1866. He was sentenced to twelve months' hard labor but had four months taken off for voluntarily surrendering himself and, upon conclusion of that sentence in May 1869, he participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Republican River Expedition. On July 8 he had a fight with Indians that resulted in his receiving the Medal of Honor, awarded on August 24, 1869. Kile's name, however, was misspelled as Kyle in the papers awarding him the coveted medal. On May 17, 1870 he finished his 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry enlistment as a first sergeant, a soldier described as having good character. On June 2 he re-enlisted - using the misspelled name John Kyle - into the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry in Buffalo, New York. He deserted the next day and then re-enlisted one last time, back in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, on June 9 - as John Kile - reporting for duty at Fort Hays on June 26, three weeks before his fatal brawl with Hickok. It is hard

to believe that in the midst of all these desertions, aliases and re-enlistments he somehow managed to be recognized for unusual gallantry and awarded the Medal of Honor.

Unlike other victims of Hickok in his violent gunfights that gave the gunfighter lasting fame, victims who were unknown except to family and friends, whose personal life stories are lost to history today,



*Courtesy Leon Staab, Frontier Photography, Hays, KS*

Tommy Drum Saloon c.1870s

much of Kile's military career can be reconstructed from military records. The story that emerges makes for a rebuilt glimpse into the life of one man and his destiny with Hickok. Perhaps not surprisingly, alcohol played a significant role in every blemish in this man's military career.

Before pulling out Kile's complicated military record, let's first look at the other man wounded by Wild Bill Hickok, Jerry Lonergan. His enlistment papers show that he was an Irish immigrant, born in Cork, Ireland. His earlier occupation was that of a baker. He was 22 years old when he enlisted, which was at New York City on December 26, 1867. Shortly after, he was assigned to Company M, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, where he remained throughout his service. He was described as having hazel eyes, brown hair, fair complexion and was five feet, nine and a quarter inches tall, big in those days but not quite as big as Hickok, who stood at five feet, eleven inches tall.<sup>13</sup> When Lonergan was wounded he stayed in the Fort Hays post hospital until his discharge more than a month later, on August 25.<sup>14</sup> He remained in Company M at Fort Hays for another five months when he was placed under arrest and faced a court-martial. The charge was conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline. In another drunken bout occurring after taps on January 31, 1871, he repeatedly kicked at a sleeping Corporal John Zametzer, yelling "Get out of that bed, you Dutch son of a bitch, you bastard.... If I had a revolver I would kill every Dutch son of a bitch in the quarters." Later in his bout he drew a knife and threatened to assault 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Frederick Thies, one of the

new recruits who had arrived at Hays on the day of Lonergan's earlier drunken encounter with Hickok. In addition, as the court-martial record notes, later that night Lonergan did, "with forethought and malicious intent, commit a nuisance in the quarters of his troop." That nuisance was defecating near the bunk of his company sergeant.

One of the eyewitnesses testifying against Lonergan said that "he would shit in the room [barracks] if he had a mind to and nobody would say a word to him." As one soldier noted, Lonergan made good on his threat and "made a deposit of man manure on the floor."

When all of this was reported to Captain Frederick W. Benteen, who was Officer of the Day, he ordered 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Thies to escort Lonergan to the guardhouse. When Lonergan was told he was being arrested he replied: "Before I go to the guardhouse I shall give you some more trouble." Thies, who had advanced from a new recruit in July to company 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant by December, testified that upon receiving that threat he ... put on my belt and pistol and then ordered him to follow me to the guardhouse immediately. Upon that the prisoner drew a clasp knife from his pocket, opened it, and said, "If you say another word to me I'll cut the guts out of you." I, knowing the disposition of the prisoner, then drew my pistol and thereby probably prevented actual violence on his part.

When the four-day trial was finished the court found Lonergan guilty on all counts. After his summer brawl with Hickok it appeared the military wanted him out of the cavalry. He was sentenced to be confined at



RC 47 A100 AFFICE  
BOX 432  
ENTRY 71 ENLISTMENT PAPERS

STATE OF Mississippi TOWN OF Shashville

John Kelly was a Resident in the Town of Shashville in the State of Mississippi and by occupation a Farmer the military commission to him voluntarily entered the 6th of February 1862

of THE YEAR, unless sooner discharged by proper authority. He does agree to accept such bounty, pay, allowances, or any, or any fee, authorized by law. And I, John Kelly do hereby certify, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America; and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opponents whatsoever; and that I will observe all the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles of War.

Witness my hand and seal this 9th day of December 1865

John Kelly  
By John Kelly U.S.A.

I CERTIFY, that I have solemnly sworn to observe exact truth, fidelity to the United States of America, and that I will support the same to the best of my power and ability, without regard to any party. Witness my hand and seal this 9th day of December 1865

John Kelly  
By John Kelly U.S.A.

National Archives Bldg., Washington D.C.

STATE OF Mississippi TOWN OF Shashville

John Kelly was a Resident in the Town of Shashville in the State of Mississippi and by occupation a Farmer the military commission to him voluntarily entered the 6th of February 1862

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John Kelly  
By John Kelly U.S.A.

National Archives Bldg., Washington D.C.

Kile's 1st enlistment in the 5th Cavalry Dec. 9, 1865

Kile's 2nd enlistment Nov. 23, 1866 in the 7th Cavalry

Fort Leavenworth for the remainder of his enlistment, to forfeit all pay and, at the conclusion of his sentence, which ran until December 26, 1872, he was to be dishonorably discharged from the service.

61 and endured all the hard ships of a soldiers life during the late rebellion suffered the hard ships of Southern prison as a prisoner of war for 8 months upon being discharged I a gain joined the Regular Army and have served honorably ever since until the misfortune of being court-martialed befell me I have no disliken to become a soldier a gain having never deserted the Army I feell my self capable of doing the duty of a soldier in every respect.

Several months into serving his sentence Lonergan tried to have it overturned. He wrote to Secretary of War W. W. Belknap and pleaded for a second chance. Saying that some of the officers on the board had earlier told him they were going to get him out of the service, he felt his trial was not fair because they were already prejudiced against him. Thus he did not make a good effort in his defense. Lonergan:

Lonergan's letter went to the Bureau of Military Justice in Washington. Clemency was denied and Lonergan disappeared from history upon his release from prison. His record noted that, judging from the prisoner's language and behavior, "he is probably a course

I hereby ask for a remission of sentence and to be a gain restored to duty if such is possible having bin in the US service since

R. 6 14  
Box 457

ENLISTMENT CARD

Lv. 91

STATE OF  TOWN OF

Albany City of Albany

I, John Kiley, do hereby certify that John Kiley is the person named in the foregoing certificate, and that he is a Soldier in the 37th Regt of the United States of America, in the period of THREE YEARS, unless sooner discharged by proper authority; Do also agree to exempt such John Kiley from all military duties, until he shall have been fully and completely discharged by proper authority; Do also agree that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opponents whatsoever; and that I will observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles of War.

I CERTIFY, ON OATH, that I have solemnly sworn the statements herein made by the person named in the foregoing certificate, and that he is a Soldier in the 37th Regt of the United States of America, in the period of THREE YEARS, unless sooner discharged by proper authority; Do also agree to exempt such John Kiley from all military duties, until he shall have been fully and completely discharged by proper authority; Do also agree that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies or opponents whatsoever; and that I will observe and obey the orders of the President of the United States, and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to the Rules and Articles of War.

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National Archives Bldg., Washington D.C.

### Kile's 3rd enlistment in the 37th Cavalry Apr. 1, 1868

blackguard, when sober, yet the record makes it apparent that the words and acts for which he was tried and sentenced, were the result of intoxication. His threats were the boasts of a drunken man...."<sup>15</sup>

Thus ends, ingloriously, the military career of the soldier wounded by Hickok on July 17, 1870.<sup>16</sup> Learning the history of John Kile is much more complex. Kile's early service with the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry was not on the frontier but rather in the South, dealing with Federal occupation of southern states at the close of the Civil War. In late fall 1866, he was part of an escort detail that moved citizen prisoners, guerrillas, etc., from Mitchellville (about 20 miles northeast of Nashville), Tennessee, to Louisville, Kentucky. The

STATE OF  TOWN OF

West York City of Buffalo

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National Archives Bldg., Washington D.C.

### Kile's 4th enlistment Jun. 2, 1870 in the 1st Infantry

guard would ride the train with the prisoners up north and then catch the next train south and back to their camp. On November 20, Kile missed taking the train back from Louisville, after delivering prisoners, and was then charged with desertion as well as taking with him cavalry equipment and his Sharps carbine. Just three days later, however, on November 23, he enlisted in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry under the alias John Kelley. Ryan's *Memoirs* pick up the story when Kile returned to the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in 1870. He wrote how he recognized his old comrade John Kelley upon his arrival at camp shortly before the deadly brawl:

... a great many men deserted while on the expedition in the summer of 1867 and among those

from my company was a corporal by the name of Kelley and a trumpeter by the name of Augustus Anthony. While lying in camp here on Big Creek [1870], we got some recruits assigned to the different companies in the regiment. Co. I's tents being pitched on the right of my company line, the recruits that were assigned to that company were obliged to march by my company [M] from headquarters to get to Co. I. There was a 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant by the name of [Frank E.] Varden in Co. I and a sergeant in my company that were pretty chummy. As those recruits were going to Co. I, this sergeant from my company spotted this former Corporal Kelley and reported it to Sergeant Varden. This sergeant of my company and Varden were making up money to go on a furlough. They already apprehended one deserter and were laying for some more [anyone turning in a deserter received a \$30.00 bounty for catching them, according to General Order 325 Adjutant General's Office, 1863].<sup>17</sup> It was hinted to me that this Kelley was among the recruits. Kelley was a good man while serving in the company and whatever possessed him to desert on this occasion, I do not know. I thought it too bad to have him arrested, so I immediately proceeded to Co. I to where the recruits were and spoke to Kelley. I said, "Now Kelley, you have one thing or the other to do. You will be apprehended as a deserter within a few moments and the best thing you can do is to go over and surrender to General

Custer and I will go with you." He told me that he didn't know what to do. He said he was not feeling very well, so I told him to come down to my company tent. ... Kelley started with me to Custer's tent and in crossing the parade grounds, ... I approached General Custer, saluted him, and said to him, "General, I have brought a man to you by the name of Kelley. He has surrendered to me as a deserter." The general asked me what company he deserted from and I told him Co. M. He asked me where from and I told him in the Department of the Platte on the expedition of 1867. He also asked me what kind of man he was and I told him that he was a very good soldier and a corporal in my company but what possessed him to desert, I could not say. During the time that Kelley had been away from the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, he enlisted in the 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Cavalry and served under General [Eugene] Carr over in the Department of the Platte and had some meritorious papers from that general.... General Custer said, "Well, Sergeant Ryan, you take him back and report him to the 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant of his company for duty." I was somewhat perplexed to know which company to take him to at the time. I asked the General which company I would take him to. I told General Custer that Kelley deserted from Co. M, my company, and he was now assigned to Co. I. The general told me to take him back to the 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant of Co. M and turn him over for duty, which I did. I did



in Washington, DC, but was sent back on August 8 because "they do not state whether or not casualty occurred in line of duty." Keogh then had to write another explanation, and in this second statement he revealed important information, including the identity of John Kile as being the same person as John Kelley. He wrote that Kile died on July 18 "at Fort Hays, Kans (in post hospital) by reason of pistol ball wound received July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1870 in a drunken row at Hays City, Kans & not in the line of duty. *Private Kile (alias Kelley), was originally a deserter of Troop M of this regiment, and on re-enlisting was assigned to Troop I but attached and doing duty with Troop M at the time he was killed.*"<sup>20</sup> Captain Keogh gave another clue in learning Kile's story. In the remarks to the original Final Statement he added that this was Kile's second enlistment, "last served in Co. M: 5<sup>th</sup> U.S. Cavalry. Discharged May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1870." The 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry muster rolls confirm this soldier enlisted December 9, 1865 and deserted November 20, 1866.

The enlistment papers for the alias John Kelley show that he had enlisted in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry on November 23, 1866 at Cincinnati, Ohio.<sup>21</sup> When Ryan, Kile (alias Kelley) and the company bugler, Augustine Anthony, deserted together in 1867, they were discovered missing one day's march from Fort McPherson after Custer's command had camped there for a week, according to the Regimental Returns of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry.<sup>22</sup> Ryan surrendered himself two months later at Fort Kearney, 75 miles from where he deserted. He was court-martialed but was exonerated, arguing that his desertion was not intentional.

He said that before the command was ordered on the march for the day he had left camp with three canteens to go over a bluff several hundred yards away to where there was better water than the bad spotty water near where camp had been made the day before. When he tried to return to the camp the morning fog was so thick that he could not see his way back and thus got lost. Ryan:

*I filled the canteens and started to come back to camp. I followed the stream till I came to a bluff which I supposed I had crossed over. I crossed over this bluff and found it to lead into a ravine. After I got pretty near where I supposed the camp was, I found I was lost, and did not know where I was going. It was too foggy to see which direction to take, so I got on top of a hill and looked around.*<sup>23</sup>

Ryan's Company Commander at that time, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Owen Hale, testified at Ryan's trial that his horse was saddled and ready to ride on the morning he was discovered missing. Ryan was found not guilty and restored to duty, though he was no longer a corporal and had reverted back to private. What remains unexplained in Ryan's judicial file is why he didn't turn himself in at Fort McPherson, which would have been not more than a day's walk from where he got lost in the fog, and instead traversed more than 75 miles further east before turning himself in at Fort Kearny. Nor is it explained the two months' absence from the date of his desertion to his turning himself in at the post in late August. A clue to that answer comes from the court-martial record of Augustine Anthony, the Company M bugler who deserted together

with Ryan and Kile (Kelley).

After his disappearance with Ryan and Kelley (Kile), Anthony made his way to Denver. He did not turn himself in but rather was apprehended seven months later.<sup>24</sup> He was sent to Fort Reynolds, a military post along the Santa Fe Trail a few miles east of Pueblo, Colorado Territory, where his court-martial took place. While awaiting trial he was a model soldier, impressing the post commander so much that he was "paroled" from the post jail, serving as the bugler for the command as well as the post tailor. Anthony did not talk about being lost in a fog. Instead he said he had been confined and ordered to walk all day.

*After we started I was unable to keep up with the horses, and after marching ten miles gave out. The guard told me to stay where I was and he would ask permission of the officer of the day for me to get in a wagon. The guard never came back, and I started to overtake the command, but could not catch up, night overtook, and the next morning I took the back trail, so that I could report myself to the first post I came to. I met a train going to Denver and learned that it was two hundred miles to a post, and I concluded to go to Denver.<sup>25</sup>*

Anthony was found guilty and sentenced to six months of hard labor, loss of pay and service enlistment from the time of desertion until the end of sentence. In addition he had to carry with him, for the duration of his sentence, a twelve-pound ball connected to a four-foot chain attached to his ankle. He then returned to his duties as company M bugler where he remained

for several months until he went on furlough and never returned. This time he was never caught and disappeared from history.

Anthony's 1868 trial testimony makes no sense; however, one can assume at least some truth hidden within the testimony. His desertion was noted in the muster rolls as occurring on June 22 (as was the desertion date for Ryan and Kelley), but in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regimental Returns - the usually more accurate reporting document of military units - all three men's desertions were noted as being discovered on June 20 at camp at Medicine Lake Creek which was after the first day's march from Fort McPherson.<sup>26</sup> However, the journal of Lieutenant Jackson, who mapped and outlined with an odometer Custer's 1867 summer campaign, noted that the camp on Medicine Lake Creek was actually on June 18, not June 20. Jackson also noted that the dense fog that Ryan referenced in his court-martial defense was on the morning of June 20. That morning's camp was an additional 30 miles away from the forts on the Platte River. If all three soldiers were discovered missing on the fog-infested morning of June 20, as Ryan's testimony claims (and is confirmed in the Regimental Returns), then the men were discovered missing on the second day's camp after leaving Fort McPherson, a very unlikely country to desert from.<sup>27</sup>

A little historical interpretation is necessary to bring into a coherent compatibility the court-martial testimonies of Ryan and Anthony. Perhaps all three soldiers did not intend to desert and instead had other ideas when leaving camp on the night they did, intend-

ing to be back by the morning march. If Ryan was truthful about his fog story, then his disappearance would have been noted on the morning of June 20. But if the men were all retrieving water together, why didn't Ryan state that in his trial testimony and why would Anthony not state that in his? If the disappearance location on Medicine Lake Creek as cited in the Regimental Returns is correct, then they were discovered missing on the morning of June 19, not June 20, the date (June 20) the Regimental Returns say they all deserted. This earlier camp location (Medicine Lake Creek) makes plausible a more reasonable lure to draw the men away while the rest of their comrades were slumbering, for near the reservation boundary of all military posts during this era existed what were known as hog ranches, private enterprises providing men indulgence of their adult pleasures. These hog ranches offered cheap whiskey, gambling and, more luring for young cavalymen, "cribs" where women made themselves available at cheap prices.<sup>28</sup>

If this was what tempted the men to sneak out of camp at night, then they stayed too long at the ranch and were not able to get back to camp before the command moved out the next morning. They were not lost because of the fog, as that did not appear until the following morning. Finding that the command had already moved out, perhaps the three men tried for a day to catch up with Custer's column but were unable to do so since they were afoot and the command was riding horses. In fact, thirty miles were marched by Custer and his men on that day.<sup>29</sup> The three AWOL soldiers could have caught

up with the command by the morning of June 20 had they kept walking into the following evening, using the numerous easily visible wagon tracks accompanying Custer's command in the nearly full moonlit night.<sup>30</sup> But the impending fog rolling in later that night made the trail impossible to follow and thus they missed finding Custer's camp before the column again moved out the next morning. Now they were sixty-five miles into nowhere. Their only option at that point was to head back to the Plate River Trail. Otherwise, following Custer's trail - if they didn't wander too far from it when blinded by the fog - would only lead them further from any white civilization and into hostile Indian-infested territory.

Ryan in his court-martial trial cleverly developed his story of being lost in the fog before the next morning's march. Perhaps some of his other NCO friends really knew where the three men had wandered off two nights earlier - knowing they had no intentions to desert - and kept their horses saddled the next morning, which Lieutenant Hale testified to in Ryan's trial. When the men didn't appear the next morning - June 19 (the morning before the dense fog) - perhaps Anthony spoke the truth in his trial when he said he was lagging behind the command. Consider this scenario: when the trio missed getting back to camp before the next morning's march Anthony was not able to keep up with Ryan and Kelley (Kile) and was promised by them that they would send an escort back, once they caught up with Custer. Had the three men rejoined Custer's command after being lost for one day - perhaps they would have said something like they went out on an

early morning hunt and did not get back in time before the command moved out - they would not have faced a court-martial trial for desertion. Instead as punishment they might have been ordered to walk behind the command for a day or so, thus making sense of Anthony's explanation that he had been ordered to walk behind the command and was not able to keep up. But the fog ruined their intent to catch up with Custer. When Ryan and Kelley (Kile) were not able to find the command it meant Anthony was all alone as the two corporals never came back to him. After waiting a day he then turned back to the Platte River and caught a freight train west to Denver.

Ryan and Kelley (Kile) together, being unable to rejoin the command, cut north to the Platte and headed east, Ryan ending up at Fort Kearny nearly sixty days after disappearing - where he turned himself in - and Kelley (Kile) ending up in St. Louis a month later - where he then re-enlisted into the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry - not as John Kelley, as John Kelley was now a deserter, but rather as John Kile, his real name.<sup>31</sup> His 1866 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry desertion happened in Tennessee, and by enlisting in the infantry and not the cavalry, Kile must have felt it safe to use his real name in this third enlistment in his short military career.<sup>32</sup> Kile's 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry experience, however, would prove to be a disaster.

He was assigned to Company C and was soon sent to northern New Mexico where his company was given the task of constructing a new camp, initially called Camp Plummer. The fort was located about sixty miles south of present-day Pagosa Springs, Colorado and near the present-day New Mexico

town of Tierra Amarilla. It was built to protect people from attacks by Ute Indians. The camp was later named Fort Lowell, in remembrance of General Charles Lowell, who had been killed in 1864 at a fight at Cedar Creek, Virginia. It remained an active fort for only two years.<sup>33</sup>

Alcohol was at the root this next incident, which happened on Christmas Day 1867. Kile was arrested and charged with conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline. There were two specifications to support the charge: he was intoxicated in the camp and quarters and, more importantly, with two other soldiers was accused of breaking into the locked sutler's store and taking over \$600 in merchandise, including clothes, boots, etc. Part of the goods was found hidden in a ravine behind the store but a bundle of goods valued at \$474.91 was never recovered.

Kile remained in arrest until his court-martial trial convened on March 31, 1868. He pled not guilty to all charges. The trial transcript is interesting in that there are witnesses who identified Kile as being visibly drunk, and there are witnesses who claimed he was not drunk. Similarly there are witnesses who placed him in the sutler's store when it was broken into and who saw him carrying the stolen goods to the area where a part of the goods were recovered, and there are witnesses who testified that during the time of the break-in they were with Kile in the company quarters talking "tales."

One of the soldiers who gave damaging testimony against Kile was 37th Infantry Company C 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Frederick Thies. With Sergeant Thies

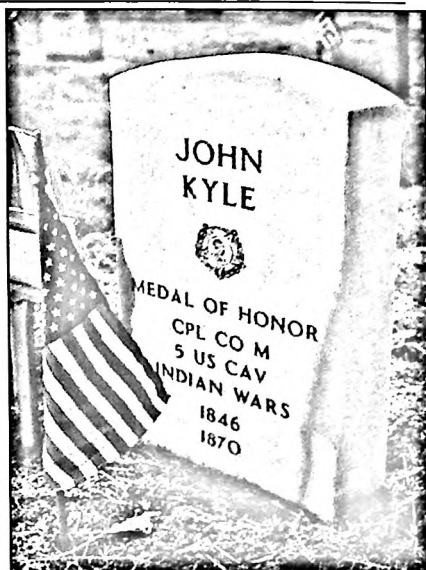




*Courtesy of Joyce (Nance) Woodcock*

Kile's headstone was finally changed in 2008 to reflect his real name

there is a remarkable coincidence for this is the same Thies who arrived as one of the eighty-four new recruits in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry at Fort Hays on July 17, just hours before Kile was mortally wounded by Hickok. He was assigned to Kile's Company M. It was Thies that testified against the surviving Hickok brawl participant Jerry Lonergan in 1871 – five months after Hickok shot him - resulting in his being sentenced to prison and given a dishonorable discharge. Incredibly, it is the same Thies - again as company 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant, 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry - who gave damaging testimony against Kile in his 1868 court-martial trial.<sup>34</sup> Had Kile not been killed by Hickok in 1870 it would have been only a very short time before he and Thies would have recognized each



*Courtesy of Kent Kool*

Medal of Honor gold trim was on his headstone in 1994 though his name was misspelled

other at Camp Sturgis. If Kile would have seen Thies first perhaps - like he did earlier that summer in Buffalo - he might have attempted yet another desertion and re-enlistment somewhere else on the frontier. Either way, Kile's time back in Custer's cavalry would have soon ended.

The coincidence that this same man would be in the same company with Kile in both the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry in 1867 and the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in 1870 are simply astounding. When one adds up all of the white cavalry, artillery and infantry companies in which one could possibly serve in 1867, it represented 566 different companies.<sup>35</sup> The probability Thies would randomly appear in the same two companies as Kile represents a mathematical equation of one

in 207,156 possibilities.<sup>36</sup> So perhaps Kile's bad fortune was influencing his historical destiny when Thies reported for duty in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry on July 17. Surely, the misfortune of a dishonorable discharge and three-year prison sentence would have awaited him. Sergeant Thies himself had an interesting career. He left the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry in 1873 when he received an appointment as a Second Lieutenant with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, where he was eventually appointed to the important position of regimental quartermaster. He died at Fort Shaw in 1888 of erysipelas – St. Anthony's Fire – or what is today called an aggressive staph infection.<sup>37</sup>

As C Company 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant of the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Thies testified that Kile had been drinking on Christmas Day and appeared intoxicated near the company barracks. His reason for knowing Kile was drunk was "the noisy manner in which he behaved himself." Kile was found guilty of all charges, sentenced to a dishonorable discharge, and ordered to serve three years in the federal prison in Jefferson City, Missouri. The sentence was affirmed on May 1, 1868. The order stated: "The Commanding Officer of the District of New Mexico will see that the prisoner is sent under a suitable guard and turned over to the warden."<sup>38</sup>

The records are unclear exactly how Kile was able to avoid his three-year sentence in Jefferson City, but avoid it he certainly did. Records at the penitentiary show he was never admitted.<sup>39</sup> Fort Lowell was literally in the middle of nowhere, and it was a few weeks before an escort could take him from New Mexico to Missouri. He apparently managed to escape from his

escort to detention. The Company C 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry Muster Roll for June 1868 might give a clue. It states that Lieutenant [John W.] Jordan was removed from command of his company, for leaving "the company in charge of prisoners." From the Regimental Returns there is the note that Headquarters requested further information, including the date Jordan was removed and the date Jordan left the company in charge of the prisoners. At this point further records appear lost.

We know two important things regarding Kile's next move: he did not get transported to prison and, on August 19, 1868, he appeared before the military authorities in Gallatin, Tennessee, where he voluntarily surrendered for his November 20, 1866 desertion from the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, his initial enlistment into the Army.<sup>40</sup> The only plausible explanation that can be drawn is that Kile did indeed escape from his guarded transport to Jefferson City and that he then made his way back to Tennessee and turned himself in for his 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry desertion, knowing a severe punishment awaited him. This shows what must have been a deep willingness and desire to remain in the military and do whatever was required to continue his career as a soldier. At this second court-martial trial for his first desertion in 1866, he pled guilty and asked for consideration from the court in sentencing him, noting that his "intentions were not bad" when he deserted.

When his 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry court-martial began September 15, 1868 he gave an interesting statement regarding why he deserted. Of course, he did not reveal where he had been during the time he had deserted, which included

his seven-month stint as John Kelley in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry and a nearly one-year stint with the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Kile:

*When I went to Louisville – I turned over the prisoners – and went up in town and expected to be back in time for the train [no doubt his friend John Barleycorn kept him away] – in company with some of the men of the detachment – I did not mean to stay, but stayed until after the train left and the detachment went away – I stayed a considerable time over my time – and was afraid to come back on account of punishment – and thought the Capt. (Bvt Lt. Col. E. H. [Edward Henry] Leib) was down on me – as a few days previous to that he had threatened to have me driven out of the company – that was one reason I did not come back – afterwards I was sorry for what I had done, and seen that I was wrong – and came back and reported – I hope the court will be just enough to give me a just and fair trial – as my intentions were not bad when I left.<sup>41</sup>*

Kile was sentenced to twelve months of hard labor, but when his sentence was forwarded on to department headquarters for approval his punishment was reduced to eight months “in consideration of the man’s having surrendered himself.” The 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Company M muster roll shows Kile restored to duty and promoted to corporal by May 1869.<sup>42</sup> He was back in the good graces of the military, now on duty and part of an important campaign under Brevet Major General Eugene A. Carr. In this campaign Kile

would perform actions resulting in his being awarded the Medal of Honor. It was during this time that Kile’s name got misspelled as Kyle by several 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry officers, and thus his military record gets confused from this point on, with nearly every historian henceforth referring to him as John Kyle.

On May 1 Kile’s Company M left Fort Lyon to travel north where they were ordered to station at Fort McPherson in Nebraska, near where Kile had deserted two years earlier as John Kelley. With Kile’s company were six other companies under the command of General Carr. When the command arrived in northwest Kansas, Carr fortuitously encountered a large village of Cheyenne Dog Soldiers who had escaped two months earlier from Custer down in the Texas panhandle. Carr engaged the Indians in two fights on May 13 and May 16. The first fight was in Decatur County close to a rock formation known as Elephant Rock and near present-day Traer, Kansas. Four of Kile’s comrades were killed as well as at least 25 warriors. A portion of the village was also captured and destroyed.<sup>43</sup>

The Indians moved northeast into Nebraska and three days later had a second engagement with Carr’s men, which occurred along a stream called Spring Creek. It was in this encounter that an unknown 23-year-old scout, Buffalo Bill Cody, distinguished himself in the fight. It was also in this fight that John Kile had his more intense action fighting Indians. Company M, under the command of Brevet Major John Babcock, was the lone company that had been sent about two miles in front of Carr’s command to scout for a possible Indian trail. Without warning

about 200 screaming Indians charged from a ravine and attacked the company, hoping to surround and kill them to a man before Carr's command could come to their rescue. In a brisk fight that lasted the better part of an hour, Kile's commander, Major Babcock, directed his men onto a small hill and there they desperately fought off the far superior force of warriors. In 1896 Babcock would receive a Medal of Honor for action in this fight. Cody suffered a profusely bleeding head wound but kept fighting. When Carr heard the firing in the distance he sent one company out to reconnoiter and report back but when the Indians saw the soldiers approaching, thinking that all of the command was coming, they withdrew, thus ending the fight. The warrior casualties in this second fight were unknown but it was estimated that at least twenty Indians had been wounded. Several soldiers were also wounded.<sup>44</sup>

After the Spring Creek fight Carr brought the command further into Nebraska and to Fort McPherson. The Indians, smarting from their losses, went into north-central Kansas and conducted a series of deadly retaliatory raids against outlying settlements and stage stations. The most deadly of these raids occurred on May 30 when eleven settlers were killed along the Saline River and Spillman Creek in Lincoln County, and two women were taken captive, 24-year-old Susanna Alderdice and 23-year-old Maria Weichel. Both women were pregnant before their capture. Susanna's eight-month-old daughter Alice was also taken captive but she was killed three days later in the Indian village after the Indians tired of her incessant crying. Among the dead

settlers in this raid were Susanna's sons, five-year-old John and two-year-old Frank. Four-year-old Willis incredibly survived with numerous arrow and gunshot wounds in his back.<sup>45</sup>

Shortly after the women's capture Carr was ordered out on the Republican River Expedition, in an effort to find and fight the Dog Soldier Indians and rescue the women. It was during this expedition that John Kile distinguished himself and received the Medal of Honor, but under the misspelled name John Kyle. It happened on July 8 and was probably in Colorado Territory, perhaps only a mile outside of the Nebraska border. Kile's citation states that the action was in Nebraska; however, from Carr's Itinerary Officer, Lieutenant William Volkmar - who kept a daily journal of the campaign and used an odometer attached to a wagon to note marches and campsites - it is likely Kile was still in Colorado Territory when he had his commendable fight against Indians. A few days earlier, as Carr moved from Nebraska into Colorado Territory, he sent nearly half of his command under Brevet Major W. B. Royall - Kile's Company M included - to follow one trail west, roughly along the Republican River, while he stayed with the rest of his command and crossed the Republican River in a southwest direction following the Arikaree Fork of the Republican River. Royall's command had a brisk skirmish with a few warriors, in which three were reported killed. This was Kile's third fight with Indians. Running out of rations, Royall rejoined Carr, who had in the meantime ventured about twenty miles north of the Arikaree, probably a few miles northeast of present-day Wray, Colora-

do. When the two forces joined together on July 7, Carr withdrew the command back and away from the Indians, near his earlier July 5 campsite, which was very close to where the 1868 Beecher Island battle was fought. The next day, July 8, Corporal Kile and two privates volunteered to venture north in an effort to retrieve a horse that Royall had earlier abandoned. It was a Company M horse and that was probably why Kile volunteered to retrieve it. After several miles the horse was found and the men began to return to camp when a band of Dog Soldier warriors discovered them. Thinking they could easily overcome three men they charged at the soldiers. The citation written for the award, as most Indian war Medal of Honor citations bear, was skimpy: "This soldier (Kyle [Kile]) and two others were attacked by eight Indians, but beat them off and badly wounded two of them."<sup>46</sup>

George Price, who in 1869 was a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant with Carr's command, later wrote of Kile's heroic fight: "... on the afternoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> Corporal Kyle [Kile] and three men of Company M had a brilliant affair on Dog Creek, where, although surrounded by thirteen Sioux warriors, they succeeded in killing three and compelling the others to retreat north of the Republican River, when they leisurely retired and rejoined the command twelve miles below."<sup>47</sup>

Lieutenant William Volkmar's journal, written on July 8, gave more details:

*In the morning a small detachment of "M" Troop, 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, under Corporal Kyle [Kile], was sent from Black Tail Deer Creek, over to Rock Creek to recover, if possible, an exhausted horse,*



Courtesy Wyoming State Archives

James Butler "Wild Bill" Hickok  
from a plate made c. 1870

*abandoned there by the troop in returning with Col. Royall; Whilst engaged at this, they were attacked by a much superior force of Indians, of whom they killed and wounded three and made their escape.<sup>48</sup>*

*Carr, in his report on July 20, also mentioned Kile's fight: During the day [July 8] three men of Company "M" who were several miles in the rear of the column bringing in a given-out horse, were attacked by eight Indians. They got near a large rock for a breastwork on one side, and killed the horse as a defence on the other, and beat off the Indians,*

wounding two badly.

*Corporal John Kyle [Kile], Company M 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry was in charge of the party; he showed especial bravery on this, as he had done on previous occasions.<sup>49</sup>*

Kile's heroic action, as it was soon reported to Carr - who noted in his report that Kile had acted bravely earlier - included the desperate fight Company M had at Spring Creek on May 16. And of course, there was still the fight to be had at Summit Springs three days later where Kile again no doubt demonstrated "especial bravery."

The Summit Springs fight, in Colorado Territory about 12 miles southwest of present-day Sterling, is probably one of the most significant and underrated battles of the entire Indian war era. Carr's command surprised an unsuspecting village of eighty-four Cheyenne Dog Soldier lodges in the early afternoon of July 11. When the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry charged into the center of the village, along with a contingent of Pawnee Indian scouts, the village was completely routed. Most of the nearly 500 occupants escaped, but anywhere from fifty-two to seventy-three Indians were killed, and only one soldier received a slight wound to his ear from a glancing arrow.<sup>50</sup> Unfortunately, there was one white casualty. Susanna Alderdice, at her rescue, now seven months' pregnant with her unborn child, was killed by an Indian at the beginning of the fight before fleeing the village. Captive Maria Weichel was shot in the back but recovered. She had her baby in December, and eventually remarried, to a man named John Mantz and lived in California until her death in 1890.<sup>51</sup> That not a single soldier was hurt indicates the

severity of the rout and, after this battle, the power of the Dog Soldier band of Indians was broken. No longer were the Cheyenne able to ride into Kansas, Nebraska and Colorado and attack unsuspecting settlers in their homes as they had been doing since 1864. Kile made his contribution to bringing peace to this part of the frontier.

To appreciate the historical significance of Kile's Medal of Honor, one must understand its context. During the entire Indian war era, which began at the inception of the Army Medal of Honor in 1862 and continued until the mid-1890s - not quite a 35-year era - the U.S. Army in all its branches fluctuated in actual numbers of soldiers in the service. In 1866, Congress authorized 54,302 officers and men. In 1867 it was raised to 56,815. In 1869 it was reduced to 37,313. In 1870 it was reduced further to 30,000 and in 1874 even lower at 25,000 men. For a variety of reasons, at best in any given year the actual strength was at least ten percent below what was authorized.<sup>52</sup> Thus, for an average calculation covering the entire Indian war era, it is probably fair to say that the average number of soldiers serving in any given year rarely exceeded 33,000. But the medal, conceived during the Civil War, was slow to be extended into the Indian war era. In fact, only one soldier was awarded the medal for action against Indians in 1865 and it wasn't until 1869, the year that Kile was awarded his, that Congress fully authorized the coveted award to be officially extended to Indian fighting Army.<sup>53</sup>

A total of 422 soldiers received the medal during the entire Indian war era. That represents an average of only

twelve medals awarded each year. In 1869 eventually fifty-seven medals were awarded but, significantly, only four were awarded to soldiers in the calendar year 1869. Another one, also on the recommendation of Carr, went to an Indian scout for a different action on the same day Kile was nominated for his.<sup>54</sup> 'On August 24 the Adjutant General's Office in Washington, D.C. wrote to General C. C. Augur, commanding the Department of the Platte, and conferred to Corporal Kyle [Kile] his Medal of Honor.<sup>55</sup>

That Kile had his papers and medal in 1870 to show to General Custer when Sergeant Ryan sought to protect him from his earlier 1867 desertion as John Kelley no doubt made a strong and favorable impression on Custer and contributed significantly to his exoneration and transfer back to Company M. Likewise, it had to be equally disappointing to Custer to experience the untimely demise of Kile by Hickok in a drunken row a little more than two weeks later.

After receiving his Medal of Honor, Kile remained with the 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry until May 17, 1870, when his first 1865 three-year enlistment - minus the two years he was not present for duty and his eight-month court-martial sentence - expired. What he did next involves both a manipulation of the military system and a mixing of fate. Kile's service expired while his company was stationed at Fort McPherson.<sup>56</sup> Perhaps he had family in the area of Buffalo, New York, for Kile next surfaced there and on June 2 re-enlisted into the service, this time in the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry. He was assigned to Company G at Fort Porter, New York. He was

out of the service a mere fifteen days. In Kile's era when a soldier re-enlisted within thirty days after his first enlistment expired he was eligible to receive an additional \$2.00 per month in pay throughout the second enlistment. In addition an additional \$2.00 was given for anyone issued a "Certificate of Merit," which was official recognition of acts of bravery short of receiving the Medal of Honor. Kile's Medal of Honor thus more than amply qualified him for this extra \$2.00 per month.

Information from Kile's 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry discharge papers was copied on the side of his new enlistment papers, verifying that he was re-enlisting and thus eligible for the monthly pay bonus. But he enlisted as John Kyle, not John Kile. This enlistment repeated what he said in his first two enlistments, viz., that he was born in Cincinnati. But, perhaps not surprisingly, within a day he deserted.<sup>57</sup> He then went to Chicago, and on June 9 re-enlisted yet again, this time back into the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. As with his New York enlistment, he showed his discharge papers, the information from them again copied on the side of his new enlistment papers. This time, however, he enlisted under his correct name, John Kile. Both 1870 enlistment papers say that Kyle/Kile had served earlier in Company M, 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, and was discharged on May 17, 1870, thus verifying the same man enlisted as both Kyle and Kile.<sup>58</sup> John Kile was soon sent via train to Fort Hays and arrived there on June 26.<sup>59</sup>

A mystery remains why he used the name Kyle and not Kile when he enlisted in New York. And why then did he immediately desert? Had he remained in the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry he might

have enjoyed a long military career. Some think the motive was to receive a substantial re-enlistment bonus. One researcher said this bonus amounted to \$300.00 and this was why he deserted, so he could collect it again in Chicago.<sup>60</sup> The problem with this explanation is that it is contrary to the facts. The army regulations in force in 1870 mandated no bonuses for re-enlistment.<sup>61</sup> Don Rickey, Jr., in his definitive work on the enlisted man in the Indian war army noted that although "the army professed an official interest in promoting re-enlistments for reliable veteran soldiers, the only inducement offered was a three-dollar monthly pay increase for five-year men who re-enlisted within thirty days of discharge."<sup>62</sup>

If Kile was not motivated to enlist, desert and enlist again for the purpose of receiving a substantial re-enlistment bonus, why then did he re-enlist as John Kyle instead of his real name, and why did he then desert? The answer to this mystery might be the simple explanation that he wanted to avoid being detected as John Kile, because John Kile had a 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry bad conduct discharge and escaped from a three-year prison sentence. If he enlisted under his real name the records could potentially reveal this embarrassment and, if caught, there goes his continued military career and he would then begin a three-year prison sentence. Thus, in order to avoid the records identifying him as Kile, he changed his place of birth from Cincinnati to Troy, New York, and used the wrong name Kyle, shown on his Medal of Honor papers.

This at least plausibly explains why Kile did not use his real name

when he re-enlisted in Buffalo. But why, then, did he almost immediately desert? To answer that we need to recall the coincidental military transfer of Sergeant Frederick Thies, who knew Kile in the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry - and had Kile not been killed by Hickok - he would have known Kile in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry once he recognized Kile there. If just one soldier, probably an officer or senior NCO, was at Fort Porter who might have known Kile from the 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry then the gig was up and he would be tagged as an inmate who escaped a long prison sentence. It is possible, perhaps even likely that given the haste of his desertion once Kile reported to his company at Fort Porter - which was in Buffalo - he recognized an officer who would soon recognize him from New Mexico and thus Kile had to desert in order to evade being arrested. It was his only option to keep alive his military career; desertion had served his needs in the past so why not again?

Kile obviously wanted a military career and apparently loved army life. Thus he enlisted again one week later, hoping this time to avoid detection. He now could not use the name Kyle because that name would appear as a deserter from the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry in New York, and so he enlisted back in the cavalry as John Kile, the only name he could use and still be counted as a re-enlistee eligible for the monthly re-enlistment bonus. But, as destiny proclaimed, he was assigned back to the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, the one cavalry unit he had earlier deserted under the alias Kelley. However, being in Company I and not M, and knowing from his earlier service that regimental companies seldom all served together, perhaps he thought



he could remain undetected in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry as John Kile, and hopefully no one from Company M would be at Fort Hays to recognize him as the 1867 deserter John Kelley. At least, he could wait and see upon his arrival at his new station whether anyone there might know him. And thus he journeyed to his fate at Hays.

It was fortuitous that John Ryan almost immediately recognized him as John Kelley. Circumstances were shining favorably upon Kile, given the fortunate fact that Ryan was his old friend. They had inadvertently deserted together in 1867. What Ryan didn't say in his memoirs, but probably what he told Kile and reported to Custer, was that the very same reasons that got Ryan exonerated from his desertion - viz., he left in the early morning of a dense fog to fill several canteens and then got lost - also applied with Kile, as no doubt Ryan would report that Kile was with him when he got lost, as they had disappeared together. After all, they both had been corporals in Company M. Thus it was easy for Custer to exonerate Kile for his 1867 desertion since Ryan's earlier court-martial claims provided identical justification for Kile. And of course, showing his 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry papers which revealed both the coveted Medal of Honor and his being a 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant was gravy on the meat. Custer had every reason to believe Kile was a meritorious soldier and would perform well back in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. Kile no doubt felt likewise.

So things must have looked good for Kile. His desertion from Fort Porter was a gamble that apparently paid off. Now his 1867 desertion was vacated and he was reassigned back to

Company M. He only had to keep hidden his 37<sup>th</sup> Infantry fiasco. He wasn't feeling well when he reported to Fort Hays so he was assigned to bed rest for several days.<sup>63</sup> During this time he became friends with Jerry Lonergan, the company baker. Once Kile recovered he and Lonergan slipped out of their bunks after tattoo and snuck across the creek for an exciting nightlife in the rowdy town of Hays City. Kile was no doubt ready to celebrate his good turn of fortune. He was probably unaware that earlier on this very day his old Company C 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant Frederic Thies had just arrived as a new recruit, assigned to Kile's company. The game soon was going to be over but Kile did not yet know it.

And thus we arrive at the end of an extremely interesting and historic-filled short journey into the military life of the man killed by Wild Bill Hickok in Wild Bill's last night in Hays City, Kansas. While Hickok went on to an equally violent end of his life six years later in Deadwood, one can only wonder how history might be different if Kile's service revolver did not misfire on that night John Kile stepped into the vice of fate. We find, in his short career, he served twice with Custer, fought in one of the most important and celebrated Indian fights at Summit Springs, fought side by side with a young and unknown Buffalo Bill Cody in a spirited fight at Spring Creek, was awarded the coveted Medal of Honor, and knew intimately, although quite briefly, Wild Bill Hickok. What stories he could have shared from his rocking chair in his aging years after the winning of the West, had he lived. Except, his Remington pistol misfired and it was Wild Bill who

See [http://www.webmagician.com/cgi-bin/fullmoon\\_calc.pl](http://www.webmagician.com/cgi-bin/fullmoon_calc.pl).

31. Kile's service in the 37th Infantry was not noted in any historical publications until Robert Rybolt wrote an article about it in *Old West*. See Rybolt, "Requiem for John Kile," *Old West* (Spring 1994), 28-32. In an email exchange with the author (12/30/2010), he informed me that a request for enlistment papers with the National Archives revealed Kile's 37th Infantry enlistment, and a comparison of Kile's distinctive signature with his earlier enlistment in the 5th Cavalry, as well as his 1870 7th Cavalry enlistment revealed it was the same John Kile.

32. Record Group 94, Enlistment Papers, Entry 91, 1st Series, 1867. Kile's 37th Infantry enlistment is dated St. Louis, Missouri, July 24, 1867.

33. Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 99.

34. Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903), 952.

35. Robert M. Utley, *Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian 1866-1891* (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. (1973), 11.

36. This is calculated on 566 different companies one could possibly serve in, in 1866 [96 in the cavalry – 12 companies per regiment - 60 in the artillery – 12 companies per regiment - and 410 in the infantry – 10 companies per regiment), and with a reduction in units in 1869, the infantry was reduced from 410 companies in 41 regiments to 210 companies in 21 white infantry regiments. Thus the calculation

multiplies 566 times 366, thus revealing the probability that two men could serve in the same two companies on a random enlistment lottery.

37. *New York Times*, January 23, 1888.

38. Court-Martial case file, Record Group 153, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General Army, Box 2363, 00-3136, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

39. In a series of emails with the reference staff of the Missouri State Archives in Jefferson City Missouri, they responded to me via email on July 31, 2009 and reported this: "We did not find any record of an earlier request from you concerning the Penitentiary record of John Kile, but we decided to go ahead and search the State Pen Index for him. We searched the index on reel S207, Volumes A-D [A-K], which cover the years 1836-1874, but we found no listing for John Kile in those records. Since he does not appear in the records, perhaps he escaped before he made it back to Missouri. We are not sure what else to suggest." I believe their surmise is the most plausible explanation. Kile escaped his sentence.

40. Court-Martial case file, Record Group 153, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General Army, Case 00-3524, National Archives Building, Washington, DC., p. 10.

41. Court-Martial Case 00-3524.

42. Muster Roll, Co M, 5th Cavalry, covering the period April 30 to June 30, 1869. Record Group 391, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

43. Jeff Broome, *Dog Soldier Justice: The Ordeal of Susanna Alderdice in the Kansas Indian War* (Lincoln, KS: Lincoln County Historical Society, 2003). Reprinted with a new

introduction in 2009 by the University of Nebraska Press, 71-88.

44. Broome, *Dog Soldier Justice*, 74-75.

45. All of these events are carefully covered in Broome, *Dog Soldier Justice*, 89-146.

46. Anonymous, *The Medal of Honor*, 211.

47. George F. Price, *Across the Continent With the Fifth Cavalry* (New York, NY: Antiquarian Press LTD, 1959. Originally published in 1883), 136.

48. Record Group 393, Part 1, Department of the Platte. Letters Received, 1869, Box 12. Volkmar is officially the first officer to misspell Kile's name as Kyle. Not being in his company, when he heard of Kile's heroic exploits he wrote his last name as he thought it was spelled, Kyle. Carr, nearly two weeks later, when he wrote his report, and probably having Volkmar's Itinerary report in front of him, repeated the misspelling, as did Price when he wrote his account about a dozen years later.

49. Record Group 393, Part 1, Entry 3731, Department of the Platte, Letters Received, 1869. National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

50. Broome, *Dog Soldier Justice*, 163-185.

51. Broome, *Dog Soldier Justice*, Bison edition, xvi-xvii.

52. Utey, *Frontier Regulars*, 12-16.

53. Douglas D. Scott, *Custer's Heroes: The Little Bighorn Medal of Honor* (Wake Forest, NC: SAT Press, 2007), 53-55, 65.

54. Anonymous, *The Medal of Honor of the United States Army* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office,

1948), 210-214.

55. Record Group 393, Part 1, Entry 3731, Letters Received, 1869, Department of the Platte, National Archives Building, Washington, DC. At the same time Pawnee Indian scout Co-rux-te-chod-ish (Mad Bear) was also awarded the Medal of Honor. Luther North, commanding one of the Pawnee companies that summer, years later said that Carr meant to give the award to Traveling Bear, but this is clearly a mistake, as Traveling Bear fought at Summit Springs, but Mad Bear did not, as he was seriously wounded in the action on July 8 when he was cited for the Medal of Honor. Carr's citation is specifically for the July 8 action and not Summit Springs. Nevertheless, historians quote North as evidence that Carr was mistaken, when clearly he was not. See James King, "The Republican River Expedition," June-July, 1869," in Paul, *The Nebraska Indian Wars Reader 1867-1877* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 59.

56. Price, *Across the Continent*, 142.

57. The Regimental Returns for the 1st Infantry lists Kile's desertion as June 13, but this is either a clerical error that meant June 3, or this represents the date that his desertion was formally recognized. Clearly Kile cannot have been in New York up to that date when the records show he re-enlisted in Chicago on June 9. Thus Kile probably only remained with his New York Infantry unit for one day before deserting June 3 and heading to Chicago. See Record Group 391, Records of the U.S. Army Mobile Units, 1st Infantry, National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

58. His June 2 enlistment mistakenly

notes he was discharged on May 19, 1870.

59. Returns From Regular Army Cavalry Regiments 1833-1916, Microfilm Roll 71, Seventh Cavalry, June 1870, Company I.

60. Sonny Wells was quoted saying this in *The Kansas City Star*, July 8, 1994.

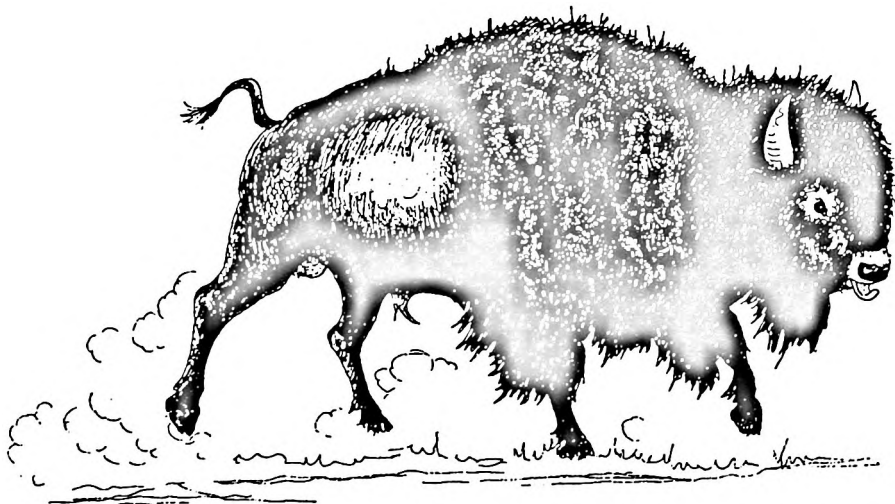
I myself also believed this as the only plausible explanation and advanced this hypothesis in several talks when telling Kile's story. But I see now that this is a mistake.

61. Email correspondence with the author January 1, 2011.

62. Don Rickey, Jr., *Forty Miles a Day on Beans and Hay* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 341. Rickey might be in error in saying the monthly pay was three dollars and not two. In the muster rolls I have examined, it is noted that the pay bonus was two dollars each month. See 1st Sergeant Frederic Thies in Company M, 7th Cavalry Muster Roll, 1870-1873.

63. Barnard, ed., *Ten Years With Custer*, 122-123.

64. In 2007, upon my petition Kile's headstone was finally changed to bear his real name.



# Over the Corral Rail

*Compiled by Ed Bathke, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ed. Deadline is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the first month in the date of publication.*

## Westerners Activities along the Front Range

During February the Boulder Westerners heard "Charles Weitfle, Photographic Entrepreneur," by Corral members Ed and Nancy Bathke. In Colorado Springs Marva Black Elk presented "Historical Insights to Holy Man Black Elk of the Oglala Sioux," to the Pikes Peak Posse.

March programs include: at Boulder, "Western Colorado's Grand Waterway: the Colorado River," by Denver Posse members Lee and Jane Whiteley; for the Colorado Corral, "Natrona County: People, Place and Time," by Rebecca Hunt, who recently authored a book by that title; at Fort Collins, "Madness on the Border" (describing the conflict between Missouri and Kansas during the Civil War period), by Bill Ezel; and in Colorado Springs, "The Fremont Experiment Forest," by Pikes Peak Posse member Eric Swab.

## New Active Posse Members of the Denver Westerners

The Posse has elected Steve Friesen and Carl Sandberg to the Active Posse. We welcome them to Active Posse membership.

Steve has applied his MA in American Folk Culture in working at the Littleton Historical Museum, in the bayou country of Louisiana, in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and as Superintendent of the Museums of the city of Greeley. Currently he is the Director of the Buffalo Museum and grave, where he has served for over sixteen years. He has authored numerous articles about the American frontier, and two books, *A Modest Mennonite Home* and *Buffalo Bill: Scout, Showman, Visionary*. In December 2010 Steve Friesen presented a lecture on Buffalo Bill to the Denver Posse.

Carl's enthusiasm for Western history is shown by membership in the historical societies of five Western states. He is a past president of the Ghost Town Club of Colorado, and is active with the Colorado Preservation, Inc. For these organizations, as well as others, he has provided numerous lectures and tours. In January 2011 Carl Sandberg presented "Ghosts of Baca County" to the Denver Posse.

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## Director of United Airlines Historical Foundation

Active Posse member Bill Leeper has been elected to serve as a director on the United Airlines Historical Foundation. With the merging of Continental and United Airlines, Bill is able to meld his love of history with his Continental career, in stepping forward to work with the UAHF to “Preserve the Past, Inspire the Future.” Congratulations, Bill!



## Westerners Bookshelf



**Tree Top Creating a Fruit Revolution**, by David H Stratton. Washington State University Press, 2010. Photos, maps, bibliography, index. 105 pages. Softbound. \$29.95.

We Americans take our abundance and choice of foods for granted. This book tells the story behind one of the many products we find on the grocery shelf.

To get apple juice you just squeeze apples, right? Well, not so fast. The story is that of one William H. Charbonneau, who in 1944 bought a small apple-processing plant in the town of Selah, Washington, near Yakima. His dream was to produce and nationally market apple juice of consistently high quality. This idea was daring to say the least: it was a time when most food products were made from whatever resources were locally available, and were sold down the street and perhaps regionally.

Of course he encountered the “But we’ve always done it this way” and “If it was good enough for my Pa it is good enough for me” mindsets. He worked to overcome those obstacles as well as finance, quality and quantity control, seasonal issues and others. He was instrumental in bringing the marketing co-op structure to the apple industry.

Thanks in large part to Charbonneau, the Tree Top Apple Juice brand became and remains the standard of the industry.

The book is well researched and is an interesting niche look into an industry most of us don’t think twice about.

*--Stan Moore P.M.*



*The* DENVER WESTERNERS  
**ROUNDUP**

May - June 2012



*Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Dept.*

View of barracks at Camp Hale, Colorado, which was the training headquarters of the Tenth Mountain Division from 1943-1944. Beyond barracks is a view of the rifle range.

**It All Began At Camp Hale**  
**By Dennis Hagen, P.M.**

***(This article was written to accompany a presentation of the same name given March 23, 2011 by Earl E. Clark and Richard C. Over)***

## THE DENVER WESTERNERS

## ROUNDUP

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## Our Presenters



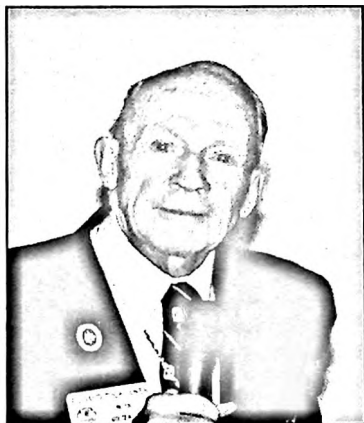
Earl E. Clark was born July 3, 1919 in South Londonderry, Vermont. He became an Eagle Scout at age 15. He enlisted in the Army in March 1942 as a ski troop volunteer and was assigned to the 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment, which later became part of the 10th Mountain Division. Clark was selected for Officers Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia where he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. Returning to the 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment, Clark participated in combat operations on Kiska Island in the Aleutians and in Italy.

When the 10th Mountain Division was inactivated in November 1945, Clark chose to continue in the Active Army Reserve and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1963. Following his retirement, he remained extremely active in military affairs. In 1979, he was inducted into the U.S. Army's Infantry School Hall of Fame at Fort Benning, Georgia. He continues to hold an

honorary rank of "Colonel of the Regiment" with the current 10th Mountain Division, and regularly travels to Fort Drum to meet with troops deploying to or returning from combat duty in the Middle East. Clark was instrumental in founding the International Federation of Mountain Soldiers, and he has been inducted into both the Colorado and Vermont Ski Halls of Fame.

Clark joined the Penn Mutual Life Insurance Company in 1951 and retired after 31 years of service. He was honored in 1963 with the President's Award for the "most outstanding Penn Mutual agency in the United States."

Clark served as Area Commissioner of the Boy Scouts of America, Vice President of the Denver Chamber of Commerce and Chairman of the Chamber's Military Affairs Committee. Clark held numerous other positions including President of the Sales and Marketing Executives of Denver, President of the General Agents and Managers Association and President of the Reserve Officers Association. He was also President of the Pinehurst Country Club, Littleton, Colorado.



Richard C. Over was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania March 22, 1924, the son of Harry E. and Marie C. Over. He completed four years of high school before enlisting in the Army on April 12, 1943 at Pittsburgh. He served with the 10th Mountain Division at Camp Hale, Colorado and Camp Swift, Texas before being selected for the Army warrant officer program in the fall of 1944.

Following the War, Over received a degree in Electro-mechanical Engineering. During his career, Over served as a physical metallurgist, college instructor, director of marketing and director of advertising services.

Currently, Richard spends a lot of his time as a volunteer with the USO at Denver International Airport, where he meets and greets traveling military personnel.

## It All Began At Camp Hale

*General Fridolin von Senger und Etterlin, the officer who negotiated the surrender of Germany's armed forces in Italy at the end of World War II, later wrote of the experience, "[General] Hays escorted me in his large Packard, and we exchanged our impressions of past fighting in which his division had been my most dangerous opponent." ' Von Senger's nemesis was diminutive Major General George P. Hays, commander of the American 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division. Hays had indeed led one of the most formidable fighting divisions of World War II. What follows is the story of America's only mountain division, and how "It all began at Camp Hale."*

As war clouds darkened Europe and Asia in the late 1930s, most Americans remained implacably isolationist. Vast oceans screened our cities and factories from air attack after all, and fears of invasion were remote indeed. <sup>2</sup>

But, when the Soviet Union invaded Finland on November 30, 1939, the vastly outnumbered Finns soon captured the world's imagination with their fierce resistance. Throughout that bitter winter, newsreels ground out images of white-clad ski troops swooping ghost-like from ice-bound forests

to ambush convoys, disrupt supply lines, and inflict severe casualties, slowing and embarrassing the inexorable Soviet onslaught that eventually forced Finland's surrender in mid-March 1940. <sup>3</sup> Finland's resistance compelled American observers to confront the unthinkable. Could a woefully unprepared American army actually respond to an attack on American soil, especially in severe weather? <sup>4</sup>

In August 1941, an American military attaché in Italy unearthed secret reports of the debacle that followed Italy's invasion of Greece in October 1940. His discovery revealed that a determined Greek counter attack had scattered the Italians into the Albanian mountains, where thousands of ill-equipped and untrained Italian troops simply froze to death in the snow.<sup>5</sup>

This evidence from Finland and Albania, coupled with Britain's obvious inability to maintain troops on Norway's frigid coast, highlighted the stark fact that alpine warfare required intensive cold-weather training and highly specialized equipment. This grim realization stirred a small handful of Americans to begin to demand ski troops for the American Army.<sup>6</sup>

In January 1940, Assistant Secretary of the Army Louis Johnson reacted by requesting Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall to report on steps the Army had taken to design special

clothing and equipment for fighting in conditions similar to those in Finland. Marshall responded that winter warfare had always been integral to the operations of the Alaskan Command and that winter exercises were being conducted at Fort Snelling, Minnesota among other locations.<sup>7</sup>

But these minimal steps involved only those troops already stationed at winter posts and those who already skied. In truth, virtually all American military training occurred within the southern states, and the American Army had been primarily a tropical army since Valley Forge.<sup>8</sup>

In November 1940, the 5th Infantry Division moved haltingly toward somewhat more serious winter training, and tiny units from the other divisions were assigned to conduct ski patrols. These programs were inadequate to create a combat force of ski troops, but they could provide a foundation for future winter training.<sup>9</sup> As yet, ski troops were simply expected to provide the eyes and ears for road-bound divisions. Conceptually, they would operate much as horse cavalry had in the past.<sup>10</sup>

These half-hearted measures were unacceptable to America's most influential lobbyist, Charles Minot "Minnie" Dole, an insurance man and founder and chairman of the National Ski Patrol System. Undoubtedly, without "Minnie"

Dole's vision and tenacity, there may never have been a fighting force like the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division.<sup>11</sup>

Dole understood that if Germany defeated Britain, German troops could easily invade the North American continent along the St. Lawrence River, splitting the United States and Canada. Given the dismal state of the American Army, Dole envisioned American troops desperately making last stands in the mountains of New England or even in the Rocky Mountains as they sought to buy time to mobilize additional troops.

Dole's fears were not idle speculation. An American diplomat in Switzerland reported that special German troops had already begun training for operations in Alaska and in the Canadian and American Rockies. His informant revealed that a principal objective of Germany's war with the Soviet Union was to create a bridge to Japan and to eastern Siberia from which war could be carried to the United States.<sup>12</sup>

"Minnie" Dole eventually gained General Marshall's ear. Dole offered to recruit experienced skiers to help train ski troops. He insisted "*in this country there are 2,000,000 skiers, equipped, intelligent, and able. I contend that it is more reasonable to make soldiers out of skiers than skiers out of soldiers.*"<sup>13</sup>

To Dole's surprise, General Marshall agreed, and Dole's vision

resulted in a contract between the National Ski Patrol System and the War Department. This marked the only time in our nation's history that civilians recruited, screened and approved volunteers for the military. <sup>14</sup> Today, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division veterans love to point out that this is also probably the only time in human history that letters of recommendation were required to get into the infantry!

In order to assure that only the best men were selected, and to maintain an elite feel to the organization, each applicant to the ski troops had to produce three letters of recommendation testifying to his mountaineering skills and good character.<sup>15</sup> On this basis, of some 15,000 applicants, only 8,000 were accepted.<sup>16</sup>

These letters were not always a fail-safe, as Lieutenant Jim Barr of the 85<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment describes. Denied an opportunity to serve in the Navy or the Air Corps due to his poor vision, Barr sought admission to the then newly-formed "ski troops." He did not wish to be drafted into the regular infantry. In his memoirs, Barr acknowledges obtaining two of the required letters and admits to writing the third and "most enthusiastic" recommendation himself.<sup>17</sup>

On November 15, 1941, a mere twenty-two days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Army activated its first ski troop

combat unit, the First Battalion of the 87<sup>th</sup> Mountain Infantry Regiment, a unit which comprised less than one thousand troops.<sup>18</sup>

Charles B. McLane, a ski racer from Dartmouth, arrived at Fort Lewis, Washington on December 8. "*I'm supposed to report to the mountain troops,*" he told an astonished sergeant who replied: "*Son, you are the mountain troops.*"<sup>19</sup>

Lacking suitable facilities near Fort Lewis, the Army leased two civilian lodges located high on the slopes of Mount Rainier. These lodges, Paradise and Tatoosh, soon saw ski troops, commanded by Colonel Onslow "Pinkie" Rolfe, skiing in and out of their second-story windows into drifts that ranged from twenty to thirty feet in depth.<sup>20</sup> Rolfe, a red-haired veteran of World War I, was named to command the 87<sup>th</sup> because he came from New Hampshire, supposedly a snow state. The Army brass had not realized that Rolfe left the state at six years of age.<sup>21</sup>

Despite a strong desire to rapidly expand mountain training, America's critical shortage of conventional forces had to take priority. In the wake of Pearl Harbor, enormous quantities of men and equipment were desperately needed on all fronts as America geared up for war. Ski troops were but one small component. The War Department realized that:

“No theater for the employment of American troops can be dismissed from consideration as fantastic. While it appears improbable at the moment, it is conceivable that our ability to fight in winter terrain might be of major, even decisive importance.”

But planners also recognized that men, supplies and training were needed everywhere.

“In view of the actualities of our situation, it is necessary that we begin this [winter] training on a small, more honestly on an inadequate scale, but we can at least take the first steps to prepare for operations of this type.”<sup>22</sup>

Six months after America’s entry into World War II, the 87<sup>th</sup> Mountain Infantry became a full Regiment with three battalions totaling approximately 3,000 men. The Army committed to the activation of a full mountain division of 10-12,000 men by the spring of 1943.<sup>23</sup>

During July and August 1942, a detachment of the 87<sup>th</sup> departed the slopes of Mount Rainier to train at the Columbia Ice Fields in the Canadian Rockies. Among other things, they tested snow vehicles called “Weasels,” manufactured by the Studebaker Corporation. The M-29C Cargo Carrier, or “Weasel” as it was known, was

the forerunner of various forms of tracked snowmobiles.<sup>24</sup> The “Weasel” eventually evolved into an amphibious version that saw significant use during the Normandy invasion.<sup>25</sup>

Staff Sergeant Peter Wick (87-F) remembers:

“We spent about two unbelievable months on the Saskatchewan Glacier working on this project. We also were trained in every phase of glacier mountaineering. When I look back on it now, it seems like a fairy tale.”<sup>26</sup>

The men who enjoyed themselves in Canada were probably unaware that they had none other than Winston Churchill to thank for their good fortune. Churchill, swayed by a half-mad scientist named Geoffrey Pyke, proposed the development of a suitable over-snow vehicle to be dropped into Norway to facilitate attacks on German heavy water plants that were presumed to be part of the German atomic energy program.<sup>27</sup>

In early 1942, while the 87<sup>th</sup> trained in Washington, the Army searched for a more suitable site, designed to accommodate some 15,000 men along with thousands of horses, mules and dogs. Ideally, the site had to sustain the year-round training of mountain troops.

An almost extinct trumpeter swan doomed the Army’s first choice, a site in Yellowstone

Park. Frederick Delano, President Franklin Roosevelt's uncle, and a power in the wildlife conservation movement, led the fight against the Army.<sup>28</sup>

Numerous other sites were also rejected before the Army approved a site north of Leadville, Colorado between Tennessee Pass and a railroad whistle stop called Pando. Construction of the camp, named in honor of General Irving Hale, began in April 1942 under the auspices of Pando Constructors.<sup>29</sup>

Hale, a West Pointer who graduated at the head of his class in 1884, received a Purple Heart, Silver Star and several brevets for gallantry during the Spanish-American War. He later commanded the Colorado National Guard.<sup>30</sup>

Pando was, according to an article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, "one of those whistle stops that would cause the passengers from behind the car windows to remark, 'Can you imagine anyone living there?'"<sup>31</sup>

On April 10, 1942, workmen began to fill the swampy Eagle River valley with dirt excavated from the surrounding hills, and they carved a completely new channel for the Eagle River. Although initially estimated to cost \$5 million, costs soared to over \$28 million, making Camp Hale one of the most expensive military posts in the country at that time.<sup>32</sup> Despite the site's remote location and high

altitude, construction on the 1300-acre site was rushed to completion in less than six months. Workers slept in trailers or under trees as Leadville's meager resources were stretched beyond reason.<sup>33</sup>

While a vast army of laborers, estimated at over 5,000 men, rushed to ready Camp Hale for occupancy in November 1942, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions of the 87<sup>th</sup> Mountain Infantry moved from Fort Lewis to the Hunter-Liggett Military Reservation near Jolon, California to fight mock battles with elements of the Philippine Army. These exercises, designed to develop tactics and equipment, were completed January 1, 1943, and the all three battalions of the 87<sup>th</sup> Mountain Infantry Regiment were reunited at Camp Hale.<sup>34</sup>

By mid-November 1942, activities became frantic at Camp Hale. A command structure called the "Mountain Training Center," recently activated at Camp Carson, Colorado, rushed to create specialized training procedures and manuals while testing all manner of equipment under the command of Lt. John Woodward, one of America's most noted mountaineers. Eventually, more than 200 experts directed this work. Although some were assigned to the Mountain Training Group, and others to the 10<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, their mission and their duties were identical. They were to impart their

knowledge to the newly organized ski troops under the auspices of the Mountain Training Center.<sup>35</sup>

Once organized, the ski troops essentially became the “rock stars” of their day. The cover of the November 9, 1942 issue of *Life* magazine featured a rugged mountain trooper while the accompanying article hailed their exploits.<sup>36</sup> Not to be outdone, the March 27, 1943 cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* featured Mead Schaeffer’s iconic rendering of a gruff ski trooper that quickly became the face of the mountain infantry.<sup>37</sup>

Numerous veterans recall how they were inspired to volunteer for the ski troops after seeing Warner Brothers’ 20-minute propaganda masterpiece, *Mountain Fighters* at a local theater.<sup>38</sup>

Sherman Smith (87-G) joined the 116th Medical Regiment of the Washington National Guard on September 12, 1940. When National Guard units, including the 116th, were federalized on September 16, 1940, Smith found himself in the regular Army and was eventually transferred to Fort Lewis, Washington. There, he discovered the recently-activated 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment. Smitten by his enthusiasm for the “ski troops,” Smith relinquished his staff sergeant’s stripes in order to obtain a transfer to the 87th Mountain Infantry Regiment as a private.

The ski troops luster was dramatically enhanced by the cast of notables that was being assembled. Some of Europe’s finest skiers, recently escaped from Austria and Germany, found their way into the Division. Included, for example, were the von Trapp brothers, later immortalized in *The Sound of Music*. It was not unusual to see many of the world’s greatest skiers and mountaineers walking along the streets of Camp Hale. Perhaps the biggest star was Norwegian ski jumping champion, Torger Tokle.<sup>39</sup> In addition, “Minnie” Dole’s Ski Patrol recruited the sons of many prestigious families among the college and private school skiers. Generally, pre-war skiing was not a poor man’s sport.<sup>40</sup>

But some of the propaganda overreached. Staff Sergeant, Robert B. Ellis (85-F), recalls his disappointment in learning that “*information that the ski troops offered higher pay than the regular army was one of many false statements emanating from the wartime propaganda mills.*”<sup>41</sup>

A good deal of propaganda emanated directly from Camp Hale. Noted photographer Winston Pote documented the activities of the ski troops with his renowned camera. Colonel Rolfe provided Pote a makeshift darkroom in the form of Rolfe’s own private latrine. While the darkroom was in use, the “Commanding Officer Only” sign

was left in place to insure privacy.<sup>42</sup>

Camp Hale became an international training site on December 14, 1942 with the arrival of the 99th Infantry Battalion (Separate). The 99th, which eventually numbered about 900 men, was composed solely of Norwegians and Americans of direct Norwegian descent. While not formally part of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, the Norwegians trained alongside the 10<sup>th</sup> at Camp Hale until August 24, 1943. The battalion was initially intended to invade Norway.<sup>43</sup> Veterans of the 99th are today welcomed as members of the National Association of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division.

Despite the glowing propaganda, initial training at Camp Hale was incredibly grim. Military tactics were often forgotten, lost in the troopers' simple struggles to survive. Men faced frostbite while collapsing under the weight of their "90-pound rucksacks" (backpacks), which compressed their lungs, making breathing nearly impossible.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the obvious training advantages offered by the Camp Hale site, it had several significant weaknesses. Paradoxically, Camp Hale was too high. Most Alpine passes range from 6,000 to 8,000 feet in elevation. At over 9,000 feet, Camp Hale was located 1,000 feet higher than the starting point for climbing the Matterhorn.<sup>45</sup> Army

regulations ostensibly required seven weeks for men to acclimate. However, these regulations were never followed and many men succumbed to altitude sickness during their first days at "Camp Hell."<sup>46</sup>

Camp Hale's altitude presented many other problems. A 1942 report titled *Medical Problems of Mountain Troops* noted that "there is probably no town in the United States, at a similar altitude that has the population this camp will eventually have." The army simply had no idea what to expect in this kind of environment. In order to determine how men might respond to life at high altitude, Army planners consulted recent works based on aviation medicine. At this time, no one knew how wounds would heal, how men would respond to shock, how much food would be required for men to function in the snow and a host of other issues.<sup>47</sup>

But training moved ahead. Camp Hale's mission was to create soldiers who could "operate for extended periods over primitive terrain where road nets are scarce or non-existent, in deep snow and extreme cold."<sup>48</sup> In pursuit of this mission, more than one hundred types of equipment and vehicles were tested. Men overcame incredible hardships to learn skiing, snow-shoeing, snow freighting, and trail breaking on toboggans. Dog teams were attached to the Division



and men trained in their handling. Men learned to build snow caves and to cook mountain rations. They learned to avoid avalanches and to rescue each other from harm. Later in the spring, schools were set up for rock climbing, mule packing and forest fire fighting.<sup>49</sup>

To the casual observer, progress seemed substantial. However, when "Minnie" Dole inspected Camp Hale in February 1943, he issued a scathing report, citing low morale, inadequate tactical training, and an unacceptably high daily sick rate. "Pando Hack," afflicted men who breathed the thick smoke generated by Camp Hale's numerous low-grade coal stoves, and it was exacerbated by the constant parade of coal-fired steam locomotives over Tennessee Pass. The railroad's proximity had been indispensable to the construction and supply of the camp, but the men's constant exposure to coal smoke during training had become devastating.<sup>50</sup>

But even more devastating than Dole's training critique was General McNair's indictment of the management of Camp Hale by its officers. He had just observed a disastrous exercise at Homestake Mountain high above Camp Hale, which the troops dubbed the "retreat from Moscow."<sup>51</sup> During this eight-day exercise, nearly one-third of the command succumbed to frostbite or exhaustion.<sup>52</sup>

During roughly eighteen months of occupation by the Division, Camp Hale recorded at least twenty-four non-combat deaths. Seven were due to training accidents including explosions and gunshot wounds. Three men died in vehicle accidents and the cause of death for two men is not recorded. Half of the Camp Hale deaths, twelve men in all, were due to medical conditions including septicemia or blood poisoning, pneumonia and appendicitis.<sup>53</sup> Although many men were incredibly rugged, hundreds failed under the pressure of the training and the severity of the climate.<sup>54</sup>

Despite the difficulties, the ranks of the unit that would eventually become The 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division continued to fill, as the Army moved toward its goal of full division operations. The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of a new 86<sup>th</sup> Regiment was activated November 26, 1942. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions were added, bringing the 86<sup>th</sup> to full regimental status, on April 26, 1943. But then suddenly the 87<sup>th</sup> Mountain Infantry Regiment, the original unit of ski troops, was transferred to Fort Ord, California on June 13, 1943 to join a task force destined for combat in the Aleutian Islands.

The Army met its Division goal when the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Division (Alpine) was activated at Camp Hale on July 15, 1943 under the command of Brigadier General

Lloyd E. Jones.<sup>55</sup> In order to facilitate full division operations and training in the absence of the 87<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, the 85<sup>th</sup> and the 90<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiments were also activated on July 15. Personnel for these new units were drawn from the existing ranks of the 86<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, from the ranks of volunteers recruited by the National Ski Patrol and from other units in the U.S. Army. Gone were the "three-letter men," and ironically, a strong cadre of non-commissioned officers transferred to the Division from Hawaii.<sup>56</sup>

Artillery support arrived when the 604th Field Artillery Battalion (Pack) marched approximately 170 miles on foot and by mule from Camp Carson, Colorado between July 5 and 15. When asked how many cattle and troop cars he needed for the move, General David L. Ruffner, who commanded the division's artillery units answered, "None! My men are tough. We'll walk it!" On July 27, the 605th Field Artillery Battalion (Pack), which also marched from Camp Carson, arrived.

The 616th Field Artillery Battalion was also activated on July 15. Other units, which comprised the original 10<sup>th</sup> Light Division (Alpine), included the 110th Signal Company, the 10th Medical Battalion, three Quartermaster Pack Companies, the 576th Antitank Battery, the 727th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion,

and the 126th Mountain Engineer Battalion.<sup>57</sup>

As a light division, the 10th's three infantry regiments did not include heavy weapons companies. The 10<sup>th</sup> Light Division (Alpine) also fielded somewhat fewer men than standard Army divisions and the Division's artillery comprised the much lighter 75mm howitzers rather than the more standard 105mm. The 75mm guns could be disassembled and transported on six mules each, making them functional in rough terrain.<sup>58</sup>

On June 7, 1942, as part of Japan's strategic thrust toward Midway Island, some 10,000 Japanese troops had occupied Attu and Kiska, two small, undefended American islands near the end of the Aleutian archipelago. These troops posed a threat to Pearl Harbor and to the American west coast.

When American planners decided to retake the islands, they seriously underestimated Japanese determination to hold the Aleutians. The initial attack against Attu proved to be a near disaster. Three weeks of bloody fighting finally dislodged troops who had taken a suicide oath not to surrender. Believing that Kiska would be defended with equal ferocity, the high command sought to invade with an overwhelming force.

On May 4, 1943, "Amphibious Task Force 9" was activated at Fort Ord, California.<sup>59</sup>

The 87<sup>th</sup> Mountain Infantry Regiment's 3,000 men were to be part of the 30,000-man invasion force because of all the units then in training, it was the best equipped to operate in the Aleutian weather. Many of the 87<sup>th</sup>'s troops had been training for over a year and were ready for battle testing. The 87<sup>th</sup> was also at least six months ahead of the 85<sup>th</sup> and 86<sup>th</sup> Regiments, making it the logical choice.<sup>60</sup>

On June 13, 1943, the 87th transferred to Fort Ord, California to join what was then called "Amphibian Training Force 9." The "training" designation was utilized to disguise the actual nature of the mission.

While Training Force 9 rehearsed its attack plans, Japanese forces pulled off an improbable maneuver. On the night of July 28, 1943, using radar salvaged from British vessels in Hong Kong, Japanese defenders of Kiska found a hole in the American naval blockade and managed to slip away undetected.<sup>61</sup>

Unaware of the Japanese departure, Training Force 9 sailed to Adak, another island in the Aleutians, where their training continued. During rehearsals for the invasion, what would become the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division suffered its first overseas death when Private Kenneth Hintze of Company C drowned.<sup>62</sup>

The 87<sup>th</sup> Mountain Infantry

Regiment and its supporting units waded ashore through a heavy fog at two beaches along Kiska's northern shore on the morning of August 15, 1943. Lead elements quickly climbed precipitous cliffs to occupy high ground along the ridge. Despite the Japanese evacuation, eleven men of the 87<sup>th</sup> were killed by friendly fire in the thick fog. Seven additional men later died of various causes, including booby traps and accidents. It was a cruel baptism for the men of the 87<sup>th</sup>, who remained on Kiska as an occupation force until late November 1943. <sup>63</sup> Upon returning to Camp Hale, some members of the 87<sup>th</sup> received unfair criticism from their colleagues in the 85<sup>th</sup> and 86<sup>th</sup> Regiments for their role at Kiska where friendly fire had caused so many casualties.<sup>64</sup>

Richard C. Johnson (company commander, 87-H) described the winds on Kiska, called Williwaws, as being terrific and almost constant. "*Walking into the wind you were forced to bend over, as you walked, to force your way into the terrific wind pressure.*" Eventually, the men dug their tents down into the ground in order to keep them upright.<sup>65</sup>

In late December, following furloughs for most of the men, the 87<sup>th</sup> Regiment returned to Camp Carson, Colorado. By February 23, 1944 the 87<sup>th</sup> had reassembled and moved to Camp Hale where it once again became the 10<sup>th</sup> Light

Division's third regiment. The 90<sup>th</sup> Infantry regiment departed Camp Hale on the same date and was inactivated shortly thereafter.<sup>66</sup>

From February 21-25, 1944, thirty enlisted men and three officers of the 10th Mountain Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop conducted a 50-mile ski trek from Leadville to Aspen through some of the most rugged country in the United States. This was one of several mountaineering exercises conducted during the winter of 1943-44. The historic trek ended with an attack on two bottles of Seagram's bourbon whiskey, provided by Larry Elisha, proprietor of Aspen's nearly deserted Jerome Hotel.<sup>67</sup>

Shortly after this trek, on March 21, 1944 the 10<sup>th</sup> Recon was broken up and the men were distributed to line companies, just in time for the start of the grueling D-Series.<sup>68</sup>

The most demanding of the Division's training exercises took place from March 24 to May 6, 1944. The so-called "D-Series" maneuvers, were designed to test the Division's ability to operate in the mountains in subzero weather. This series of exercises pushed men, mules, and machines to the limit of their endurance, and many veterans claimed conditions were worse than anything they later encountered in actual combat. As an example, over one-hundred men were evacuated for frost bite during a single night

during these exercises.<sup>69</sup>

Robert Ellis, (85-F) wrote home on April 15, "I can say with little hesitation that I have just emerged from the worst physical ordeal of my entire life." Ellis claimed to have lost seventeen pounds during the exercises.<sup>70</sup>

Staff Sergeant Harris Dusenbery of the 86<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment saw the experience quite differently: "*We of the ten thousand who went through the great experience had an élan that could have been acquired in no other way. Whatever the Tenth Mountain Division was, it had its nucleus in the multiform and arduous experiences of our D Series.*"<sup>71</sup>

As a result of the D-Series maneuvers, a recommendation was made to Chief of Staff George Marshall that the 10th Light Division (Alpine) be reorganized as a regular infantry division. The report concluded that such changes were needed "to correct deficiencies in personnel and equipment." The men themselves had functioned extremely well at high altitude, but as a light division, fire power was weak and overall combat performance was rated unsatisfactory.<sup>72</sup>

With the conclusion of intense winter warfare and rock climbing training in Colorado, the 10th Light Division (Alpine) departed for Camp Swift, Texas, arriving about the end of June 1944.

In part, this move was intended to strengthen the Division's basic infantry performance.

The Division traveled via train in what Robert Ellis described in a letter written en route as "ancient railroad passenger cars boasting three tiers of bunks." Ellis continued, "*No one felt any sadness about leaving Camp Hale, but we also knew that the future may be no brighter. The camp gave us as big a send-off as it has ever mustered. A band played a stirring tune for us as we marched through the twilight to the waiting train.*"<sup>73</sup>

The more-traditional training curriculum at Camp Swift included live-fire exercises and miles of hikes. The Division had also been scheduled for maneuvers in Louisiana. However, the rapidly changing nature of the war in Europe caused these maneuvers to be canceled. Rumors that the 10th would deploy to Asia were fueled when some units received maps of Burma to study. Others received Japanese language phrase books. By this time, most of the men of the 10<sup>th</sup> were becoming frustrated, despairing of ever getting into the war.

To say that the skiers of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division were chagrined to be sent to Texas would be an incredible understatement. Charles Paige Smith, Company Commander of 85-I remembers:

Camp Swift summons

up for me the image of mules, loose mules for the most part. True, we had a few "infantry" mules at Hale; I seem to recall riding one in the D-Series. But Texas *was* mules—big, powerful brutes that ran away whenever the spirit moved then, that broke picket lines regularly and had to be hunted all over the Texas landscape with Piper Cubs acting as mule spotters rather than artillery spotters.<sup>74</sup>

On November 6, 1944 the 10th Light Division (Alpine) was reorganized as a "Modified Triangular Division." This reorganization added heavy weapons companies to each battalion, along with more artillery support. Following the reorganization, a headline in the December 9, 1944 edition of the *Blizzard* announced: "The Tenth Gets Mountain Patch."<sup>75</sup> However, the embroidered "mountain rockers" for the Division's shoulder patches were not actually issued until May 1945 after the war in Europe had ended.

Camp Swift's training was specifically geared to the organization and training of the new heavy-weapons companies. The regiments not only had to quickly acquire proficiency with the weapons, but they also had to overcome vastly increased supply problems caused by the additional complexity of these weapons.<sup>76</sup>

On November 23, Brigadier

General George P. Hays assumed command of the reorganized division. Twelve days earlier Hays had commanded the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division's artillery units in France.<sup>77</sup> Hays had received the Medal of Honor as a young lieutenant during World War I.<sup>78</sup>

Sergeant Dan Kennerly (85-D) said of Hays:

The General is not a large man. He has a wiry build, black hair and a weather-beaten face that is very tan. He has an easy smile and his eyes seem to sparkle when he talks. His looks remind me of a cowhand.<sup>79</sup>

The 86<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment embarked for Italy on December 11, 1944 on board the USS *Argentina*, which arrived on December 22. On January 4, 1945 the 85th and 87th embarked from Hampton Roads, Virginia on the USS *West Point*. Formerly the USS *America*, it was the largest and fastest ship in the U.S. inventory. The remainder of the Division, including the Artillery Battalions and other support troops, embarked on the USAT *General Meigs* on January 6 and arrived in Naples on January 18, 1945.

War had come to Italian soil on September 3, 1943 when Allied forces crossed the straits of Messina. The bloody advance up the Italian boot had already dragged on for more than fifteen months by the time the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division arrived.

With General Mark Clark's elevation to command of all Allied forces in Italy, Lieutenant General Lucian K. Truscott assumed command of Fifth Army, to which the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division was attached, on December 16, 1944. General Hays met with Truscott in early January 1945 to develop a plan for breaking through German defenses in Italy. Truscott identified Mount Belvedere as the 10<sup>th</sup>'s first major target.<sup>80</sup>

Two previous attacks had been launched against the Mt. Belvedere ridge. The most ambitious was made in November 1944, by three infantry battalions of Task Force 45, supported by tanks and artillery. On that occasion the attacking force had eventually reached the top of Mt. Belvedere only to be driven off after three days by strong German counterattacks and effective artillery.<sup>81</sup>

General Hays realized that Belvedere could be taken only if the German positions on Riva Ridge, which flanked Mount Belvedere and provided German artillery observers a clear view of any attacking force, could first be captured. This task fell to the 86th Mountain Infantry Regiment.

In late January 1945, troops of the 85th and 87th Regiments relieved the 86th, which moved behind the lines to Lucca, Italy. Here the 86th trained for the coming attack. The 86<sup>th</sup>'s 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion

would make the initial assault, and although fully thirty percent of the assault force had not trained at Camp Hale, Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Henry J. Hampton decided that "There will be no hand picking of men for the assault." His decision increased the morale and spirit of the men, as they all now considered themselves to be mountaineers.<sup>82</sup>

On the evening of February 18, 1945, 700 men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 86<sup>th</sup> plus members of Company F carried out a daring night climb of some 2000 feet. The men attacked along five carefully scouted routes and took the German forces completely by surprise. They captured Riva Ridge at a cost of only one casualty. However, casualties mounted rapidly as ferocious German counterattacks began almost immediately and continued for nearly a week.<sup>83</sup>

On February 21, engineers from D Company of the 126<sup>th</sup> Engineers completed the first aerial tramway ever constructed under combat conditions to a point near the top of one of Riva's peaks, Mt. Cappel Buso. On the first day of operation, the tram evacuated thirty wounded men and twenty dead. The tramway also delivered five tons of supplies, mostly ammunition, to the summit.<sup>84</sup>

On the night of February 19, without artillery preparation, Hays' mountain troops attacked Mount Belvedere. By dawn of the

20<sup>th</sup>, their initial assault objectives had been taken, and troops carried the attack northeast along the Mount Gorgolesco portion of the Mt. Belvedere ridge. By 9:00 PM the evening of February 20, Mount della Torraccia and the adjacent Hill 1027 were captured. By February 25 final counterattacks had been repulsed, bringing the 10<sup>th</sup>'s first major offensive to a spectacularly successful conclusion.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division had almost no time to regroup before plunging into its second major offensive, which jumped off from the slopes of Mount della Torraccia on March 3 at 7:00 AM. The Division's initial objective was a line of hills about five miles to the northeast, near the critical road junction town of Castel d'Aiano.

By consolidating a new line from Mt. Grande d'Aiano on the west, through Mt. della Spe, to Mt. Valbura on the east, General Truscott hoped to create a springboard for a third and final offensive that would put American troops "into a terrain leading downhill to the Po Valley." The Po River Valley served as a vital source of agricultural supplies for German troops. As a result, German resistance was fierce. Among many other casualties on March 3, 1945, legendary ski jumper T/Sgt Torger D. Tokle (86-A) was killed near the village of Iola.<sup>85</sup>

While the 87th Regiment successfully captured the crossroads

town of Castel d'Aiano, the 85th Regiment secured Mt. della Spe, a key ridge just to the east. The 85th immediately began to receive intense counterattacks, but hung on through a barrage of intense shelling that battered its positions over the next two weeks.

The capture of Mt. della Spe effectively cut the main German line of communications and supply to the Po Valley, which gave the Fifth Army control of Route 64 to within fifteen miles of the Po Valley.

On April 14, 1945, the first day of the Spring Offensive, and twenty-four hours ahead of other Allied forces, the 10th Mountain Division led the assault against German positions north of Mt. della Spe. The Division was deployed with the 85th Regiment on the left (Hills 909, 913), the 87th in the center (Torre Iussi), and the 86th on the right (Rocca di Roffeno).

Surprise was impossible for this attack, and the division suffered its bloodiest day of the war despite an extensive preparatory bombardment by artillery and aircraft. Future Presidential candidate, 2nd Lieutenant Robert Dole (85-I), was seriously wounded on Hill 913. Private First Class John D. Magrath (85-G) knocked out four German machine guns on Hill 909, before being killed by mortar fire. For these heroic acts, Magrath posthumously received the World War II 10th Mountain Division's

only Medal of Honor.<sup>86</sup>

For the next four days the Division raced north along the high ground east of the Samoggia River. Advance elements of the Division captured positions on Mt. Avezzano and Mt. San Michele, and they occupied strategic points overlooking the Po Valley. On April 18, the American 1st Armored Division moved into a supporting position on the 10th's left.

On April 20, all three of the 10th Mountain Division's regiments continued their attacks. During the morning, troops from Company A of the 85th broke out of the mountains at Viacava. They were the first element of the entire Fifth Army to do so.

At noon on April 23, the 1st Battalion of the 87th Regiment became the first American troops to cross the Po River. Engineers from D Company of the 126th Engineers manned the assault boats, braving intense enemy fire to ferry troops across. By midnight, the 85th Regiment and rest of the 87th were across the river.

Once across the Po River, the 10th raced towards the Alps in Northern Italy to cut off the German retreat. While intense fighting continued for several more days, the German Army in Italy had been crushed. The German surrender in Italy came on May 2, 1945, six days before VE day, May 8, 1945, when all German forces in Europe



surrendered.

A total of 19,780 men served with the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division in Italy – 13,365 of these men deployed following training at Camp Hale and Camp Swift. An additional 6,415 men joined the Division in Italy as combat replacements from the 8<sup>th</sup> Replacement Depot, located near Empoli, Italy, some fifteen miles west of Florence. Of the 19,780 men who saw combat, 4,867, nearly 25 percent became casualties. Killed were 975 men, 3871 were wounded, and twenty-one became prisoners of war.<sup>87</sup>

Less than two weeks after VE day, on May 20, 1945, the 10th Mountain Division received a new mission, which some historians have called the first engagement of the Cold War. Orders transferred the Division to Udine, in northeastern Italy near its border with Yugoslavia. There, the Division joined forces with the British Eighth Army to prevent further westward movement by the Yugoslav Army under Marshall Tito. This mission lasted until July 17, 1945.<sup>88</sup>

On July 14, 1945, the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division received orders to return to the United States. However, at this point the war seemed far from over. The Division had been ordered to invade the Japanese home island of Kyushu on November 2, 1945, an operation that required a new round of training. Planners anticipated extremely

heavy casualties as a result of this invasion.<sup>89</sup>

The 86<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment sailed from Livorno, Italy aboard the SS *Westbrook Victory* on July 26, 1945 and arrived at Newport News, Virginia on August 7. The 85<sup>th</sup> and 87<sup>th</sup> Regiments got underway from Naples Harbor on July 31, aboard the SS *Marine Fox* and arrived in New York Harbor on August 11. It would be a tremendous understatement to say that the men of the Division received news of the Japanese surrender with great relief.

Soldiers of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division who were not immediately discharged were granted lengthy furloughs. They reported back to Camp Carson, Colorado in September and October 1945. On November 30, 1945 the 10th Mountain Division was inactivated. Some men moved on to other divisions, but many came to Denver's Fort Logan to be discharged.<sup>90</sup>

The 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, without the "mountain" designation, was reactivated July 1, 1948 at Fort Riley, Kansas, where it trained troops for the Korean War. In January 1954, the Department of Army announced that the 10th Division would become a combat infantry division, and would be sent to Europe under a new rotation policy. Personnel and equipment from the 37th Infantry Division were transferred to Fort Riley, Kansas and

on June 15, 1954, became part of the new 10th Infantry Division.

In what became known as "Operation Gyroscope", the 10th replaced the 1st Infantry Division in Germany. The headquarters of the 10th Division was located in Wurzburg, placing the 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in the strategic center position of NATO defense forces. In 1958, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division replaced the 10<sup>th</sup>, which transferred to Fort Benning, Georgia and was once again inactivated on June 14, 1958.<sup>91</sup>

The current 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division was reactivated February 15, 1985 at Fort Drum, New York, where it is presently headquartered.

Camp Hale has pretty well disappeared now. Interpretive signs watch over the bleached remains of the Field House floor that litter the valley. Dismantling operations began on February 23, 1945 under the direction of the Corps of Engineers. Seven-hundred-ninety-five structures were dismantled and salvaged. Appropriately, snow fell during much of the dismantling process. Approximately 2900 German prisoners of war, who had been confined at Camp Hale, worked to tear down the buildings. Virtually everything that could be salvaged was sorted and shipped to other training facilities located, ironically, back in the southern states where troops still trained for the eventual defeat of Japan. <sup>92</sup>

Perhaps the World War II 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division's greatest legacy lies in the rapid growth of the modern American ski industry after World War II. Tenth Mountain Division veterans made their mark in virtually every aspect of skiing as instructors, competitors, coaches, resort developers and managers, designers and manufacturers of ski equipment and as publicists. At least sixty-two major ski resorts were founded by, managed by, or trained by men who were 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division veterans. And perhaps nowhere is the impact of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division more evident than in Colorado.

Pete Seibert, despite being severely wounded during World War II, became a nationally ranked ski racer before turning Vail into a major skiing attraction. Friedl Pfeifer, another noted racer, was a key figure in developing the Aspen ski complex. He later served as director of the resort's ski school. John Litchfield, a Dartmouth champion ski racer before the war, became co-founder of the Aspen Ski School. Larry Jump developed the Arapaho Basin ski area. Gordy Wren managed Loveland Basin and then Steamboat Springs. Barney McLean went back to Hot Sulphur Springs. Crosby Perry-Smith and Pop Sorenson went to Winter Park. Steve Knowlton started Ski Broadmoor. Paul Duke went to Breckenridge. Gerry Cunningham opened Gerry's

Mountain Sports, and Merrill Hastings published *Skiing* magazine in Denver.

Ex-ski troopers Walter Prager, Joe Jones, Fritz Kramer, Clarence Campbell, John McClellan, Karl Stingl and Ralph Townsend coached prominent university ski teams to national titles.

Other veterans pioneered the science of avalanche prediction and control, founded popular ski magazines and designed new equipment from ski lifts to bindings.

Jim Winthers deserves special mention for his work with disabled Americans. As a certified professional ski instructor at California's Donner Summit, Winthers worked tirelessly with the disabled, especially veterans. His pioneering efforts in adapting techniques and equipment for use by the disabled brought him a number of honors including being named to the President's Council for Physical Fitness.

Remarkably, some thirty members of the World War II 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division have been inducted into the United States Ski Hall of Fame, and it is virtually impossible to find a major ski resort that didn't have at least one 10th Mountain veteran involved in some phase of its operation.<sup>93</sup>



Walter Prager during rock climbing instruction.



Saturday Evening Post cover March 27, 1943

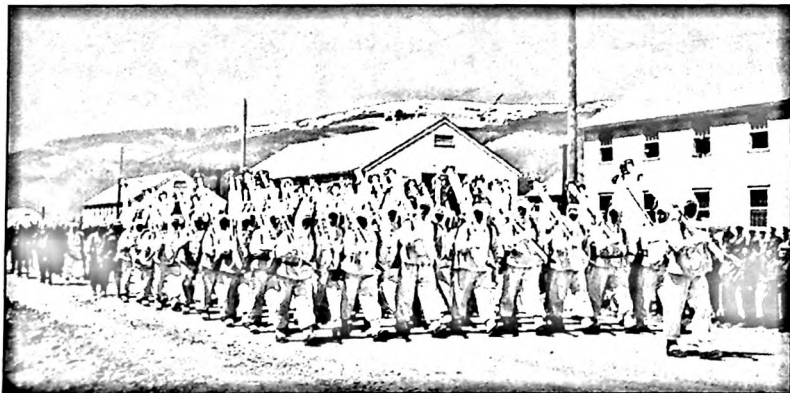
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*Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Dept.*

10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division soldiers parade down a street at Camp Hale, Colordao. They are wearing their "whites."

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Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Dept.

10th Mountain Division soldiers with mules at Camp Hale, Colorado

# Over the Corral Rail

*Compiled by Ed Bathke, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ed. Deadline is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the first month in the date of publication.*

A wide range of topics was featured at Colorado Front Range corrals and posses in April. The Boulder County Corral presentation was "Colonel Henry C. Merriam and Fort Logan, 1889-1897" by Jack Stokes Ballard, member of the Denver Posse, and also a member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Historic Fort Logan. Dr. Ballard, retired from the history department of the Air Force Academy, has authored *Commander and Builder of Western Forts: the Life and Times of Major General Henry C. Merriam*, as well as an Arcadia book, *Fort Logan*.

The Colorado Corral program was "Come and Get It – the Saga of Western Dinnerware," by Corrine Joy Brown. Corrine has written a book published with this title.

The bill of fare for the Fort Collins Corral was "Kit Carson, the Man and the Legend," by John D. Farr.

In Colorado Springs, the Pikes Peak Posse heard Susie Stepanek tell the little-known tale of "The CIA and Tibetans in Colorado's Back Country," involving training in Colorado's mountain country, facilities at Camp Hale, and a secret airstrip in South Park in the 1950s.

May brought forth the following presentations. At the Boulder County Corral, "Pancho Villa, Hero – Devil – General – Casanova – Robin Hood – Myth" was the fare provided by their past sheriff Jim Hester. The Colorado Corral was feted by member Paul Malkowski, with "The Denver Folk Music Tradition: an Unplugged History from Harry Tuft to Swallow Hill and Beyond," (also the title of his recently published book). Ruth Obee provided "History in Stone: the Story of Red Rock Canyon" to the Pikes Peak Posse.

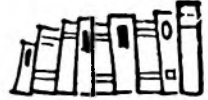
Included in the activities of Denver Posse members is Jeff Broome's "Brown Bag" presentation on the Hungate massacre to Aurora History Museum at their May 16 noon gathering.

## Denver Posse Member Ray Koernig Honored

Several members of the Denver Posse of Westerners were present when the Littleton City Council commemorated Ray Koernig's service as a city council member and mayor of Littleton, as well as his activities in other community services, by declaring April 27, the date of his eightieth birthday, "Ray Koernig Day."



## Westerners Bookshelf



**Irish Denver**, by Dennis Gallagher, Thomas Jacob Noel, and James Patrick Walsh. *Images of America Series*, Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2012, 128 pp. Photos, maps, bibliography, index. Softbound, \$21.99.

Your chefs are: Dennis Gallagher, Tom Noel, and James Patrick Walsh. Their dish is: *Irish Denver* Irish Stew, serving up 200-plus vintage images with focused commentary, seasoned with liberal doses of humor and quirkiness, and the merest hint of blarney to taste.

From the *Images of America* series via Arcadia Publishing comes this latest delectation, which the promotional material accompanying bills as the "first ever book on Denver's Irish." It follows the formula which Arcadia has worked so well, popularizing local history at a time when the printed word is under siege: take advantage of the technology which permits small-batch publishing, and narrow the aperture to increase the depth of field. Browser and scholar alike can find much to like, and little to criticize. (Is that a *history* book stand I saw during my last visit to the local Walgreen's? Yes, it was, thanks to Arcadia.)

Each *Images* volume works to a 128-page format, including Bibliography and Index, which might seem like a one-size-fits-all approach were not the topics as focused as they are. And the format suits the Denver Irish particularly well: a brief Introduction, followed by single-page discussions to pave the way for ten segments of the local Hibernian portrait.

Colorful people for Colorful Colorado. Section the first is "Gold, Guns and Gandy Dancers," miners especially, railroaders, and "domestic servants" – a broad category that last, replete with innuendo. Section the second promptly puts the appropriate lid on the spice and levity of the first with a stern dose of "Keeping the Faith," marvelous images of the remarkable tradition of service, charity, and monument-building which the wide-open West

opened wide for the clever and enterprising Irish.

On to a segment on the Ancient Order of Hibernians and other Irish organizations, against the backdrop of and struggle to combat anti-Irish prejudice and the vaudeville perception of the typical Irishman as “subhuman” and their women as “infuriate.” Then the matrix of change: the Irish as entrepreneurs. Saloon keepers, yes, by a startling plurality out of keeping with their total representation in the populace, but ditch-diggers too, railroad engineers, dairymen, shopkeepers, and farmers, all the way up to the financial superstars: Thomas Francis Walsh, Dennis Sheedy, and John Kernan Mullen.

The images of the labor leaders and labor strife which forms so much a part of Colorado’s late nineteenth century history are particularly powerful and well-represented. Likewise the section on Irish women, from the unsinkable Margaret Tobin and the wink-winkable Elizabeth McCourt, to the many unsung footsoldiers of family life and progress, secular and Catholic alike.

And what would such a volume be without a strong section on Irish politicians, who “gravitate to the public stage. . .,” beginning with Robert Morris, Denver’s first Irish-born mayor (and first in our long line of “minority” mayors), and culminating in a gem of a photo of Colorado’s first Irish-Catholic governor, Stephen L. R. McNichols, riding in an open car with the first Irish-Catholic president, John F. Kennedy.

Particularly fun is the “Irishmen From. . .To. . .” game which can be played with the section on “Visitors From the Old Sod” – as in: from Tom Fitzpatrick to Eamonn de Valera, say, or from John L. Sullivan to Oscar Wilde, or from U2 at Red Rocks to World Youth Day and John Paul II at Cherry Creek State Park. Play along for yourself.

Our guides appear throughout these pages as contributors from their important collections and as occasional participants, and it would be a wan contemporary tour through the Irish Colorado landscape indeed without these three. Gallagher the politician smiles from several pages, solo and in the company of other prominent Irishmen (can that be your reviewer squinting over the Senator’s shoulder from page 91?). Dr. Walsh dresses as Michael Mooney for his Romero Theater Troupe’s production of *Which Side Are You On?* Graffito from Doctor Noel’s all-in-the-name-of-history pub crawl past makes its way into the section on Irish traditions, featuring, of course, Denver’s renowned Saint Patrick’s Day celebration.

Whether you check in from time to time for a few moments and a pint with these charming hosts, or decide to make an evening of it, *Irish Denver* will delight and enlighten you with the history of this remarkable people in what Dr. Noel has been known to refer to as our “highest state.”

--Hugh Bingham, C. M.

**After Custer Loss and Transformation in Sioux Country** by Paul L. Hedron. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011. 272pp., bibliography, two maps, index. Cloth \$24.95.

The author, Paul Hedron, notes in his preface that his book "... is a historical geography of the northern Great Plains – Sioux Country - and the story of the consequences of one climatic Indian war in 1876-77 that set the stage for all that came next in the late 1870s and 1880s."

That one climatic Indian war had one climatic battle, better known as Custer's Last Stand but known today the Battle of the Little Bighorn, and hence the title *After Custer*. This is an ambitious book and the author succeeds well in his ambition – to educate the reader of the significant changes brought about in Sioux Country after the Little Bighorn.

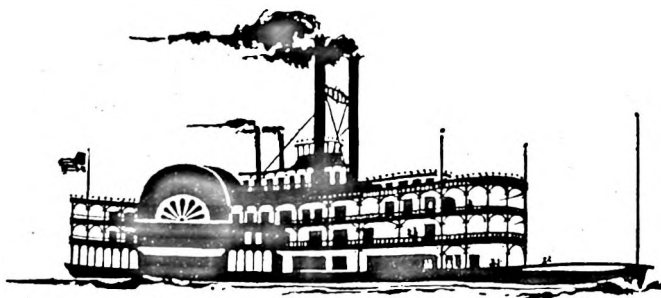
First covered, and done well, is what Hedron calls the Great Sioux War, perhaps a misnomer as there were greater wars in the West involving other Indians which produced greater casualties, extended over a longer period of time, and had perhaps more effect on historical geography – Texas as an example – than what occurred in Sioux Country, but Sioux Country had the Custer disaster and perhaps that overshadows all else. But what Hedron succeeds in showing is that the changes that occurred overshadow, paradoxically, Custer's defeat.

Hedron details the numerous forts that were built, from Fort Custer, the post closest to the Little Bighorn fight, to Forts Meade, Assiniboine, Keogh and others, and covers their history until they were nearly all abandoned. He also carefully weaves into the picture the transformation this country experienced with the final solution on reservations of the Native Americans. Included too is the onslaught of the railroad and settlers, with the development of agriculture and mining changing the country into what it is today. Not forgotten, of course, was the demise of the buffalo and how that contributed to the changing Indian use of the country as well as the burgeoning cattle industry that came to replace the buffalo.

Wherever possible Hedron uses the narrative voice of those who witnessed this transformation, giving the reader a wonderful perspective of this important metamorphosis, which makes this portion of the United States what it is today. Anyone who reads this book will possess a deeper understanding of the significant events occurring in Sioux Country that brought an end to the Old West and the bringing of America into the modern age. Anyone traveling through this part of the country, after absorbing the information in *After Custer*, will forever transform their understanding of the land being traversed.

This book is highly recommended both for its readability and the in-depth understanding the author possesses of the many roads built that originated from where Custer fell on that lonely Montana hill on that fateful June day in 1876.

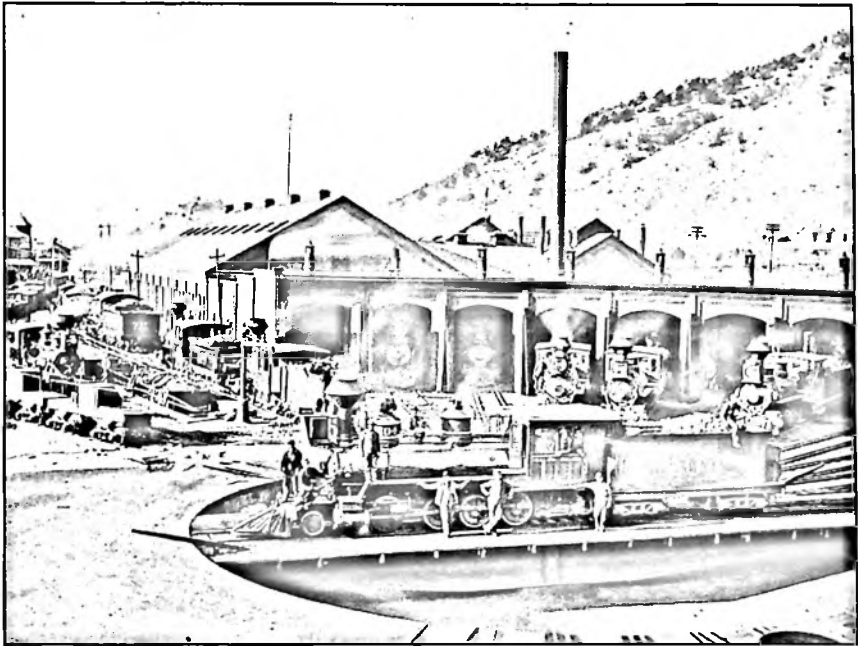
--Jeff Broome, PM





The DENVER WESTERNERS  
**ROUNDUP**

July - August 2012



*Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Dept.*

Salida, Colorado, and the roundhouse there was the cornerstone of the Denver and Rio Grande's narrow gauge empire in Colorado.

**Palmer versus Evans: The Race for the Gunnison Country**

**By Walter R. Borneman**

**(Presented April 27, 2011)**

## THE DENVER WESTERNERS

## ROUNDUP

VOL. LXVIII NO. 4



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## Our Author

Walter Borneman received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Western State College in 1974 and 1975. In 1981 he received his law degree from the Univ. of Denver and his practice frequently involves historic preservation issues.

Walter has authored many books on American History including: *Alaska: Saga of a Bold Land, 1812 and The War That Forged a Nation, the French and Indian War.*

In Colorado, Walter is best known for coauthoring *Climbing Guide to Colorado's Fourteeners*. His latest book, *Rival Rails, the Race to Build America's Greatest Transcontinental Railroad*, is the subject of this presentation.

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## Palmer versus Evans: The Race for the Gunnison Country

By Walter R. Borneman  
(Presented April 27, 2011)

Colorado's best-known railroad battle may well be the Royal Gorge War, but the 1870s and 1880s saw plenty of other railroad rivalry throughout the state. As the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe conceded the Royal Gorge to General William Jackson Palmer's Denver and Rio Grande, there were many railroad promoters who still thought the central Colorado Rockies offered the most direct route toward transcontinental destinations. While the terrain was difficult, what made these mountainous routes nonetheless inviting was the mineral wealth that promised substantial trade and profit along the way.

By 1880, the proponents of rails leading straight west from Denver had not gotten farther than the Colorado Central railhead about thirty-five miles up Clear Creek Canyon, but both Palmer's Denver and Rio Grande and former territorial governor John Evans's Denver, South Park and Pacific had made circuitous strides into the labyrinth.

At best, Palmer and Evans were wary adversaries. Early on, they had been cautious allies when Palmer's role with the Kansas Pacific and Evans's interests in the Denver Pacific had them

working together for Denver's first railroad. But there was plenty of ego in both men and after they each incorporated their personal railroad fiefdoms, their interests grew increasingly adverse.

Their first battle came in 1873, when the South Park sought a bond subsidy from Arapahoe County to build the initial leg of its line up the South Platte River through Waterton Canyon. In a series of letters published in Denver's *Rocky Mountain News*, Evans charged that Palmer's communications in opposition to the bonds "intended to mislead." Palmer opposed the issue, Evans claimed, solely because he did not want a competing railroad from Denver building toward the mining towns in South Park that Palmer sought to access from Colorado Springs and Pueblo.

Palmer countered that the Denver and Rio Grande's opposition was simply that of an outraged taxpayer. The railroad paid taxes in Arapahoe County and it could not condone \$300,000 of new public indebtedness at a handsome eight percent when Evans's road would duplicate much of the Rio Grande's initial miles toward the mouth of Waterton Canyon.

Bemoaning "the useless and wasteful character of the

proposed subsidy," Palmer noted that the original charter of the Denver and Rio Grande called for one of its ubiquitous branch lines to ascend the South Platte. His railroad would gladly undertake a five-mile extension to the mouth of the canyon "unless the power and credit of Arapahoe County should be raised against us, to promote the construction of an unnecessary, longer, and rival line to the same point." Evans was well aware of Palmer's goals and to protect what Evans called "Denver's enterprise," he "put a party of men to work grading our road in the canon" to prevent the route being seized.

In the end, Palmer's self-interest in Colorado Springs may have overshadowed Evans's own selfish commercial interests and worked against him in the Denver area. By a vote of three to one, Arapahoe County voters approved the bonds for the Denver, South Park and Pacific and from then on, the ex-governor and the ex-general were on opposite sides.<sup>1</sup>

But railroading, like politics, sometimes made for strange bedfellows. That was particularly true when one of the parties in the room was Jay Gould, a self-styled rail baron and entrepreneur who traded railroads as readily as some men traded horses. By the fall of 1879, to cover his broader transcontinental plans against the Santa Fe, Gould bought into both

the Rio Grande and the South Park.

The Arapahoe County bond vote aside, the Panic of 1873 stalled the Denver, South Park and Pacific far longer than John Evans cared to admit. But once into Waterton Canyon in 1878, the road built up the South Platte to Buffalo, Bailey, and Grant and then over Kenosha Pass into South Park. Continuing generally south across the rolling hills of this grassy bowl, it passed Como at the foot of Boreas Pass and crossed the Middle Fork of the South Platte at tiny Garo. From here, a branch line would soon climb uphill toward Fairplay, the roaring mining camp that had gotten everyone excited about South Park prospects in the first place.

Fairplay was barely fifteen miles due east of the mining hub of Leadville, but the Mosquito Range and its 14,000-foot peaks cordoned off direct access. So, the railroad continued southwest up gentle grades over Trout Creek Pass and descended to the Arkansas River valley just south of Buena Vista. From here, the continuation of the Royal Gorge route that the Rio Grande had won from the Santa Fe continued north about thirty miles to Leadville.

In his early courtship of the South Park road, Jay Gould wrote John Evans that they "should arrange in our extensions so as not to get in each others' way." There was plenty of room for all, Gould

assured Evans, "and I shall be glad to confer with you with that end in view." Now, with a hand in both Evans's and Palmer's pockets, Gould resolved to do just that.<sup>2</sup>

Gould forced a joint operating agreement on both Palmer and Evans. Once released from the Royal Gorge, the Denver and Rio Grande would build to Leadville, but the South Park was to have equal trackage rights on the last thirty miles of the route from Buena Vista north. The South Park would pay eight per cent annually on one-half of the construction costs of this section and one-half of the annual maintenance and repair expenses.

In exchange, the South Park was to continue its planned extension west up Chalk Creek and permit the Rio Grande the same trackage rights and terms along its planned line across the Continental Divide and into the Gunnison country. Not only were a host of silver mining camps in that area boasting of becoming another Leadville, but also the town of Gunnison was rapidly becoming a key supply center and access point for the mining camps of the northern San Juan Mountains.

In an effort to bury the long-simmering Evans-Denver versus Palmer-Colorado Springs/Pueblo competition, traffic from Leadville and the Gunnison country would be pooled and the gross revenues equally divided after deducting fifty

percent for the operating expenses of the road carrying it. And, despite Gould's well-known tendency to rush to the courts, Gould required—perhaps because of the morass of the recent Royal Gorge litigation—that the parties settle any disagreements by binding arbitration.

Denver, South Park and Pacific trains began operating between Denver and Buena Vista on March 3, 1880. The joint operating agreement with the Rio Grande required the South Park to transport material for the Leadville extension direct from Denver to Buena Vista so that the Rio Grande could undertake construction northward from there while the Santa Fe stalled its turnover of the Royal Gorge. This was to be done at cost as determined by one representative of each line. If there was any doubt about who was really controlling the roads, in case of a disagreement as to the amount to be charged, the final arbiter was to be Silas H. H. Clark, Mr. Gould's trusted lieutenant and best friend.<sup>3</sup>

Once the Santa Fe finally relinquished the Royal Gorge a month later, the Denver and Rio Grande laid track with great speed toward Leadville. The Rio Grande's railhead reached the confluence of the mountain branches of the Arkansas River about twenty miles south of Buena Vista in May. Unabashedly promoting their program of town speculation, Palmer's associates promptly

founded the new town of South Arkansas—shortly renamed Salida. With lines soon to be running in three directions, it was destined to become a major rail center complete with a roundhouse and hospital.

From Salida, the road built north to link up with the South Park at Buena Vista. Another thirty miles brought the Rio Grande into Leadville at last, where it celebrated its arrival on July 22, 1880, with a special carrying ex-president Ulysses S. Grant. Meanwhile, the South Park made temporary use of the Rio Grande tracks south from Buena Vista for about five miles to Nathrop. From this junction, the South Park laid track westward up Chalk Creek beneath the crumbling chalk cliffs of Mount Princeton.

But all was not well in the house of Gould. Having had the albatross of the Royal Gorge battle removed from around his neck, William Jackson Palmer was counting shares and reasserting himself as the decision-maker of the Denver and Rio Grande. Not only was Palmer planning a line south from Salida over Poncha Pass to connect with his line over La Veta Pass—a venture Gould seems to have supported and been prepared to help finance—but also he was eyeing a line independent of the South Park across the divide to the Gunnison country.

When Gould got wind of this, he was in the midst of

purchasing the estate north of New York City that would become his country retreat at Lyndhurst on the Hudson. “As I understood the contract,” Gould wrote from there to Governor Evans with a great degree of frustration, “the D&RG were not to build an independent line into the Gunnison country [because] such a line would sooner or later get the two companies into a collision.” Gould reminded Evans that there was in fact a clause in the joint operating agreement that contemplated that the two roads be consolidated and he urged Evans that “the sooner this is done the better.”<sup>4</sup>

Evans was certainly willing to see that happen. But a quick review of the joint operating agreement showed that while the Rio Grande had in fact been granted trackage rights over a South Park line to Gunnison, there was no prohibition in the agreement of the Rio Grande building its own line there despite the general understanding at the time that it would not. Whether this contractual lapse was Gould’s fault or that of one of his minion attorneys made little difference as Palmer champed at the bit to head west.

Surely, the general knew that if he did so, it would mean a rate war with the South Park and quite probably the wrath of the Union Pacific system in which Gould held considerable sway. Palmer may have

meant his first westward moves from Salida as a bluff to encourage John Evans to sell the South Park to him while Gould was still only a minority, though influential, South Park shareholder. If Palmer could acquire controlling interest in the South Park for himself, the move would rid the Rio Grande of Union Pacific influence in the central Rockies, save for the struggling Colorado Central.

So, Evans at Gould's urging and Palmer for his own interests sat down to haggle over price. Reportedly, Palmer first offered Evans a straight stock trade, one share of Rio Grande stock for one share of South Park. Having achieved somewhat of a re-birth thanks to Gould's investment, Rio Grande stock was then trading between \$60 and \$70 a share.

South Park stock was not on the market because after Gould had bought about twenty-five percent, Evans and his Denver cronies shrewdly put all their remaining shares into a trust with instructions that it be voted or sold as a block. This was a ploy to keep Gould from chipping away and getting to fifty-one percent and control of the company. Evans and his Denver crowd did not intend to be minority shareholders; it was either all or nothing.

But the Denver, South Park and Pacific was having a banner year. Thanks to traffic in South Park

and the rush to Leadville, the little railroad would report a staggering net income of almost one-million dollars on 162 miles of track in 1880. The Denver crowd thought that its stock was worth at least par—one-hundred dollars a share.

Palmer countered with a \$700,000 sweetener, but wanted nine-month terms and initially pledged no collateral. When Evans discussed the terms with Gould in his role as a South Park shareholder who would have to give consent as to his quarter interest, Gould "offered to purchase the South Park himself at \$90 per share, and, as an added inducement, offered to let Evans remain as president."

When Evans was somewhat taken aback and asked why he should still be president after the transaction, Gould tipped his hand. "I thought you might like to remain as president and be identified with the Union Pacific." That, of course, was exactly what Palmer feared the most.

Evans responded to Gould in the same way he had to Palmer: holding out for par of \$100 per share and promising that he could "get a cash par offer accepted at once." By this point the two railroaders were communicating in hurried telegrams. Just to be certain he fully understood Evans's position, Gould wired him to make an all-cash proposal. "We will take cash par for our railroad stock," the governor wired back on

behalf of his Denver crowd. Done, answered Gould, "Your offer is accepted."

So, John Evans and his associates reaped substantial profits and Jay Gould became the sole owner of the Denver, South Park and Pacific. By one count, Evans's personal take was almost \$800,000. Gould quickly made money, too, because he sold most of his shares at par two months later to the Union Pacific, recovering the \$100 per share he had paid the Denver crowd for 25,908 shares and making more than half a million dollars on the 5,716 shares he had held as the result of his construction loans.

What Gould's stake was in the Rio Grande at this time is uncertain, but it seems probable that by the 1881 annual meeting, Palmer had rounded up enough support to out-vote him and Gould subsequently sold out his minority position in the Rio Grande. Jay Gould was not, however, out of the central Rockies railroad competition entirely. He still had an interest in the Colorado Central and he would use it shortly to strike yet another line toward Leadville. But before that happened, the Denver and Rio Grande and the Denver, South Park and Pacific would race for the Gunnison country and eye transcontinental destinations beyond it.<sup>5</sup>

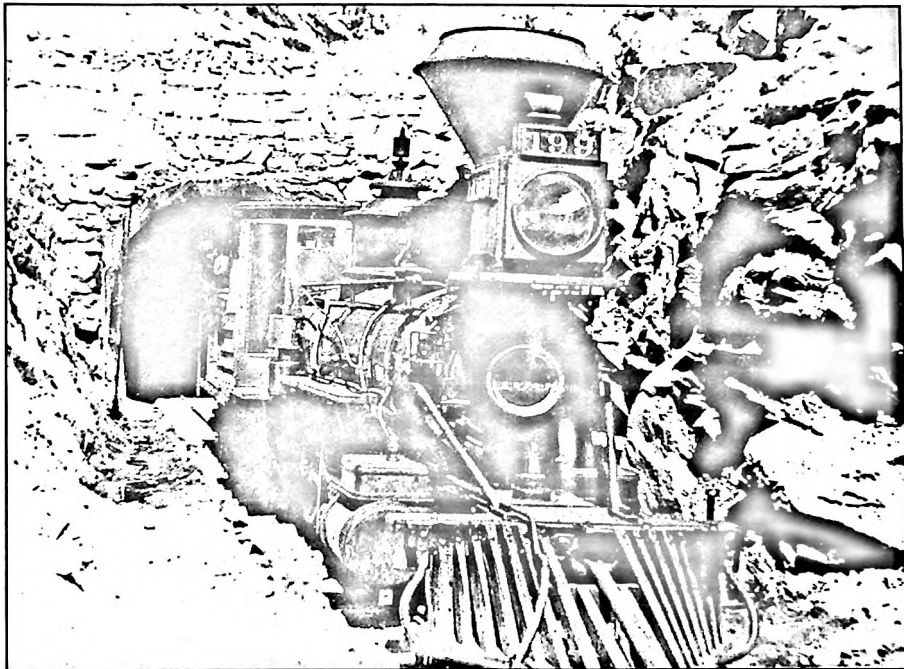
West of the Arkansas River between Salida and Leadville, the

Sawatch Range is the heart of the Colorado Rockies. Mountain after mountain—fifteen of them over 14,000 feet—rise thousands of feet above the river and hold aloft the Continental Divide. While a host of high rugged passes—Tincup, Cottonwood, and Independence among them—offer some east-west passage, most are over 12,000 feet and very discouraging as railroad routes.

The South Park chose to thread the needle and build up Chalk Creek between Mount Princeton and Mount Antero, crossing the divide in the vicinity of 11,762-foot Williams Pass. The crossing would require a lengthy tunnel, but the line on the map led straight to Gunnison. As early as October 1879, Jay Gould assured John Evans that the Union Pacific was sending qualified bidders for what they were calling the Alpine Tunnel.<sup>6</sup>

There was, however, one other promising possibility for the competing Denver and Rio Grande. Late in the fall of 1873, Lieutenant William L. Marshall of the Corps of Engineers was a division chief for one of the Wheeler Survey parties. Marshall was in the vicinity of Silverton deep in the San Juans when he came down with what he later described as "one of the worst toothaches that ever befell a mortal."

His mouth became so swollen and sore that he could not move his jaw and he was



*Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Dept.*

The Denver, South Park and Pacific lost the race with the Denver and Rio Grande to Gunnison when the enormities of the Alpine Tunnel became apparent. Here, No. 199 emerges from the Western portal of the tunnel.

reduced to sipping thin gruel for sustenance. Eschewing the offer of a local blacksmith to extract the troublesome tooth, Marshall and a packer named Dave Mears struck a beeline for Denver and presumably more qualified medical assistance.

Remembering a low depression in the range between the Ute trails over Cochetopa Pass and the landmark summit of Mount Ouray, Marshall and Mears spent six days struggling through deep

snow before cresting the Continental Divide at the comparatively low elevation of 10,846 feet. Realizing that he had stumbled onto a potential east-west route, Marshall shook off the pain of his toothache and spent a full day and night on the summit of the pass. His subsequent profile—though produced hastily under harsh conditions—caused great excitement upon his arrival in Denver.<sup>7</sup>

Four years after Marshall's discovery, the inveterate toll road

builder of the San Juans, a Russian immigrant named Otto Mears (no relation to Dave Mears), chartered the Marshall Pass and Gunnison Toll Road to run from Mears's Poncha Pass road across the divide and on to Gunnison, a distance of some sixty miles. Limited construction began along the route in 1879, but by the spring of 1880 as the Denver and Rio Grande laid track past South Arkansas, Mears advertised that the road was open and the shortest route from the railhead to all points in the Gunnison country and beyond. In a wave of promotion, the neophyte *Gunnison News* claimed, "all who travel it pronounce it the best road into the county."<sup>8</sup>

Business was brisk and Otto Mears counted his profits as Barlow and Sanderson stagecoaches and convoys of freight wagons followed the ruts west. Tolls for a two-horse team with wagon were four dollars; a wagon with one horse, two dollars; loose stock and pack animals, twenty-five cents a head; and saddle animals fifty cents each. By one report, Mears turned down an offer of a daily rental of \$175 per day, but he was soon to cash out completely.

The Denver and Rio Grande took steps to secure Mears's favor as well as his toll road franchise. Construction superintendent Robert F. Weitbrec first had his chief engineer, James McMurtrie, conduct grade surveys of both Marshall Pass and nearby Monarch Pass

to the north. When McMurtrie's numbers over the two passes proved uncannily similar in distance, grade, and construction costs—about \$1.2 million for the Salida–Gunnison branch—the prospect of acquiring Mears's toll road tipped the route in favor of Marshall Pass.

The toll road ran steeply straight up Poncha Creek to the summit on the east side. The railroad would have to add mileage and build a series of switchbacks to keep its grade to four percent, but the Rio Grande's ownership of the road would provide construction access and block the South Park or any other line from the route. It was also quite likely that construction of the railroad grade would use or disrupt portions of the toll road and Mears would be owed compensation in any event.

From his side, Mears was busy building new toll roads into the heart of the San Juans and was facing future competition from a toll road that was being built over Monarch Pass. It didn't take much thought to realize that whatever his profits on Marshall Pass in 1880, they were likely to be severely impacted by the completion of the railroad. After he negotiated with Weitbrec, the man some later called "the Pathfinder of the San Juans" agreed to sell his Marshall Pass toll road to the Denver and Rio Grande for \$13,000.<sup>9</sup>

Railroad fever hit Gunnison



as early as May 1880 when a petition promoting a Denver and Rio Grande extension was circulated and signed by all county and city officials as well as some prominent citizens. Reporting the petition, the *Gunnison News* had the optimism to predict that the Rio Grande would be in town by September 1 and that—counting the Denver, South Park and Pacific—Gunnison would then have two railroads to keep freight rates in check.

Work on the ground took much longer than boosterism editors could set type, and by the middle of September, the Rio Grande had barely commenced driving piles for the major bridge across the Arkansas River at Salida. The structure was finished and laid with rail by late October and the railroad completed the first five miles of its Gunnison extension to the tiny crossroads of Poncha Springs on November 14.

Poncha was the final decision point in the question that the local press had bandied about for months: would the rails go over Marshall Pass or Monarch Pass? With the purchase of the Mears toll road, the question was categorically resolved and the Rio Grande laid track south from Poncha Springs toward Marshall Pass. Once again, the railroad was the beneficiary of prior grading work the Santa Fe had done during the Royal Gorge War when it had planned its own extension over Poncha Pass into the

San Luis Valley.

But there was plenty of excitement along the grade. The section boss of one of the grading outfits got into a row with one of his men and gave him a good thrashing. Later, the boss brandished a knife from the cook tent and threatened to cut out the man's heart. That was enough for the abused worker and he pulled out a revolver and shot the man in the neck, killing him instantly. The worker surrendered to authorities, but was duly acquitted on the basis of self-defense.

Weitbrec planned to continue construction through the winter, but when the temperature dropped to minus-twenty-three degrees Fahrenheit, at Salida on November 18, many workers simply quit. Those who stayed pushed the line along Poncha Creek six miles to the Owens sawmill—soon to be called Mears Junction—and continued to labor through the cold and snow. This was no small effort and in the middle of February 1881, more than 1,100 men and 150 teams were at work grading the frozen ground and laying track.<sup>10</sup>

Still, with construction work underway on multiple fronts, Weitbrec had difficulty maintaining a "sufficient quantity of good labor." The Rio Grande was paying the highest wages yet paid to railroad laborers in Colorado and providing passage for at least one-thousand laborers per month from Denver

and Pueblo. The road also advanced the cross-country fares of 250 men from St. Louis, 300 from Chicago, and 200 from as far away as Canada. They were supposed to work off their passage, but Weitbrecht sourly reported to Palmer, "In nearly all cases the men deserted, many to the mines, a few returned to their homes, and the Lord probably knows where the rest are."<sup>11</sup>

In some respects, if one didn't mind the cold, it was easier to work on frozen ground than in the endless mud that came with spring thaws. By the April 1, the railhead was two miles beyond Mears at Silver Creek, but stage and freight traffic between there and Gunnison ground to a halt in the quagmire. Gone were the glowing reports of the year before and now Gunnison newspapers insisted the toll road was the "worse road in the State" and claimed, "it is utterly impossible for a wagon loaded with freight to successfully make the trip with the road in its present condition."

But slowly but surely the railroad was coming to the rescue. From Silver Creek—later called Shirley—the grade crossed Poncha Creek and the toll road, made a tight loop, and then wound up a series of switchbacks to Grays Siding beneath the massive cirque on the east face of Mount Ouray. From Grays Siding another six miles of track snaked high above Poncha Creek along the southern slopes of the mountain

and reached the summit of the pass after crossing the comparatively flat summit meadows via an uncannily straight three-quarter-mile straightaway.

There would be no tunnel here—the flat terrain on the east side would have required one of more than two miles to make the elevation savings worthwhile—but a fifty-foot-deep cut several hundred feet long was blasted through the summit hogback that Lieutenant Marshall had huddled behind on his discovery trip. On June 21, 1881, the passengers who stepped off the Barlow and Sanderson stage in Gunnison proudly announced that theirs had been the first passenger train to arrive at the summit of Marshall Pass.<sup>12</sup>

But what had become of the other railroad that the *Gunnison News* had bragged of having in town even before the Rio Grande? The Denver, South Park and Pacific had gotten off to an early lead in the race for the Gunnison country by building west from Nathrop up Chalk Creek to St. Elmo.

On paper, the South Park's plan looked sound. A series of grading contracts for its entire Gunnison extension were awarded along with contracts for ties—P. B. Buchanan & Company alone was responsible for 100,000 of them. These were to be stockpiled along the grade in readiness for the iron. The crux of the route was the



*Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Dept.*

### William Jackson Palmer

Alpine Tunnel, but by the time rails reached up the south fork of Chalk Creek past Romley and Hancock, tunnel contractors were to have completed the 1,800-foot bore and made it ready for track. That was the plan. But the mountains had other ideas and the Alpine Tunnel was to become the South Park's millstone.

When John Evans first advertised for tunnel contractors, he was quick to point out that "the time at which the contractor will agree to complete the work will be an element of importance in the bids." At a South Park board meeting on December 3, 1879, Cummings & Company was awarded the tunnel contract with the requirement that the work be completed within six months.

They got right to it and

### John Evans

started boring into the windswept heights of the Continental Divide amidst deep snow and numbing cold in January 1880. But the mountain didn't cooperate. The South Park's chief engineer as well as the successful tunnel bidder had assumed that the work "would penetrate solid, self-supporting granite." Instead, once drilling began, the mountain proved to be mostly decomposed granite heavily saturated with water. Not only did this make for slow and dangerous excavation work, but it would also require substantial cribbing during the digging and heavy and extensive permanent timbering. Orders went out for half a million board feet of California redwood.<sup>13</sup>

The months ticked by and by May 1880, it was clear to all that

they had a monster on their hands. Cummings & Company called it quits after only 150 feet. The South Park scrambled to find tougher, more experienced hands and settled on Fitzgerald & Company, whose principals had done extensive railroad construction, including work on the famed 4.8-mile Hoosac Tunnel through the Berkshires. One of the partners, William Osborn, brought his family with him to Hancock, three miles east of the east portal, and settled in for the duration.

Although it has not been documented with absolute certainty, Alpine Tunnel historian Dow Helmers believed that Osborn used the centre-core system of construction that was employed in the Hoosac. Essentially, a pilot bore was drilled at the apex of the tunnel. Workers then dug downward and outward in two directions to the "shelf," where men could stand erect. Then, both walls were excavated to the full tunnel width and down to the floor level, "leaving a huge core of rock, bench high, in the center of the tunnel."

The core provided a sturdy support base for the false timbering required during construction and, when it came time for its removal, the rock could be worked from at least three sides. "The pilot bore usually ran from eight to twelve feet ahead of the shelf [and] often the centre-core remained in place

while other work progressed several hundred feet ahead of it." The permanent redwood timbering was installed before the core was removed.<sup>14</sup>

In engineering theory, it all sounds very precise. In practice, at 11,700 feet, it was slow going. The South Park encountered the same frustrating labor shortages as the Rio Grande, despite its willingness also to pay top dollar. "Laborers received \$3.50 per day; hard rock and explosives men, \$5.00 per day." Even with Fitzgerald & Company's expertise and crews averaging 350 to 450 total workers digging from both portals at once and working around the clock, another winter was soon gnawing away at construction efforts.

By the spring of 1881, as the competing Rio Grande's advance over Marshall Pass was momentarily stalled by mud at Silver Creek, the *Gunnison Review* reported that the South Park "had only 570 feet of cutting to penetrate the backbone of the continent." But a few months later, with a estimated 250 feet still remaining, the newspaper had long abandoned any optimism and speculated, "The length of time now required to complete the great work is estimated to be one month, but considering the progress heretofore made we judge it will take in the neighborhood of three months to complete it."

In fact, it took only half

that time and on July 26, 1881, the contractors holed through the two bores, joining their two headings within an engineering accuracy of 11/100ths of a foot. One of William Osborn's children got the honor of scampering through first, followed by Mrs. Osborn. Resident engineer P. F. Barr was next after a joking payment of ten dollars that was promptly "expended for beer by the boys."<sup>15</sup>

For this final length of construction, the core had been left in place ten feet high for almost six-hundred feet. This was attacked with renewed vigor. Meanwhile, track was laid upgrade from Hancock and reached the east portal on August 11. Although the tunnel itself was not ready for track, rails were hauled through it so that construction could continue on the west side downhill toward a narrow ledge called "the Palisades" and around a tight curve at the Sherrod Loop.

Then, quite suddenly, the race to Gunnison was over. The Denver and Rio Grande had continued its tracks over Marshall Pass, reached the Tomichi Valley at Sargents, and laid rail into Gunnison, its first train steaming into town on August 6, 1881. Regular service started two days later. Palmer, however, did not pause to celebrate. The Rio Grande hastily threw a branch line northward to tap anthracite coal deposits near Crested Butte that both the Rio Grande and

the South Park coveted and then rapidly continued its main line westward.

But the Denver, South Park and Pacific had run out of steam. It took longer to clear the core and install the permanent timbering than expected. There was a cave-in that further delayed construction. By late October, the South Park was still saying that it would be in Gunnison before Christmas, but three weeks later all work was suspended on the grade until spring. By the time the tunnel was fully operational, it was July 1882 and the first South Park train did not steam into Gunnison until early September.

The Alpine Tunnel remained a spectacular engineering achievement. When completed, it was 1,772 feet long. The first one-hundred-sixty feet of track inside the east portal was built on a curve of 24 degrees before heading on a tangent to the west portal. The apex of the tunnel was at 11,524 feet and from the east portal the rails climbed a hefty 2.4-percent average grade for 1,172 feet to reach the point where a gentler half percent led the remaining 600 feet downgrade to the west portal. Estimates of the tunnel's construction costs vary greatly, but \$300,000 is thought to be reasonably accurate.<sup>16</sup>

For the Denver, South Park and Pacific, Gunnison proved the end of the line—the demise of its transcontinental efforts. The road

built a spur north to coal deposits at Baldwin, but even the railroad's ability to market that coal was short-lived. Trouble plagued the South Park line and had railroaders talking about the curse of the Alpine Tunnel. A massive avalanche in 1884 buried the water tank and boarding house at Woodstock three miles below the west portal and killed thirteen people. A temporary closure of the tunnel in 1890 lasted five years and then it cost four lives to re-open it. Finally, the South Park gave up the route for good in 1910.

The Alpine Tunnel reserved a spot in railroad lore for the South Park, but it cost the railroad dearly in construction costs, a year's delay in reaching the Gunnison country, and in lives and materials as the years went by. Because of the Alpine Tunnel the Denver, South Park and Pacific had not only lost the race to the Gunnison country, but without the local ownership of John Evans and his Denver crowd, it quickly became just another of the Union Pacific's myriad of branch lines.

For the Palmer and the Rio Grande, it was a different story. It had won the race to the Gunnison country and up ahead, beyond the depths of the Black Canyon lay the deserts of Utah and a promised transcontinental connection with the Union Pacific at Ogden. As the Denver and Rio Grande built west from Gunnison, its race was no longer with the South Park, but

against the success of their old adversary, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, to the south and the spreading branches of the Union Pacific system nipping at their flanks to the north. There were many more railroad rivalries to come.

## Endnotes

1. "intended to mislead;" "the useless and wasteful;" "unless the power and credit;" and "put a party of men" *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver) July 23, 1873; election results and Colorado Springs bias at Harry F. Kelsey, Jr., *Frontier Capitalist: The Life of John Evans* (Denver: State Historical Society and Pruett, 1969), p. 181.
2. South Park construction timetable from Tevis E. Wilkins, *Colorado Railroads* (Boulder: Pruett, 1974), pp. 23-24, 31, 40; "should arrange" John Evans Collection, Stephen H. Hart Library, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Box 7, FF 80 (Gould to Evans, January 8, 1878) cited hereinafter as "Evans Collection" by box and file folder.
3. "Agreement between Denver, South Park and Pacific Railroad and Denver and Rio Grande Railway, October 1, 1879," Evans Collection, Box 7, FF 80.
4. "As I understood" Evans Collection, Box 7, FF 82 (Gould to Evans, July 5, 1880).
5. Various versions exist for Gould's role in the Denver and Rio Grande; Palmer's decision to build independently to the Gunnison

country; and Gould's purchase of control of the South Park. The most reasoned and best researched may be Kelsey, *Frontier Capitalist*, pp. 187-193, 316-317n, which is based on correspondence between Gould and Evans, specifically, "offered to purchase," "I thought you might," "get a cash par," "We will take," and "Your offer" p. 192; other interpretations along with Gould's profit on the South Park sale can be found at Maury Klein, *Union Pacific, The Birth of a Railroad, 1862-1893* (New York: Doubleday, 1987), pp. 431-432 and Maury Klein, *The Life and Legend of Jay Gould* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 257; the Denver and Rio Grande annual report for 1881 does not include Gould as a director.

6. Evans Collection, Box 7, FF 81 (Gould to Evans, November 8, 1879).

7. Thomas Dawson, "Godfather of Marshall Pass," *The Trail* (September 1920), pp. 8-10. (Based on a personal interview with William L. Marshall)

8. Mears's advertisement in *Mountain Mail* (South Arkansas/Salida, Colorado), June 12, 1880; "all who travel it" *Gunnison News*, June 19, 1880.

9. Toll road rates *Gunnison News*, June 12, 1880, p. 2; rental offer of \$175 per day *Solid Muldoon* (Ouray, Colorado), May 28, 1880; construction estimates Robert F. Weitbrec Collection, Stephen H. Hart Library, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, File folder 13, Notebook 6, pp. 111-112; toll road sale Denver and Rio Grande Archives, Stephen H. Hart

Library, Colorado Historical Society, #4307 (Bennett to Risley, April 27, 1882).

10. Gunnison petition *Gunnison News*, May 1, 1880; Gordon Chappell, "Scenic Line of the World," *Colorado Rail Annual*. No. 8, 1970, pp. 16-17.

11. "sufficient quantity" and "In nearly all cases" Denver and Rio Grande Archives, #3265B "Construction of Denver and Rio Grande Railroad to and within Gunnison County," pp. 2-3.

12. "worse road" and "it is utterly impossible" *Gunnison Review*, April 2, 1881; first train to summit *Gunnison News-Democrat*, June 25, 1881.

13. Dow Helmers. *Historic Alpine Tunnel* (Colorado Springs: Century One Press, 1971), pp. 23-25; "the time at which" *Rocky Mountain News*, November 2, 1879.

14. centre-core construction Helmers, *Historic Alpine Tunnel*, pp. 25-26.

15. "had only 570 feet" *Gunnison Review*, April 16, 1881; "The length of time" and "expended for beer" Helmers, *Historic Alpine Tunnel*, p. 27.

16. Rio Grande arrival in Gunnison in Walter R. Borneman. *Marshall Pass: Denver and Rio Grande Gateway to the Gunnison Country* (Colorado Springs: Century One Press, 1980), p. 31; tunnel construction details in Helmers, *Historic Alpine Tunnel*, pp. 28, 61.

# Over the Corral Rail

Compiled by Ed Bathke, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ed. Deadline is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the first month in the date of publication.

## Westerner Activities in June

The Colorado Corral joined the Friends of Historic Fort Logan at the White Fence Farm on June 22. The FHFL annual meeting featured Colorado State Historian Bill Convery, as he presented an entertaining and informative program on the new Colorado History Center.

In Colorado Springs, the Pikes Peak Posse heard member Mary Elizabeth Ruwell, Ph. D., describe "The Aeronautical History Collection of Colonel Richard Gimbel." Mary Elizabeth is the United State Air Force Academy Archivist and Chief of Special Collections at the cadet library.

The Gimbel collection is one of the most prestigious aeronautical history collections in existence, featuring the history of man's dream of flight from antiquity to the advent of powered flight at the beginning of the twentieth century. Richard Gimbel was the son of one of the founders of the Gimbel department store, served in the 8<sup>th</sup> U. S. Army Air Force in England in World War II, and became Curator of Aeronautical Literature at Yale when he retired from the Air Force. According to his wishes, his collection of over 20,000 items was donated to the USAFA upon his death in 1970.

## Denver Posse Member Bob Larson Keynote Speaker

Denver Posse member Bob Larson gave the keynote address at the New Mexico Statehood Symposium held in the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe on May 3 of this year. Bob was selected as the keynote speaker because his 1968 book *New Mexico's Quest for Statehood, 1846-1912*, published by the University of New Mexico Press, is characterized by the Historical Society of New Mexico as a "classic." His book is a pioneering study of the state's sixty-six-year statehood movement. According to a member of the staff of the New Mexico State Library, it is one on a list of ten state historical studies considered as a must read by the library. Congratulations to Bob on this well-deserved recognition.





## Westerners Bookshelf



**Fort Clark and its Indian Neighbors: A Trading Post on the Upper Missouri.** Wood, W. Raymond; Hunt, William J. & Williams; Randy H. Oklahoma University Press, Norman, 2011. 1<sup>st</sup> Edition. Hardback in Dustjacket. Illustrated, photos, endnotes, bibliography, \$34.95

Three talented Archeologists/Anthropologists worked together to write a most excellent history of Fort Clark, Fort Primeau, and the Mandan, Hidatsu and Arikara Indians that lived in the vicinity. The coverage is exceptional from the historical perspective.

Fort Clark, named for William Clark of the famous exploration duo, is located about sixty miles as the crow flies from present-day Bismarck, ND, and had a brief appearance on the stage of Western history, from 1830 to 1860. Fort Primeau at the same location, had an even shorter life span, from 1846 to 1860. The former was built by James Kipp, who also oversaw construction of several Fur Trade forts, for the American Fur Trade Company, aka the Upper Missouri River Outfit. Their business was the purchase of furs from a number of Indian tribes that also included the Sioux and Crow. The local, more sedentary tribes traded corn and other foodstuffs for trade goods, providing the fort with a much needed source of grains and vegetables. Following the disastrous smallpox epidemic of 1837, which almost wiped out the Mandans, these supplies dwindled significantly. Though generally the relations with the three local tribes was amicable, the epidemics caused problems with the Rees, who killed several of the fur traders. A cholera epidemic in 1851 further aggravated relations.

The coverage of the local Indians, and their archeology, is especially well done, providing both an historical perspective as well as an anthropological one. There were several villages in the area, including one close to the fort called Mih-tutta-hang-kusch. There is none of the Lo! The Poor Indian approach in this account, which is commendable for its fact-laden coverage of the native peoples. For example, the attacks by the Sioux on the three tribes were exceptionally brutal, forcing them to keep to their immediate vicinity, consolidate into Like-a-Fishhook and fortify themselves against attack.

There were several Factors/Bourgeois at the fort, most notably Francis Chardon, who manage the post from 1834-1839, and who left an account of his life there. His journal provides an important day-to-day view of life at

a Fur Trade fort. There are a host of other accounts, particularly by visitors who passed through the area. Most notable of these are the artists George Catlin, Karl Bodmer, Rudolph Kurz, Carl Wimer and William Jacob Hays, all of whom left paintings or sketches of the forts, and giving us an accurate idea of the look of the place.

Wealthy aristocratic foreign travelers, such as Prince Maxmilian Von Wied and Prince Friederich Paul Wilhelm, Duke of Wurttemberg also visited Fort Clark and left detailed accounts of their time in the locality. Catlin's two volume work *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs and Condition of the North American Indians* was published in 1841, and subsequently republished on numerous occasions. It provides a detailed examination of life in the 1830's along the upper Missouri.

Today, Fort Clark is the location of North Dakota's State Historic Site, and open to the public for visitation. Anyone considering visiting the area would do well to read this well-written and informed account prior to his trip.

--Alan Culpin, P.M.

**Kit Carson - The Life of An American Border Man** by David Remley. University of Oklahoma Press, January 2012. 320 pages, 25 black and white illustrations, 2 maps, photos, bibliography, index. Paperback, \$19.95

This is a must read for those interested in reading a well-balanced picture of the life and times of Kit Carson. Many modern-day writers of Western history have labeled Kit an Indian hater, while the opposite is more accurate. He wasn't the brutish killer of Indians that he is so often depicted today. He was a fearsome Indian fighter when it was necessary to save lives. He was respected by most of the Indian tribes he had dealings with. But it was the "Long Walk" relocation of the Navajos that cast Kit an Indian hater. Many of the women, children and aged Navajos perished on the trail during this shameful, tortuous trek, thereby branding Kit for his involvement.

Kit respected the Indian way of life, having married two Indian women in his early days as a trapper and hunter. But his true and lasting love was for Josefa Jaramillo. Their marriage lasted twenty-five years.

The author takes the reader back to the lowlands of Scotland and to Ulster where the Scots-Irish clans began. Kit's ancestors were born and raised in the farmers clan. They learned to stick together and fight for what they wanted. And what they wanted was a way out of the poverty-stricken lowlands that held them in bondage. It was out of this desire to flee the intolerable living conditions that the Carson family ancestors joined the swarms of Irish migrants who left for America.

Kit inherited the fighting spirit, not the bullying type looking for a fight, but the fighting spirit it takes to survive in the wilds of the West. It was this instinct to survive that made Kit the subject of so many embellished tabloid stories, that made him look bigger than life, a super hero of the Wild West. In reality he was embarrassed by all the attention given to him.

Had it not been for the expert guidance of Kit Carson many early government expeditions would not have survived the wilderness or contact with hostile Indian tribes.

While this book is about Kit Carson the reader will learn a lot about the political and military machinations of the United States government in those early years of manifest destiny.

Kit Carson died at the age of 58 in 1868.

*--Ron Perkins, C. M.*

**Bonanzas & Borrascas: Gold Lust and Silver Sharks, 1848-1884** by Lingenfelter, Richard E. The Arthur H. Clarke Company, Norman, Oklahoma, 2012. Volume 26 in the Western Lands and Water Series. Index, footnotes, illustrations. Hardback, dustjacket, \$40.00

First it must be said that Lingenfelter writes extremely well. This is an interesting book and quite fun to read. It covers the history of stock investments and stock scams in the West in the period 1848-1884, heavily concentrated into California and Nevada, with a bit of Arizona, Idaho, South Dakota and Colorado tossed in for flavor. He focuses on the exploitive selling of stocks in a number of famous mines including the Comstock, in numerous California mining operations including The Empire, the New Almaden and many others. He focuses on gold, silver, mercury, and of course, covers the Great Diamond Hoax.

Lingenfelter is not a professional historian. He is, somewhat surprisingly, a physicist – and it shows. While there are many good stories in this book, many of them are well-known. Amazingly, there is no bibliography which would be considered a must for most historians. His footnotes are bunched together by pages, resulting in one footnote number leading to a multiple of possible sources – very confusing. He does not use primary sources, however he clearly has investigated the secondary sources in depth, and has based the book on what others have written.

As the title suggests, the book focuses on the dark side of mining history, and he has little good to say about any mining operation, with the exception of the Homestake Mine, and a couple of others. It is a book about exploitation of the ignorant, and to some extent, this book also risks exploiting our ignorance. He does not seem to understand the method of funding

mining operations – it took a lot of capital to develop hard rock mines, and while some of the operations were clearly set up to scam investors, most were not. They might lose money if there was insufficient ore, or if it were in a remote location, or not rich enough. All too often, Lingenfelter thinks all such mines were scams.

He almost totally neglects smaller mining operations—the tens of thousands of limited attempts to extract wealth from the ground. Some of these made money, many of them did not. But they were for the most part honest attempts, and Lingenfelter gives them little credit. There are a number of errors in the accounts, especially ones familiar to Coloradans. He takes on Leadville, and particularly Tabor, claiming he was just another shark. Tabor may have been stupid, but there is little evidence he set out to scam the public. Also, the suggestion that the Little Pittsburgh and the Matchless were worked out within a couple of years is clearly inaccurate.

All in all, this is an enjoyable read, to be taken with a grain of salt at times, no pun intended. At times, it feels repetitive, a facet of the similarity of the scams that were pulled on investors large and small over that period of thirty-six years.

*--Alan Culpin, P.M.*

**Automobile Gold Rushes and Depression Era Mining**, by Charles W. Miller, Jr., University of Idaho Press, Moscow, Idaho, 1998, 200 pages. Illustrated with photographs, charts and maps; endnotes, bibliography, index. Cloth, dustjacket, \$35.00 (Paper, \$19.95)

This slim volume is a real sleeper – and not just because the 1998 book was received by the Denver Westerners in about 2010 for review and then negligently misplaced by this reviewer. The book is a significant contribution to Western mining history, for it tells the story of the little-known third (of approximately four) series of gold “rushes” to occur during modern times.

Of course, the Golden Age of Gold Rushes was the 1849-1869 period, an era that saw rushes from California to Australia, from British Columbia to New Zealand, from Colorado to Arizona. Then, from the 1890s to the early twentieth century, there was the second series of rushes – from Cripple Creek to Western Australia, from Alaska to South Africa, from New Zealand to Nevada – which salvaged the economies of several nations – and caused at least one war. Then, during the Great Depression, there was a gradual worldwide mining rebirth, a series of rushes chronicled in this history. Driven by

extraordinary prices, we currently are in a fourth era of almost-exclusively corporate gold rushes.

But it was during the Great Depression that there was a hint of the glory days of the nineteenth century, for – driven by necessity – individual prospectors and smalltime miners headed to the hills to eke out livings for their families. While this scenario was seen worldwide (and included Australia, New Zealand, and Canada), Dr. Miller has chronicled the important story in the United States, and that story includes the traditional Western locales of California, Colorado, Alaska, Idaho, and other areas that had participated in the old-time rushes.

As related by Dr. Miller, the Depression Era rushes – oftentimes “automobile rushes” because of the growth of the highway system – actually was reminiscent of the old-time days. In the early days of the depression, encouraged by smalltime claim owners who occasionally found huge nuggets, many individuals and family groups could earn living wages during the hard times. However, as always occurs, these small-time operators were followed by corporations – which was not a bad thing for getting on the road to recovery.

Importantly, this volume is geared towards educated laypersons. As with many mining books, information regarding the methods of recovering gold – from panning to sluices, from hydraulic mining to dredging – is succinctly set out. The book is worth the price just for the environmental discussions regarding dredging and the use of the “little giant” pumps for washing away whole mountainsides.

In addition to relating the tales about the hunt for gold (as well as other minerals, including silver and copper), the author has included much information on the various theories about the causes of the Great Depression and the various efforts – both Democratic and Republican – to get out of the hole. Ironically, with the passage of time since its writing, these balanced economic discussions are more timely than ever.

In summation, this is a wonderful book, on a neglected topic, that is well-researched, well-written and delightfully presented. While it is not clear that the volume still is available from the University of Idaho Press, it is to be found on such sites as Amazon.com. The volume is highly recommended and has information that will please many of those in the Denver Westerners.

--John M. Hutchins, P.M.

**Thunder Across the Swamp: The Fight for the Lower Mississippi, February 1863 – May 1863**, by Donald S. Frazier, State House Press, Buffalo Gap, Texas, 2011, 615 pp. Illustrated with numerous illustrations and maps; endnotes, bibliography, index. Hardcover, dustjacket, \$59.95

This volume about Civil War fighting (fighting which, when on the “off” side of the banks of the Mississippi thereby technically makes it into the Denver Westerners’ area of interest) is a significant contribution to Civil War historical literature. While most semi-serious students of the 1861-1865 war know about the battles over Galveston in late 1862 and early 1863 and know about General Nathaniel Banks’ disastrous Red River Campaign into upper Louisiana in 1864, most do not know about the considerable maneuvering and fighting that occurred between Vicksburg and New Orleans in the interim. This book – one in a series of four planned for the Louisiana Theatre by Texan Donald Frazier – meets a relative vacuum of knowledge when it comes to understanding what was going on around the Lower Mississippi while Grant was investing Vicksburg and while Lincoln was trying to find a commander who could cross swords successfully with Bobby Lee in the major Eastern Theatre.

Perhaps surprisingly, just as the Far West had to make do with less as federal and confederate resources were squandered in Virginia and the [Mid-]Western Theatre comprising Tennessee and Mississippi, this region of the Mississippi Delta and the Red River’s mouth saw its local commanders attempting to come up with pennywise ideas that would either wrest the area away from rebels or keep Yankee invaders at bay. Thus, both naval and military commanders for the Union attempted to gain unrestricted access to the Gulf from above Vicksburg as rebel commanders attempted to produce innovative solutions (including ironclads) to prevent the strangling effects of the Anaconda Plan.

In addition to relating the various skirmishes and battles, this narrative also includes important information as to how the year 1863 related to the growing strength of the federal forces, as southern Unionists and African-Americans were enlisted and added to the ranks fighting secession. It also notes how many plantation owners – among the early advocates and hot-heads when it came to taking on the Union – often were the first to throw in the towel in an attempt to survive the war intact (an accommodation that usually failed).

While the litany of engagements and maneuvers in this heavy book might seem tedious, Donald Frazier’s writing is easy to digest – and it fortunately lacks some of the southern partisanship of one or two of his

earlier books. In addition, the pagecount is deceptive. There are hundreds of helpful illustrations and maps paced throughout the text that keep the reader engaged. Those illustrations and the colorful jacket compensate for the hefty price tag.

During the period covered in this second volume in the series, there was a seesaw sense to the marches and counter-marches conducted by both sides up and down the Red River and the Mississippi. The volume ends – just before the joint Confederate disasters at Gettysburg and Vicksburg – with each of the contestants anticipating successes in the year to come. For the North, the coming year would bring frustrating failures and near-misses. For the South, it would include pyrrhic victories that only prolonged a bloody war already lost.

The volume is highly recommended. While an overview of the events in this series will be found in John Winters' *The Civil War in Louisiana* (LSU Press, 1991), this series – being more detailed and more lively – likely will prove an indispensable part of any serious Civil War collection.

--John M. Hutchins, P.M.

**The Character of Meriwether Lewis, Explorer in the Wilderness**, by Clay S. Jenkinson. The Dakota Institute Press of the Lewis & Clark Fort Mandan Foundation, 2011. 457 pp. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Paperback, \$19.95

This is the sort of book I would recommend only to the most dedicated Meriwether Lewis fan. Those who like a smoothflowing, straightforward narrative will probably not enjoy it, as it is not a book you just pick up and read straight through. In it, the author has attempted to analyze “through many different lenses” the actions of Meriwether Lewis both during and after the Lewis & Clark Expedition. Sometimes these analyses succeed, and sometimes they don't. There are times when Lewis' writings, actions or lack thereof get analyzed to the point of tedium. Although there are many stretches of straight narrative form, the book tends to jump back and forth between dates and events a lot. In more than a few cases, the author attempts to make an analogy between Lewis' actions/inactions and actions or events that occurred either in the dim distant past or fairly recently. As a case in point, when the author equates the team of Lewis & Clark to a nuclear reactor, with Clark being the control rods and Lewis the fuel rods.

Then there is the matter of Lewis' final journey, which ended in his death. Was it suicide, or was he murdered? The author states early on that he believes it was suicide, but takes 116 pages to present the case for both theories.

Having retraced the route of the Lewis & Clark Expedition myself during the 2003 - 2006 bicentennial, I can say that I found parts of the book both interesting and informative. However, I must confess that I also found it a sometimes frustrating and difficult read.

The author admits that many of his conclusions are his own speculation. And after the passage of over 200 years since Lewis' death, that is probably all we will ever have, unless some long lost material should surface that would shed new light on events.

Overall, I guess, while I didn't totally dislike the book, for me it would not be one I would add to my own Lewis & Clark collection.

*--Carl Sandberg, P.M.*

**Owen Wister: Chronicler of the West, Gentleman of the East**, by Darwin Payne. University of Nebraska Press, 2011. 377pp Photos, notes, index. Paperback, \$24.95

The title should have been reversed as Owen Wister was first a Gentleman of the East and later a Chronicler of the West. He was born in 1860 in an upscale section of Philadelphia to Sarah Butler Wister and Owen Jones Wister, a prominent physician. The Wister family traced its heritage back to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century in Philadelphia. The Butlers were even more prominent as they owned a one hundred acre estate near Philadelphia and a plantation in Georgia. Sarah's mother, Fannie Kemble Butler, was a renowned Shakespearean actress living in Europe who knew famous composers of the day such as Liszt and Wagner. Sarah herself was an excellent pianist who played Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and Schubert. Is it any wonder that her only child, Owen, was raised to be a musician as a young man.

As a young man he traveled to Europe with his mother regularly and attended a boarding school in Switzerland while his mother spent time with friends in Europe. He attended college at Harvard where he was the only student from Pennsylvania in his class. At Harvard he continued his interest in music and playwriting. There he met his lifelong friend Teddy Roosevelt who was a class ahead of him and guided him to meet many of the famous people of the day. Roosevelt's experiences out west may have had an influence on Wister's later interest in the West.

After college Owen tried to kick start his music career in Europe but never reached the level necessary for success there. He finally gave in to his father's wishes that he get a paying job and he returned to Philadelphia. He tried business, teaching and finally took up writing as a hobby. He wrote



short stories and poems but sold few. He became depressed which effected his health and his doctor suggested he take a restful trip out west. This he did and it proved a life changing experience. He worked on a ranch and met many Westerners some of whom became his characters in his later short stories culminating in his famous work *The Virginian* finished in 1902. It was an instant success and his fame exploded. The New York Review of books called it "easily the book of the year." As time passed it was presented as a play and later in several movie renditions. The qualities of the central character transformed the view of the American cowboy into what it still is today.

This biography is very well-written and it paints a picture of life in the East and the West of that time period.

--Barry Sweeney, P.M.

**Rawhide Texas Ranger, Ira Aten**, by Bob Anderson. University of Northern Texas Press, 2012. 528 pp., 100 illustrations, end notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$32.95

Bob Alexander has written another excellent biography, this time on Texas Ranger Ira Aten. Enlisting in the Rangers when only twenty-one years old, Aten's only qualifications were a "formidable Christian upbringing" and "strictness regarding issues of morality and character." Everything else he needed was learned while riding with experienced men.

As part of the Frontier Battalion in the 1880s, he confronted rustlers, murderers, escaped fugitives, train robbers, and especially the often violent men who cut fences. His battalion covered a huge area—they often rode more than 500 miles a month—populated with folks who had little use for the law, engaged in a culture of violence, and had more respect for outlaws than lawmen. Incidents along the Texas-Mexican border occupied much of Aten's time. Addressing cultural biases and moral judgments was a century away and as a result, innocent people were killed on both sides before Aten and other cooler heads arrived to sort things out.

As a Ranger, Aten was proud of his identity, wanted to show his badge and prove his prowess. He had no interest in detective work that involved sneaking and snooping, taking on a false identification, pretending to be a friend when he was an enemy, and betraying trust. Yet he volunteered for detective work because it needed to be done. He excelled in the work and in all other aspects of being a Ranger.

In 1889 Aten was trying to keep peace between two warring factions, the Woodpeckers and the Jay Birds, in Fort Bend County. The feud erupted

into violence and four men died, including the sheriff. When a tenuous peace followed, the Governor declared that unless an interim sheriff was appointed to maintain order, marshal law would be imposed. Aten was the only person both sides could tolerate, and in August of that year he left the Texas Rangers and became sheriff. He was just shy of his 27<sup>th</sup> birthday. He immediately established a no-nonsense approach to law enforcement. But after less than two years in office and battling a jail “full of suicidal nitwits,” a quagmire of administrative red tape, critical newspapermen, and the hopeless task of reconciling a growing pile of tax receipt errors, he resigned and moved to the far northwestern corner of Texas. There he built a dugout, cultivated land, and strung barbed wire, thus setting himself up as a farmer-rancher. Following another short stint as an interim sheriff, he took the position as a division manager for the XIT ranch, more to stop the rustling than to handle the cattle. The huge enterprise had no need for lawmen of any type and, as Aten stated, “we handled the cases ourselves.”

With increasing family responsibilities and realizing that each violent encounter with rustlers might be his last, in 1904 he and family moved to the Imperial Valley in California where he established a ranching and farming empire. He became deeply involved in civic organizations, lent a hand to the local lawmen, and started writing about the Texas Rangers, presenting the facts and sometimes nurturing the “hyped Texas Range mythology.”

This biography is written in a casual, engaging style that uses many metaphors—burning the wind, put iron to their horses, imbibing locations, lost in berserkville, akin to a scratchy burr in his long-johns, underlying bugaboos, snared the pigeon, dicey dustups, his six-shooter fanged poison—usually absent from a biography. Some sections are hard to follow. The book is written in chronological order and because Aten commonly juggled many cases at the same time, maintaining the threads of a specific incident is difficult. This detailed book is well documented with eighty-eight pages of endnotes and 300 entries in the bibliography. It is an excellent read for anyone interested in late-nineteenth-century law enforcement in general and Texas Rangers in particular.

*--Rick Barth, P.M.*



*The* DENVER WESTERNERS  
**ROUNDUP**

September - October 2012



*Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Dept., by Harry Rhodes, Rn212*

Byers-Evans residence, 1314 Bannock, Denver, Colorado

**Anne Evans - A Pioneer in Colorado's Cultural History**  
**By Barbara Edwards Sternberg**  
**(Presented May 25, 2011)**



## Our Author

Following a degree in sociology from the London School of Economics, Barbara Sternberg emigrated to the U.S. and earned her Master's degree in Urban Sociology from the University of Denver. While raising five children, she taught courses in urban sociology and race relations on a part-time basis at the University of Denver and Colorado Women's College. In collaboration with her husband, Barbara wrote many articles, several books about urban planning and architecture, and a book entitled *Evergreen, Our Mountain Community*. Her recent book about Anne Evans was a deeply satisfying excursion into the history of Colorado in general and of Denver in particular, especially with respect to cultural development. During her research for this book, challenging questions arose and not all of them have been satisfactorily answered. Barbara hopes that more answers and new information will come to light from the discussions aroused by publishing this book.

## THE DENVER WESTERNERS

# ROUNDUP

VOL. LXVIII NO. 5



September - October 2012

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## **Anne Evans - A Pioneer in Colorado's Cultural History**

### **By Barbara Edwards Sternberg**

**(Presented May 25, 2011)**

#### **Introduction**

One of the fruits of the long, uneven movement towards the recognition of women as full persons, rather than as the property of men and inherently inferior to them, has been a growing interest in the historical achievements of women. Writing about the early development of the West, historians have analyzed women's letters and diaries as virtually the only documentation of their pioneer experiences. In Colorado, from the 1950s on, an increasing number of biographies have been published about the almost-forgotten women who made significant contributions to the development of the state. It is past time to add the story of Anne Evans to that literature.

It is impossible to understand how Anne Evans was able to achieve what she did without knowing something about her background, and the springboard this created for her in the Denver of the late nineteenth century. Her father was John Evans, the second Territorial Governor of Colorado, a man of prodigious accomplishments even before he came to Denver from Chicago. An ardent Methodist, he supported the building of the first Methodist churches in the Territory and was the prime mover in the foundation of the University of Denver, originally a Methodist institution. He spearheaded the development of the first railroads in the state, so crucial to its growth. He

acquired and developed real estate in the young city of Denver, and participated in the organization of many of its earliest civic organizations. Anne's highly-educated New England mother, Margaret Patten Gray, was a "founding mother" of many of the first social, philanthropic, and cultural organizations in Colorado. William Gray Evans, Anne's much older brother, in whose household she spent her adult years, developed into a powerful political and business force in Denver, greatly admired or reviled, depending on the political and social mindset of the observer. William inherited the sense of civic responsibility that characterized both of his parents and made major contributions to his native city and state. His son, another John Evans, to whom Anne was something of a second mother, became one of Denver's most important bankers and also carried on the family tradition of civic service. Therefore, it is not surprising that Anne Evans also was motivated by a powerful drive to contribute to the development of Denver and Colorado. Her own interests were in the arts and literature; these were the areas into which her impulse for public service was channeled.

Anne benefited from the emphasis placed on education by both her mother and father. After attending private schools in Denver, she was sent to Evanston, Illinois to spend a year under the tutelage of an older cousin—with the intent of having her tomboyish

character molded into something more acceptably civilized. Like her mother, she then spent her late teens in schools in Paris and Berlin, where she focused on art studies. Back in Denver for a few years, she enrolled in classes at the University of Denver's School of Art. In 1893, Margaret Gray and her daughter Anne became associate members of the newly created Denver Artists' Club. The following year, to her great joy, Anne was accepted as one of the small number of professional members. She spent the last years of the nineteenth century at the Art Students' League in New York.

From 1900 on, though she traveled quite extensively, Anne Evans' life was firmly anchored in Denver. It followed a satisfying pattern: the fall-through-spring period was spent in Denver; the brief and beautiful summer months were spent on the Evans-Elbert Ranch in the mountains west of the city. In Denver, Anne had quarters in the household of her brother, William. On the ranch, she built her own mountain home.

Anne Evans died at home in Denver in early 1941. What was it that she did in the years between 1900 and 1941, that merits attention? What were her accomplishments that could justify a biographer spending years in research, or entice the public to read about her life?

Anne Evans was one of the most influential founders of the Denver Art Museum. Involved from the start in its evolution out of the Denver Artists' Club, she enthusiastically served in any needed capacity, unpacking art materials, helping to hang exhibits, hosting social occasions in the early

days, serving for many years as unpaid executive secretary, and even, at a time of crisis, as interim Director.

One of the early pioneers in working for the recognition of the art of Native Americans as art, not just as colorful craftwork with which to decorate dens and recreation rooms, Anne Evans started the Native Arts Collection of the Denver Art Museum with her own gifts. She was also ahead of her time in valuing and collecting the neglected "Santos" sculptures of the Southwest, and enriched the Art Museum's holdings with the bequest of her own collection.

In a quiet but effective manner, she was an important leader in the 1920s effort to preserve the mission churches of New Mexico. At the time, these were either falling into disrepair or being remodeled in totally inappropriate ways.

On the Evans-Elbert Ranch located above Evergreen, Colorado, Anne Evans built one of the most original mountain homes in Colorado. She furnished it with high-quality art from many sources, with a special emphasis on the art of Native Americans of the Southwest.

As a member of the Denver Public Library Commission from 1907 until the year before her death in 1941, when she resigned for reasons of ill health, Anne was a major factor in the Library's evolution. She was honored mainly for her constant insistence that only the very best was good enough for Denver – in the caliber of library staff, the architecture of its buildings and the art integrated into them, and the quality of its collections.

Personally, as well as through

the organization Denver Allied Arts, Anne Evans was a constant and unassuming supporter of artistic talent, especially young talent. She accomplished this sometimes through financial support, sometimes by making crucial introductions, and sometimes by directing commissions for work when her position gave her the ability to accomplish this.

As a member of the Denver Art Commission from its inception in 1904, Anne Evans was an enthusiastic participant in Mayor Robert Speer's plans to transform Denver into a City Beautiful, and especially active in helping to achieve the dream of a Civic Center.

Governor John Evans, Anne Evans' father, is honored as the founder of Denver University. His son William and grandson John carried on his tradition of support for the University through difficult times, each serving for extended periods as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Anne Evans too gave generously of her time and energies to the University, especially to its Art and Civic Theater Departments. In turn, she was the recipient of two honorary doctorates from DU for her civic and cultural contributions.

In Central City, Anne Evans invested the final nine years of her life. In cooperation with Ida Kruse McFarlane, another remarkable Colorado woman, Anne Evans raised the funds to preserve Central City's crumbling Opera House, persuaded the University of Denver to accept ownership of the building and initiated the unique – and still vibrant—summer festival there. All this was accomplished in the depths of the Great Depression.

Although literally hundreds of people were involved in the fund-raising, hospitality, and work of putting on high quality professional productions, the event was universally acknowledged as "Miss Evans' show."

Different aspects of the character and personality of Anne Evans are discussed in the following pages. In all tributes paid to her, in her life and at her death, one characteristic was stressed: she never acted in the pursuit of honors or material rewards. Thanks to the efforts of her mother, she was assured a modest income for life as a stockholder in the Evans Investment Company. Though sometimes autocratic in her dealings with people, she was singularly lacking in what we might call today an inflated ego. What she cared about was getting the job done. She was content either to lead or to act behind the scenes, whichever best served the cause she believed in.

Anne never married. She lived out her adult years as a whole-hearted participant in the family life of her brother, William, his wife, Cornelia, and her three nieces and a nephew. Her engagement with the family, in its dark days as well as the busy and happy ones, was an integral part of her life story.

There was an extraordinary summer life in the mountains on the 3,600-acre Evans-Elbert Ranch, where Anne Evans spent her childhood summers and later built her own mountain cabin. There she could indulge her love of horseback riding and her passion for play and pageantry in the fellowship of family and friends from all over the nation, and indeed from many other parts of the world.

There also she could savor the natural beauty that nourished her.

My first involvement with the personality and accomplishments of Anne Evans came when my husband and I were gathering materials for a book on our adopted hometown of Evergreen, Colorado.<sup>1</sup> We wanted to include the story of the Evans Ranch because of its connection with Evergreen's development. The nucleus of the ranch was acquired in the late 1860s by Governor John Evans and his son-in-law Samuel Elbert. Successive generations of the Evans and Elbert families enjoyed the ranch, where they built some of the most interesting summer homes in the area.<sup>2</sup>

We interviewed Peg Hayden, a great-granddaughter of Governor Evans, who lived year-round in her home on the Evans Ranch. She told us colorful stories about the ranch, the foremen who had taken care of it over the years, and the family members who had enjoyed summers on it for almost a century and a half. Peg also talked, with great affection and admiration, about her Aunt Anne Evans and the contributions she had made to the cultural development of Denver. As we were finishing the Evergreen book, I told Peg that I had become seriously interested in the life of Anne Evans and believed that more people should know about her achievements. I said that I would like to write her biography.

Peg was a very definite lady: "Oh no!" she said. "I am collecting material about my Aunt Anne, and I am going to write about her life!" I moved on to other projects.

Some years later, I attended Peg Hayden's funeral in the little Church

of the Transfiguration in Evergreen. In the weeks after this, a good friend introduced me to Peg's daughter, Mag Hayden. I had a chance to ask the question that had naturally come to my mind: did Peg leave behind a manuscript about Anne Evans? After looking through her mother's papers, Mag Hayden found that Peg had done a good deal of research about the Evans Ranch and also about the New England family of Governor Evans' wife, Margaret, but apparently very little about Aunt Anne. Mag offered to share with me, from her mother's papers, whatever might be of help in writing a biography of Anne Evans and encouraged me to go ahead with the project.

Since there was a great deal of material in the public domain, it took some time to realize that an important element was missing from the archival record of Anne Evans's life. Her mother and father, John and Margaret Evans, left for posterity a wealth of written materials: letters—to each other, to friends and other family members—as well as much official correspondence. Two brief diaries kept by Margaret Evans in the 1860s are treasures for a biographer. But aside from writings by Anne Evans that were preserved by others, or survived by accident, there was a great dearth of personal materials.

While I was talking on the phone to an Evans family descendant living in Alaska, and bemoaning this lack, I first heard the explanation. "I always understood," said William Davis (a great-grandson of Governor Evans), "that Anne ordered all her personal papers destroyed at her death." Later, a senior member of the library staff



at the Western History Department of the Denver Public Library verified his statement. A serious attempt to understand why she made this choice was just one more challenge added to a number of tantalizing questions encountered during our research.

Why, after spending many years training herself as an artist, did Anne Evans give up her own painting entirely, devoting herself instead to supporting the artistic talents of others and to helping to develop the cultural institutions needed by a young city?

As a student in Paris and Berlin in her late teens and at the Art Students' League in New York in her early twenties, Anne Evans must have produced scores – if not hundreds – of drawings, sketches and paintings. We were only able to identify three oil paintings by her in our searches. What happened to all the rest?

Why did she never marry?

Was there any truth to the conjecture that her concern for the well-being of the Indians of New Mexico arose out of guilt for the excesses of the Sand Creek Massacre, which occurred during Governor Evans' term of office?

Why have so many memorials to her contributions disappeared?

Why, as far as our research could discover, did Anne not belong to a church in Denver? Her parents were devoted Methodists. They helped to found the original Methodist church in Denver. Her brother, William, and sister-in-law, Cornelia, in whose household she spent her adult life, were also loyal Methodist church members. Tracing the possible reasons why Anne became an active member of the Theosophical Society in America,

revealed another dimension – that of a spiritual seeker – to this intriguing woman.

There was a period when, if we had been superstitious about small omens, the outlook would have seemed far from promising. Karen Jagelle, an intern at the Colorado Historical Society, did extensive research for a brief biography of Anne Evans: the biography survives but the appendix listing her sources has disappeared. Reached by mail in Philadelphia, she wrote, "I left all of my research papers at my parents' house and my mother believes she threw them out."<sup>3</sup>

Because of her lifelong friendship with Mary Kent Wallace, one of the founders of Denver's prestigious Kent School and its Head Mistress for many years, Anne Evans took a lively interest in that institution and was involved in many of its activities. School personnel gladly gave us access to their newly created archives area, where files of materials used by a former headmaster for a history of the school were stored. Unfortunately, the files were there but most of their contents were missing.

Marilyn Griggs Riley, author of the spirited book *High Altitude Attitudes: Six Savvy Colorado Women*,<sup>4</sup> listed Anne Evans among the list of significant women in the history of the state whom she considered as subjects, but did not include in her final list. When I asked for any references she might have come across in her research, she sent one small comment. "Sorry, this is all I have on Anne Evans. She's going to be a real challenge to research. Good Luck!"

However, our efforts also

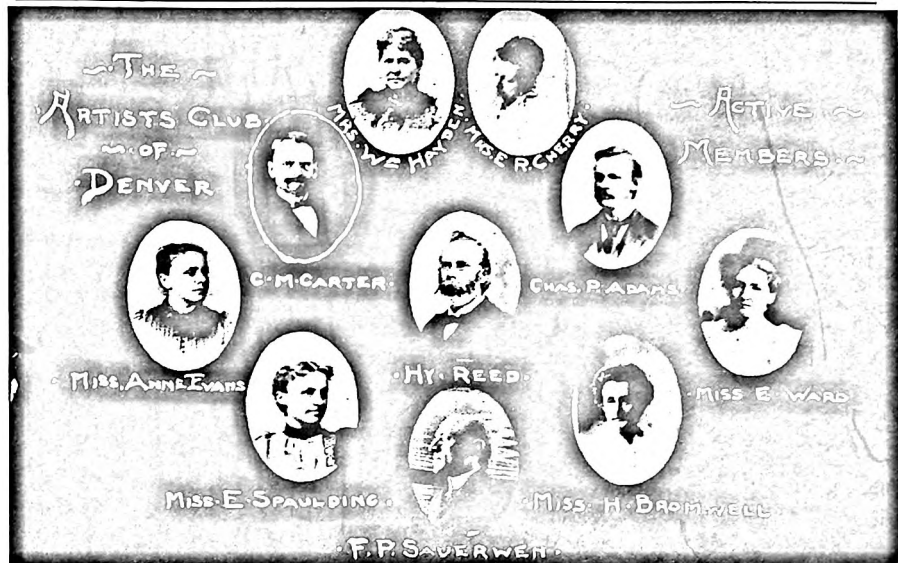
turned up some unexpected nuggets. Especially valuable was a little accordion file, used by Anne Evans in the 1930s to store a variety of current information and penciled notes. These yielded worthwhile insights into her activities and ideas. The file was in the Denver University archives, a little bit of personal material that escaped the destruction order.

Entwined in this economic and political narrative of Denver and Colorado's development is another story – about the development of its cultural life and institutions. About its libraries, art museums, concert halls, opera houses and theaters, and the artists, writers, musicians, and actors who brought them to life – all those elements which make the difference between a city that merely survives and one that exuberantly flourishes. It was with this cultural component of Denver's development that Anne Evans was involved.

As I learned about the different facets of Anne Evans' background, life and work, I discussed them with my generally well-informed friends. Despite the efforts of the indefatigable Dr. Tom Noel<sup>2</sup> and other historians of the West to educate us all, I found that most of my friends had as hazy and intermittent understanding of Denver's history as I had. And so I decided to write the life of Anne Evans in its appropriate context – which is that of a powerful family deeply involved in creating Denver and Colorado.

## Endnotes

1. Gene and Barbara Sternberg, *Evergreen: Our Mountain Community* (Boulder, CO: Johnson Publishing Company, 1987, 1993, 1994).
2. We were also interested because, in the 1980s, a family development had forced the sale of the major portion of the Evans Ranch. An innovative planning process was underway to conserve most of the land as open space. This was the first project of a new conservation organization, Colorado Open Lands.
3. Karen Jagelle, letter to the author 15 May 2004.
4. Marilyn Griggs Riley, *High Altitude Attitudes: Six Savvy Colorado Women* (Boulder, CO: Johnson Publishing Company, 2006).
5. Thomas Noel, "Dr. Colorado," is Professor of History and Director of Colorado Studies at the University of Colorado Denver. He writes a bi-weekly column for the Sunday *Denver Post* and has published thirty-eight books on Colorado History.



*Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Dept.*

## The Artists Club of Denver

### The Story

Before embarking on a study of Anne Evans' contributions in specific areas, it is important to recognize some fundamental truths about Anne Evans and her approach to her life's work. She did not work for recognition or honors, though plenty came to her in her lifetime. A typical example of this reticence is contained in a brief 1940 correspondence about a forthcoming article on the Denver Art Museum in a Chicago Art magazine. At the time, Anne Evans was functioning as the DAM's Executive Secretary. The magazine editor requested a photograph of Miss Evans and some information about her, because "Every story ought to have a hero, and from the moment I met her I realized she must have counted for a great deal in the Museum history." Anne Evans'

assistant wrote, "I have just talked to Miss Evans and she feels quite strongly that the article should not contain too much personality, but she is willing and anxious to see the article go ahead and to do what she can."<sup>1</sup>

The important question for a biographer at this juncture of Anne Evans' life is – how did she do it? How did she make the transition from being a capable student, with a lively interest in the arts and literature, into a mover and shaker in the cultural life of Denver?

The answer, in brief, is that in the years between 1900 and 1910 she was appointed to a number of influential commissions and boards and worked diligently in these positions to accomplish worthwhile goals. No doubt, her family background and connections were influential in

suggesting the initial appointments. However, it was her own intelligence, her persistence in the face of obstacles, her confidence in her own judgment, and her cheerful ability to cooperate with dedicated colleagues that enabled her to be so successful. As we shall see, she also used to great effect the potential for fruitful connections between the organizations to which she was appointed.

For the sake of clarity, an attempt will be made to tell the story of each of Anne Evans' major contributions in separate chapters. The truth is that these activities, along with many other involvements as well as her spiritual and philosophical convictions, were all woven together into one rich, full, enthusiastic life.

### **A Crucial Year for the Denver Artists' Club**

The year of 1896-1897 was a crucial one in the development of the Artists' Club. Its growth was so dramatic that two bulletins were issued in the same year. The first, written both as a yearbook and as a membership-recruiting tool, noted, "The Artists' Club of Denver is entering on the fourth year of its existence." It listed its objectives as: *The encouragement and assistance of every form of art enterprise, whether educational, industrial, or municipal. The maintenance and extension of its annual exhibition, which has already gained recognition beyond the borders of this State, and the holding of frequent exhibitions of work from other cities. The provision of a gallery suitable for exhibition and other purposes.*

The bulletin noted that a

Building Committee has been appointed "to consider this matter." The appeal for membership is contained in the paragraph stating,

"The Club feels that a wholesome interest in artistic matters and an intelligent appreciation of art products are worth cultivating, and is sure that a simple statement of its plans will be sufficient to assure your membership and aid."

Under a recently adopted amended constitution, the Club is now governed by a council composed of active and associate members and elected by the entire Club. Every member now has a voice in the management of Club affairs. Active members are defined as those who are engaged in the practice of art, Associate members are those who are not, but are heartily in sympathy with its aims and wish to further its interests.

Annual dues were two dollars for active and associate members, ten dollars for sustaining members. Henry Read was President, Henrietta Bromwell, Secretary and Treasurer. Anne Evans was on the elected governing Council, along with John Cotton Dana, head of the Denver Public Library at that time; Charles Partridge Adams, Edward Ring, Elizabeth Spalding, Charles M. Carter and architect Willis A. Marean. There were twenty-one active members, including Anne Evans, and twenty-two associate members, including Mrs. John Evans, Mrs. J. F. Spalding, and Samuel Elbert, who by this time had become a Colorado Supreme Court Judge.

In the second bulletin, issued in 1897, Anne Evans was listed as one of three members of the "Membership

and Invitation Committee,” with the note that, “The Club has made so remarkable a response to the appeal of the membership committee that another bulletin is issued by way of celebration.” The Committee had made an appeal to the existing membership to enlist new recruits, and the result was that “The Club now numbers three hundred and fifty.” Clearly one of the reasons for the expansion of the Club’s membership was that the cream of Denver society was drawn into its activities. Elisabeth Spalding describes how the opening receptions for its exhibitions became “notable” social affairs.”<sup>2</sup> For years the social committee of the Artists’ Club gave prestige to all functions ... it would be difficult to name any well-known Denver family of culture who was not interested in helping at one time or other.”<sup>3</sup>

### **The Impossible Dream – A Building of Their Own**

A free building site miraculously appeared. The Denver Parks Commissioners offered the Artists’ Club a location on one of the triangular pieces of land being created by the new diagonal Park Avenue. There will be no rent to pay and no taxes. No event in the Club’s history is of more importance than this proposition ... with its building completed and paid for, the Club will have upwards of \$2,000 to spend for pictures. A few years will see Denver in possession of a free art gallery that would be a credit to any American city.

However, the celebration was premature. The site offer was eventually rejected as being too far away from the city center. By 1900, the *Denver*

*Republican* articulated a much less ambitious plan:

“Granted that it is given a certain amount of moral support and financial assistance, the Artists’ Club of Denver will provide the city with an art gallery. It will not be an ostentatious building, and not necessarily one of which the city will be proud, but it will be an art gallery, and Denver will be relieved of the disgrace it has long been under in having no place, not even a good sized room, in which pictures can be hung and seen in a respectable light.”<sup>4</sup>

The article went on to say that, the Club had started an active campaign to raise a building fund.

The next possibility for the Club to have permanent gallery space came with the proposed building of the Colorado Museum of Natural History in City Park. Incorporation papers for the museum were signed in 1900, immediately followed by the signing of a contract with the City of Denver, which promised to supply a suitable site and a contribution towards the construction cost. Negotiations between the Artists’ Club and the Museum were started enthusiastically, but broke down somewhere along the way. The Club raised \$3,000 to contribute towards the cost of a gallery. However, when the Museum finally opened its doors in July of 1908, and there was indeed an art gallery on the third floor, neither its contents nor its operation had anything to do with the Artists’ Club. Art works were loaned by private collectors in Denver. “Among these works on loan to the museum, not one belonged to the Artists’ Club – for the obvious reason that it had nothing to lend.”<sup>5</sup> However,

the Club did finally move into action on its long-held goal of accumulating a permanent collection. Starting in 1909, the paintings it acquired—mainly between 1909 and 1919—were displayed in the Colorado Natural History Museum Gallery until 1925.

### Starting to Acquire a Permanent Art Collection

The choice of these first paintings was strongly influenced by the educational experiences of two women who were active members of the Artists' Club, Elisabeth Spalding and Anne Evans, and a third woman, Marion Hendrie, a good friend, student, and connoisseur of art herself. For years, Hendrie was a vigorous associate member of the Club, elected to active membership in 1916. All three women had studied in the East, as indeed had many other Club artists, either at the Art Students' League or in other settings under individual artists. The strong ties thus formed were largely responsible for the willingness of many Eastern artists to send their works to be exhibited in Denver. A reviewer of the 1901 annual exhibit said, "Most of the pictures brought here are sent by their painters as personal favors to the Denver artists."<sup>6</sup> In their travels to New York and other art centers in the East, during the years when the Club was actively collecting paintings by contemporary artists, the three women were constantly on the lookout for likely acquisitions. Anne Evans made a trip to Paris in February of 1910. She was in the eastern United States in January 1915, in February 1916 (when she was said by the *Rocky Mountain News* to be arranging for "an exhibit of

interest"), and again in March 1918.<sup>7</sup>

The Club's first acquisitions included works by Eastern artists Frank Vincent DuMond, a respected teacher at the Art Students' League; Leonard Ochtman, William Merritt Chase, and Louise Cox. Marion Hendrie and her two sisters presented a painting by J. Alden Weir in memory of their father. The collection also included works by Denver artists Charles Partridge Adams, George E. Burr, Henry Read, and Elisabeth Spalding.

### Marion Hendrie Artist and Collector

Marion Hendrie became an important influence in the art world of Denver. She was born in Central City, one of three daughters of Charles Francis Hendrie. He had opened a foundry in Central City in 1864, and later co-founded the Hendrie and Bolthoff Co., a significant manufacturing and mining supply firm in the Rocky Mountain region. A capable artist, Marion also became an imaginative collector of contemporary art and was responsible for bringing early exhibitions of Cezanne and Matisse to Denver. Marion and Elisabeth Spalding were active members of St. John's Cathedral. They persuaded the Colorado Diocese to appoint a commission on Church Architecture and Allied Arts to guide parishes and missions "in obtaining the best possible design in buildings and furnishings,"<sup>8</sup> a model adopted by many other dioceses. When the Cathedral decided to build St. Martin's Chapel in 1926, the responsibility for its design was given to Marion Hendrie and the Commission. "She coordinated

and supervised the work of architects and artists and achieved in St. Martin's a unity and harmony of design which has stood the test of time and made this small chapel famous."<sup>9</sup>

One of Marion's sisters married librarian Chalmers Hadley. The couple moved to Cincinnati in 1924, when Hadley was appointed City Librarian. In later life, the two unmarried sisters moved into the Hadley household in Cincinnati. When Marion Hendrie died in that city in 1968, she left her valuable collection of contemporary art to the Denver Art Museum. Transcriptions of interviews with Otto Bach, Director of the Denver Art Museum from 1944 to 1974, and Prue Grant, a longtime friend of the Hendrie sisters, are in the archives of the Denver Art Museum. They describe efforts to safeguard Marion Hendrie's precious collection from damage due to neglect, and to preserve the written materials related to its provenance.

### **Brinton Terrace—Building an Art Community**

Perhaps this is the place to ask a question: where, besides at the relatively rare exhibits of the Artists' Club, did Denverites interested in the arts have occasion to meet each other? One answer is at Brinton Terrace, which according to historian Edgar McMechen was often called "Denver's



*Courtesy Denver Public Library, Western History Dept.*

### **Brinton Terrace, 1919**

Greenwich Village."<sup>10</sup> McMechen (1894-1953) played many roles in Denver's early cultural life though he was primarily a historian and author. In addition to his 1924 biography of Governor Evans, he wrote many books and articles, including one on Brinton Terrace. McMechen served as Denver's Director of Publicity during Speer's second term, editing the city's publication, *Municipal Facts*, from 1918 to 1925. His closest association with Anne Evans was probably when he became the first part-time curator for the Native Arts Collection of the Denver Art Museum,<sup>11</sup> a position he left to become the Director of the Colorado

Historical Society.

Brinton Terrace was built in 1882 and, with its Queen Anne façade, was regarded as one of the city's early architectural landmarks. Oscar Wilde, on his one trip to Colorado, is said to have remarked that "Brinton Terrace is the only artistic building in Denver."<sup>12</sup> As originally designed by architects E. P. Varian and Frederick J. Sterner, and built by property owner William Shaw Ward, the Terrace contained six apartments of ten rooms each, with dining rooms and kitchens on the first floors, living and drawing rooms on the second, bedrooms on the third, and servants' quarters in the attics. The building occupied 18th Street between the alley behind Trinity Church and the corner of E. 18th Avenue and Lincoln. According to McMechen, "it was the second fashionable residential terrace erected in Denver, antedated only by La Veta Place." For its first quarter century, Brinton Terrace was occupied by notable business, civic and professional people in Denver. Life in the Terrace had a strong social and intellectual emphasis.

Its "golden era as an art center," according to McMechen, began about 1906. He wrote that "the honor of having conceived 'a Bohemian retreat'" was due to a Margaret S. Van Waganan, whom he described as "a protégé of Miss Anne Evans, daughter of Colorado's second Territorial governor, one of the founders of the Denver Art Museum and the Central City Opera Association." This is one of the few specific examples we have of a quiet, but important, activity of Anne Evans, that of supporting talented young artists financially, to which reference is often

made in accounts of her contributions. One newspaper article said, "She grubstaked young artists as her father grubstaked miners."<sup>13</sup> Anne Evans helped Miss Van Waganan to obtain her art education at the Chicago Art Institute and in New York. After her return to Denver, Miss Van Waganan launched a plan to assemble local artists under one roof "where they might unite in a common cause and derive inspiration from one another." A similar idea had been tried during the early eighties when J. Harrison Mills and associated artists took over the entire fifth floor of the new Tabor Grand Opera House, but that center never attained the cohesion and camaraderie of the Brinton Terrace Center. Credit for the success of Miss Van Waganan's venture is given by McMechen to her "blithe and shining spirit" which, he wrote in 1947, "has kept her memory verdant among Denver artists to this date."

Among the extraordinary roster of artists and architects who had studios at one time in Brinton Terrace were R. L. and Cyril Boutwell, who opened a lively art gallery there in 1906; the architectural firm of Maurice Biscoe and H. H. Hewitt, designers of many of Denver's early mansions; George Elbert Burr, nationally famous etcher and water colorist, whose later studio and home at 1325 Logan is now the club house of the Denver Woman's Press Club; Waldo Love, a portrait and landscape painter, miniaturist, and the staff artist for the Colorado Museum of Natural History, responsible for its first large dioramic backgrounds; and Allen True, whose talents Anne Evans called upon many times. True started



his career as a successful illustrator, specializing in Western life motifs, and went on to become famous as a painter of murals depicting Western pioneer and Indian life.<sup>14</sup> Also in Brinton Terrace were jewelry and metalwork artists Alice Best and Helen Dougall, and portrait photographers Wilma Wallace and Anne Dailey. Miss Van Waganan married Dudley Carpenter, a talented mural painter. The couple became well known for their leaded windows. One of the leading firms of interior decorators, Carstens and Timm, also had their studios for a time in Brinton Terrace.

Many of Denver's pioneer musicians had studios in Brinton Terrace, including Dr. Wilberforce J. Whiteman, Supervisor of Music for the Denver Public Schools and father of big-band leader Paul Whiteman. He opened a studio in the Terrace in 1925. Another musician, Horace E. Tureman, arranged for the first chamber music recitals in the city. He directed the Elitch Gardens Orchestra, in addition to being a capable composer, an outstanding music teacher, and a founder and long-time Director of the Denver Civic Symphony. Much later, he was honored, along with Anne Evans, for his many contributions to the cultural life of Denver.

One of the last gifted occupants of Brinton Terrace was Dr. Antonia Brico, who had her music studio there from 1939 to 1955. For many of these years, she served as Music Director of the choir of Trinity Methodist Church, as well as conducting her own choir and the Brico Orchestra. Dr. Brico was a close friend of Anne Evans' niece, Margaret Evans Davis. There is

a family story that the fine Steinway piano that used to be at 1310 Bannock Street somehow ended up in Dr. Brico's possession, and was quietly replaced by a Chickering of lesser quality.

To encourage easy sociability between the talented tenants and their patrons, Miss Belle Herzinger and Miss Alice Fisher operated the Teacup Inn at Brinton Terrace. They were "graduates in domestic science" according to McMechen, who adds the intriguing phrase that this was "about the time that calories and vitamins were embryonic."

In the early 1920s, another school important in the development of art education in Denver opened in two of the Brinton Terrace houses. The Denver Academy of Fine and Applied Arts was the brainchild of Dr. John Cory, a well-known New York newspaper cartoonist and yet another talent drawn to Denver for health reasons. He became a cartoonist for the *Rocky Mountain News*, in addition to heading up his new school staffed by a faculty of gifted artists. The best known of these was John Thompson, one of Denver's earliest modern painters who maintained his own studio in the Terrace for a number of years. Thompson, a native of Buffalo, spent time in New York before moving to Paris in 1905 where his work was greatly influenced by the Fauvists. Moving back to the U. S. in 1914, he taught for three years in Buffalo. In 1917, he moved to Denver and became an active participant in the development of its art institutions.

In 1925, Jack Manard bought the Cory School and moved it to Chappell House at 1300 Logan St. This school developed into the *University of*

*Denver School of Art*, in which Anne Evans was deeply involved.

Many other talents—photographers, commercial artists, sculptors, and teachers of elocution and the dramatic arts—had their studios in Brinton Terrace over the years, contributing to its stimulating atmosphere as well as to the cultural life of Denver. There is little doubt that Anne Evans was a welcome guest at many openings, exhibits and celebrations at Brinton Terrace, because of her close connection with Miss Van Waganan and many friends among the occupants. Perhaps she found much to discuss with Dr. John Gower, who moved to the Terrace in 1917. McMechen described Gower as “one of the most interesting and best loved characters among Denver’s cultured people.”<sup>15</sup> Originally, from England, he became “an organist of international fame, a distinguished composer and the personal friend of such students of psychic phenomena as Dr. William James of Harvard, Sir Oliver Lodge ... and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.” Anne Evans had by this time become a member of the Theosophical Society. There is no evidence that Anne Evans was interested in the spiritualist aspects of theosophy, but she was keenly interested in exploring the outer limits of human experiences, especially those with transcendent aspects.

Brinton Terrace was razed in 1956, to make room for a parking lot.

### **A New Home for Art in the Carnegie Library**

Securing of the actual first home for the exhibitions of the Artists’ Club was a tribute to the vision and

negotiating skills of Anne Evans. In 1907, she was appointed as a member of the Denver Public Library Commission and was therefore privy to the plans to build a new central library for the city, stimulated by the offer of significant financing by Andrew Carnegie.

In 1904, Anne Evans had been appointed to the new Municipal Art Commission and was an enthusiastic proponent of Mayor Speer’s ambitious plans for a new Civic Center for Denver, a centerpiece for its transformation into a City Beautiful. It became quite clear to her that the proper place for an eventual art museum was as part of the proposed Civic Center, and that an excellent first step would be for the Artists’ Club to have gallery space in the new Carnegie Library Building. Not so incidentally, this arrangement, if it could be achieved, would for the first time present the Artists’ Club with the opportunity to create some legal and financial ties between itself and the city. It must have seemed obvious, by this time, that only with financial help from the city of Denver would there ever be a viable art museum in the city. The literary arts were tax-financed through the public library, and the Museum of Natural History enjoyed considerable city support both for its building construction and for operating expenses. Elisabeth Spalding wrote, in her paper of recollections about art history in Denver,

“It was a great forward step when the gallery was planned in the new Public Library. We knew at that time how much we owed to Anne Evans, whole-hearted member as she

was of both Library and Artists' Club Boards."<sup>16</sup>

In the valuable 1996 history of the Denver Art Museum, Marlene Chambers similarly wrote, "Anne Evans, who sat on the Library Commission as well as the board of the Artists' Club, was generally credited for working out the agreement that allotted space for the club in the city's new library on Civic Center."<sup>17</sup> It was no small achievement. There had been many ambitious plans and dreams before, but this practical plan came to fruition without great fanfare and laid the foundation for the art museum we have today, with its successful combination of municipal backing and extensive private support. It must be admitted, however, that progress towards that ultimate ideal of an art museum building on the Civic Center proved slower and more obstacle-filled than anyone could have foreseen.

The gala opening of the new art galleries in the Carnegie Library took place in February 1910,<sup>18</sup> arranged to coincide with the debut of the 16th annual juried exhibition of the Artists' Club. The centerpiece of the exhibit was the same design for a fountain by Elsie Ward that had so delighted visitors to the 1899 exhibit offered by four women artists.<sup>19</sup>

### **The Artists' Club Becomes the Denver Art Association**

By 1917, it was apparent that the name, Denver Artists' Club, did not convey the breadth of the group's mission, so it was changed to the Denver Art Association. Elisabeth Spalding noted that the old name had hindered growth, for although there had

been from the start members who were not artists as associates, and although the club had always worked for civic art and civic education through exhibitions and lectures, still the idea persisted that if it was named "Artists' Club" it must be for artists only, and it needed constant explanations.<sup>20</sup>

Incorporation papers for this new not-for-profit corporation were filed on February 7 of that year. The objectives echoed those of the Artists' Club: to cultivate and promote a general interest in art; to establish and maintain a permanent art collection; to acquire real estate and to erect thereon a building or buildings for an art museum. There was one significant addition: "to co-operate with the City of Denver or with any other body corporate or any individual in the establishment and maintenance of such an art gallery."<sup>21</sup> Yearly dues of the new Association remained at \$2.00 for artists, teachers, and students, and \$10.00 for sustaining members, but were raised to \$5.00 for other regular members. The President, Horace G. Wetherill, declared in the annual bulletin, "The Association will work in close union with the public schools, art extension work of the Public Library, and all art interests of the city."

### **First Art Director Makes His Debut**

An important step towards a more active role for the new Association in the cultural life of Denver was taken with the hiring of the first paid director. This was Reginald Poland, who came to the city highly qualified and mainly through the persuasion of Anne Evans' good friend and tireless co-worker, Marion Hendrie.

Poland, the son of a distinguished art historian, had been educated at Brown, Princeton, and Harvard, and had served on the staff of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Although hired in 1917, Poland volunteered in the armed forces in World War I and did not come to Denver until 1919. However, when he did arrive, according to Spalding, he inspired a great and energetic increase in the activities of the Art Association. In the new galleries at the Library building, Exhibitions were increased to a continuously filled gallery, and constant talks were given. The Atelier, a branch of the international Beaux Arts, was strengthened and encouraged. Mr. Poland worked with the students ... to guide and help; he gave everywhere of his best and his unflagging efforts met with real reward.<sup>22</sup>

Poland authored a weekly art column in the *Rocky Mountain News*, championed the cause of Western art, and campaigned energetically for an art museum building on the Civic Center. Indeed, he put forward an interesting though unsuccessful proposal. It was that two memorials, which were being widely debated at the time – one to commemorate the unique contributions of Mayor Speer to Denver, the other to acknowledge those who died in the recent world war – should be combined in the form of an art museum.

### **George William Eggers' Contributions**

Poland stayed in Denver only for two years, leaving to take up a post as Director of Education at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Attracting the next director to Denver was again due to the efforts of Marion Hendrie. To persuade

a man who had headed up the Chicago Art Institute for the previous four years to come west, to a city that did not even have premises to call its own, was quite a feat. George William Eggers had a broad and democratic view of the functions of an art museum and many important advances took place on his watch. He carried forward the impetus to make the Art Association the official partner of the City of Denver in art matters, negotiating the first financial support to the Art Association from the city – a grant of \$3,000 in 1923. Elisabeth Spalding summarized his vision for the future of the arts in Denver in her memoir.

Mr. Eggers had visited Denver and felt that here was a larger opportunity even than in Chicago. He appreciated its need for civic beauty to be guarded and developed, the need for distinguished and distinctive character to attract and to hold the tourist and the resident, its need for an art building which should give needed inspiration to the industries and arts rapidly developing here and its need for good examples for educational purposes, all of its needs meaning great opportunities.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Gift of Chappell House**

While the Art Association was enjoying its first taste of a presence on the developing civic center with its galleries in the Library building, and ideas for the eventual location there of an art museum building were part of most plans, an unexpected gift temporarily changed the course of the organization's development. Art patrons Delos Chappell Jr. and his sister Jean Chappell Cranmer, wife of

George Cranmer, who later made his mark as one of Denver's most effective Managers of Parks and Recreation, gave to the Art Association in 1922 the home they had inherited at 1300 Logan Street, in memory of their parents.

Chappell House was a Denver mansion with a history. Built in the 1880s by Horace W. Bennett, who made a fortune in Cripple Creek mining and "plowed the proceeds into Denver real estate,"<sup>24</sup> the 20-room sandstone mansion in Capitol Hill was sold around 1900 to David May, founder of the May Company department stores. May in turn sold it to Delos Chappell, Sr.

The gift of Chappell House came with conditions. The house was to become a center for the creative arts. The upper floors were to be used as artists' studios and the main floor as headquarters for the Art Association and for a group headed by Jean Cranmer, The Allied Arts Inc. This organization was formed in 1920 by Jean Cranmer, Anne Evans, Ida Kruse McFarlane and Burnham Hoyt, "for the purpose of awarding scholarships and enlivening the Denver art scene."<sup>25</sup> According to the pamphlet on the history of the organization by journalist and art critic Allen Young, it was born "at a time of surging growth in Denver" by a group which believed in "encouraging the energy and intelligence of the young in determining a luminous future for Denver."<sup>26</sup> The guiding spirit behind this enterprise was Jean Cranmer, who was herself a talented musician. Young observed, "As an artist, she knew that the arts needed the nourishment that only money could bring."<sup>27</sup>

The acquisition of Chappell

House gave to the Art Association a kind of solidity and reality that it had previously lacked. The building's atmosphere and many rooms encouraged the development of art classes and served as headquarters for art-related organizations. Its living rooms were fine settings for small musical recitals and social occasions. It was not, however, a suitable facility for exhibitions. Therefore, its maintenance and expansion proved to be quite a drain on the limited financial resources of the Art Association, which remained convinced that its ultimate goal was a museum building on the civic center.

### **Debut of the Denver Art Museum**

At the Art Association's annual meeting in 1923, Director Eggers' recommendation to change the name of the organization to the Denver Art Museum, thus recognizing its expanding role in the community, was adopted. The three major goals of the organization remained the same as in the 1897 incorporation of the Art Association. One specific goal was added, that of holding and conducting art exhibitions, which had always in fact been one of the major activities of the group. It was not long before the new organization had to drain most of its funds, as well as raise new monies, to add a 2,000-square-foot gallery to Chappell House. This provided some minimal exhibit space. Anne Evans, as Executive Secretary, wrote about the history of the Art Museum in 1931 and characterized Chappell House as "the first great acquisition." She noted that, by the mid-1920s, as the Library had become greatly pressed for room and now needed the gallery for its own



*Courtesy History Colorado*

Anne Evans, *Untitled Portrait of Governor John Evans, 1890* oil on board

use, it was decided to add a fireproof wing to the original Chappell residence and to move the Association bodily into the new quarters. Here the various collections, which had gradually accumulated, were gathered together, and with a permanent abiding place and visible possessions there came a new sense of identity. Once again, the old name was felt to be inadequate and outgrown, and when a new constitution was framed and adopted, the Art Association emerged therein as the full-

fledged Denver Art Museum.<sup>28</sup>

In this article by Anne Evans, and another in the same issue of the *Art Register* by Walter C. Mead, President of the Board of Trustees of the Art Museum, an optimistic scenario for the future of the Museum was projected. George Eggers resigned as the Art Museum's Director in September, 1926, but because of the construction of the addition to Chappell House and a serious possibility of having an art museum site included in the latest civic

center plans, he delayed his departure until the end of October.

### Problems with Eggers' Successor

Arnold Ronnebeck (1885-1947) a sculptor whose work had been showcased in a Chappell House exhibit, succeeded Eggers. Ronnebeck had given a public lecture on his own work, and on modern sculpture in general, sponsored by the Cooke Daniels Lecture Foundation. This had drawn a favorable review by Eggers in the *Rocky Mountain News* (April 4, 1926), and an offer to Ronnebeck to serve as art advisor to the Museum. Ronnebeck had studied in France under Auguste Rodin, Aristide Maillol and Antoine Bourdelle. He brought a prestigious Maillol exhibit to Denver soon after becoming associated with the Museum, and persuaded the Board of Trustees to purchase a cast of a life-size Maillol bronze nude. Thus, the Denver Art Museum was the first public museum in the country to acquire a major Maillol work.

After Eggers' departure, Ronnebeck, with no change in his title of Art Advisor, was placed in charge of the Museum. In March, 1929, the Board appointed Samuel Heavenrich, formerly curator of the Fogg Museum at Harvard University, as executive secretary to take over museum operations. Unfortunately, the two men proved to have totally incompatible ideas about the function of an art museum, and the kind of art a museum should be collecting. Their arguments spilled over into the press. Their short-lived joint direction of the Denver Art Museum was terminated.

### Anne Evans Becomes Interim Director

The Board turned to fellow-trustee Anne Evans to take over as interim director until they could find a qualified successor. Lewis Story, in his history of the early years of the Denver Art Museum<sup>29</sup> noted, "Her energy and vision often assured a viable future for the organization, and she was always ready to serve in any capacity, from hostess at the 1894 opening of the club's first rooms, to interim director."<sup>30</sup> Anne Evans assumed this directorial role at a crucial time in the long development of the Denver Art Museum—from a small non-profit artists' club to a bold and handsome public art museum in the heart of the city. "Over the years," said Lewis Story, "she assumed a dominant role in the cultural affairs of the city and sat at various times on both the Library Commission and the Art Commission."

### The Denver Artists Guild

Anne Evans continued to support artists, even when her plate was already very full. The Denver Artists Guild was another of her affiliations aimed at supporting Denver's artists. According to Deborah Wadsworth,

"In 1928-29, as the United States slipped into the Great Depression, an adventurous group of Denver artists banded together to form the Denver Artists Guild. Their goals were 'To encourage the practice and appreciation of the fine arts and to promote the highest professional standards in original art.'" They believed deeply in the redemptive



*Courtesy History Colorado*

Anne Evans, *Margaret*, watercolor

powers of art, and the joy of the creative process.<sup>31</sup>

Like so much of the history of art in Colorado in the first half of the twentieth century the activities, even the existence, of the Denver Artist Guild had been virtually forgotten. In the summer of 2009, an exhibit of work of most of the fifty-two original Guild members in the Western History department of the Denver Public Library vividly brought the Guild and its mission to life. The exhibit was a labor of love on the part of its two volunteer curators, Deborah Wadsworth and Cynthia Jennings.<sup>32</sup>

According to the brochure accompanying the exhibition, the distinctive characteristic of the Guild was that “in contrast to the cut-throat competition of many art associations, the founders encouraged, taught and even hired each other.”<sup>33</sup>

Many of the fifty-two founders have already made an appearance in the pages of this book – Donald Bear, Laura Gilpin, Vance Kirkland, Paschal Quackenbush, Arnold Ronnebeck, and Elisabeth Spalding. By 1928, Anne Evans had long since ceased her own painting activity, so her role in the Guild was one of support – primarily





*Courtesy History Colorado*

Anne Evans, *Winter Scene*, oil on board

drawing people to and publicizing its events. A happy surprise was that for the 2009 exhibit, Deborah Wadsworth managed to find a small, hitherto unknown original oil painting by Anne Evans. Deborah Wadsworth discovered it in the course of her major volunteer effort for the Western History Department, categorizing every original piece of art in the Department's collection, with digital images and a full description of each.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Eccentric Cyril Kay Scott**

A new Director for the Art Museum, Cyril Kay Scott, was installed

in August 1930. Described by Lewis Story as an eccentric, his background more than qualified him for that description. "According to his own account, he had multiple careers and lived much of his life under an assumed name."<sup>35</sup> Born in 1879 in Missouri, Scott trained as a doctor, married, had four children, divorced, and married again, this time to a concert pianist. As young Dr. Frederick Creighton Wellman, he worked in Angola and Honduras. An authority on tropical medicine, he returned to the U. S. to join the faculty first of Oakland Medical

College and then of Tulane School of Medicine.

When he was forty-four, Dr. Wellman met an enchanting and highly original young twenty-year-old woman, the daughter of a friend, and eloped with her by freighter to London. They reinvented themselves as Cyril Kay and Evelyn Scott, and soon moved to Brazil, fearful of being traced and arrested in England. After his plans to make an income by collecting specimens for the British Museum fell through, Cyril eked out a living as a baggage porter. Next, he worked for the Singer Sewing Machine Company, moving up from bookkeeper to district supervisor. Later, he became successively a homesteading rancher and a mining engineer.

Evelyn Scott gave birth to one child, after which she became quite ill. To secure medical attention for her the couple returned to the United States, where they lived in Greenwich Village and became writers. Both of them, but more especially Evelyn, achieved critical acclaim. This did not translate into an adequate income. Their marriage became an open affair. The couple traveled widely in France and North Africa, hooking up with a New Zealand artist named Owen Merton, who stimulated Cyril to start painting. Merton also became Evelyn's lover. This did not sit too well with Owen's young son Thomas, who had lost his mother at a young age to cancer. He was to go through many dark nights of the soul before becoming, in his later adult years, the beloved Cistercian monk, prolific writer, and Catholic theologian Thomas Merton.

Now an artist, Cyril Kay Scott finally divorced Evelyn, started

to hyphenate his name, and moved to Santa Fe. There he started an art school and embarked on a fourth, rather unpropitious marriage.

### **New Goals, New Challenges**

It was from Santa Fe in 1930 that Cyril Kay-Scott came to Denver to be the director of the Denver Art Museum. He had twin goals for the rising young museum, first, to be a major educational resource for the community, "essentially a center of civic service," where art objects would be installed so as to "count day by day for the enjoyment and cultural education of the largest number of people, both young and old."<sup>36</sup> Second, he wanted to see the Museum's collections both enlarged and broadened, to include not only sculpture, paintings and prints but also art objects usually designated as crafts, such as rugs, furniture, and ceramics. This policy fitted in well with long-established beliefs and practices of the Museum's leaders from the early beginnings of the Artists' Club, and certainly, with their decision to include American Indian Art in their collections, an area intimately associated with Anne Evans' interests and contributions.

Kay-Scott realized, as did the Trustees of the Museum, that the de facto acquisition policy, which had been pursued for at least ten years, of accepting virtually all gifts that were offered would no longer do. New standards for the acceptance of donations were drawn up. Even with new limitations, the collections continued to grow. Two collections, already conditionally bequeathed to

the city, still needed a home. One was a group of twenty-eight late nineteenth and early twentieth century paintings donated in 1917 by Junius Flagg Brown, as a result of Mayor Speer's "Give While You Live" campaign. It was given on condition that a suitable building in which to display the collection would be built within fifteen years. That time limit was fast approaching. The other was a collection of Chinese and Japanese bronzes donated to the city, at about the same time as the Brown bequest, by Walter C. Mead. Both were being housed and displayed at the Colorado Museum of Natural History, which began to make it quite clear that the space was needed for their own exhibits.

The needs of the Denver Art Museum for display space had outgrown Chappell House, even with the new gallery addition, and the ideal of having a space of its own on the Civic Center had never gone away.

To understand the next chapter in the story of the Denver Art Museum, it is necessary to look at two of Anne Evans' parallel commitments, the Denver Public Library and the Denver Art Commission.

## Endnotes

1. Paul Schofield, Letter to Anne Downs. 8 August 1940. Chicago, Ill. and Letter from assistant to Anne Downs to Paul Schofield, August 14, 1940.
2. Elizabeth Spalding, "Something of Art in Denver as I Think Of It." Denver Public Library, Western History Department, Denver Fortnightly Society Collection. Dec 1924: 14-15.
3. Artists Club Bulletin 1897, Denver

Public Library.

4. *Denver Republican*. 22 April 1900.
5. Chambers, "First Steps toward an Art Museum; The Artists' Club." 64.
6. Chambers 66.
7. *DAM The First Hundred Years* Note 56: 286.
8. *The Open Door*. Denver: Saint John's Cathedral, 4 February 1968.
9. *Ibid*.
10. Edgar C. McMechen, "Brinton Terrace." *The Colorado Magazine*. Vol. XXIV, No. 3: May 1947.
11. McMechen 273.
12. McMechen 97.
13. "Anne Evans is Dead From Heart Attack." *The Denver Post*. 6 Jan. 1941.
14. A collaborative exhibition of Allen True's work was mounted by the Denver Art Museum, the Denver Public Library and History Colorado in 2009.
15. McMechen 108.
16. Spalding 15.
17. Chambers, *DAM The First Hundred Years*, 65.
18. Chambers, *DAM The First Hundred Years*, 65.
19. See Chapter 11.
20. Spalding 23.
21. Story, 72.
22. *ibid*.
23. Spalding 24.
24. Ref Note attached to a photograph in the Denver Western History Department, "Residence of Mr. H. W. Bennett, Denver."
25. Allen Young, *The Allied Arts Inc. 1920-1995*. (Denver: Spectrographics, Inc., 1995.)
26. Young 1.
27. *ibid*.
28. Evans, Anne. As Executive Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Denver Art Museum. "The Genesis

of the Denver Art Museum. " *Art Register*. Vol. 2, #2: November 1931.

29. Story, *DAM The First Hundred Years* 85.

30. Story, *DAM The First Hundred Years* 85. Also Henrietta Bromwell Scrapbook, Colorado Historical Society.

31. Deborah A. Wadsworth and Cynthia A. Jennings, *Denver Artists Guild Founders: Fifty Two Originals* (Denver: Denver Public Library, 2009).

32. Deborah, a DPL Volunteer par excellence, is working on a book about Colorado artist John Thompson. She and her husband are long-time Colorado

Art collectors. Cynthia Jennings is the daughter of Guild founder and leader, artist Clarence A. Durham; she is working on a book about the Guild.

33. Wadsworth.

34. For her volunteer services, Deborah Wadsworth received the Western History and Genealogy Department's prestigious Eleanor Gehres Award on August 26, 2009.

35. Story, *DAM The First Hundred Years* 86.

36. Kay-Scott, Cyril. "The Art Museum as a Civic Force." *Municipal Facts*. Vol. 14, nos. 1-2: Jan.-Feb. 1931.

# Over the Corral Rail

*Compiled by Ed Bathke, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ed. Deadline is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the first month in the date of publication.*

## Westerner Fall Presentations

The Boulder County Corral of Westerners kicked off its fall season of meetings, with "Buffalo Bill: a Life in the Wild West," presented by Steve Friesen, Denver Posse member, and the director of the Buffalo Bill Museum, Golden, Colo. Denver Posse member John Stewart spoke on "Temple Hoyne Buell: Denver Architect" before the Colorado Corral. In Colorado Springs, the Pikes Peak Posse heard "A Motley but Effective Field Force: New Military Considerations about the 1540-1542 Expedition of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado," by Denver Posse member John Hutchins.

## Denver Posse Doings

Vonnie Perkins participated in Burlington Harvest Festival Days, where she signed copies of her book *D. C. Oakes, Family, Friends and Foe*. Jeff Broome gave a talk, on the Kile-Hickok brawl of 1870 in Casper at Fort Caspar last July 11. The presentation was funded by the Wyoming Humanities Council. Jeff also spoke at the Little House on the Prairie Museum near Independence, Kansas last June 9 during their Prairie Festival, on Susanna Alderdice's story of Indian captivity, this being the very year the Ingalls family built their home in Kansas.

## Colorado Historical Resources Highlighted

Colorado's Park County, with the help of very energetic volunteers, has compiled a collection of over 3,000 historical images of Park County. Historical researchers can access this resource at <http://parkcoarchives.org>. The City of Golden History

Museums will launch its Golden Memories Project, which features historic photographs, of the Golden region. This collection will be available at <http://Goldenhistory.org>.

### **Becoming an Active Posse Member of the Denver Posse of Westerners**

Since its inception in 1945, the objectives of the Denver Posse of Westerners have been "to investigate, discuss and publish the facts, and the color relating to the historic, social, political, economic and religious background and evolution of the American West, and to promote all corollary activities and interests." The wording of our goals has changed very little in the 67-year history of the organization.

Those Corresponding Members of the Denver Posse showing interest in active participation in the Denver of Posse of Westerners are considered for election to Active Posse membership.

Active Posse membership is attained by submission of a letter of nomination, written by an Active or Reserve Posse Member, approval of the membership committee, and a reading of the nomination at two regular meetings of the Posse, followed by an affirmative vote by three-quarters of the members present at the meeting of the second reading. The letter of nomination should primarily contain background, activities and interests pertinent to the history of the American West and the goals of the Denver Posse of Westerners. The Posse Member composing this letter of nomination should confer with the nominee on its content.

As an Active Posse Member, one should demonstrate active interest and participation in the objectives of the Posse. Such activity includes regular attendance of meetings (in May 1947 the rule was established that missing three meetings would be automatic cause for a change in membership to Corresponding status – today there is no such stringent requirement). Being literally active involves presentation of a program based on original historical research of the American West, and although not a stated requirement to become an Active Posse member, the presentation of a paper or commitment to do so is considered the primary way for election to the Active Posse. The paper presented to the Posse should be of proper form and content for publication in the *Roundup*. Additionally, a willingness to serve as an officer or committee member is also considered a duty of any Active Posse Member. Active Posse Members are obligated to buy a copy of Denver Westerners publications, such as the *Brand Book*.

As part of the approval procedure, the Membership Committee will interview the nominee. A copy of the Bylaws of the organization will be provided to the nominee, and in addition to the committee's consideration of his background and interest in the history of the American West, he is encouraged to seek information, as well as answers to any questions he has about the Denver Posse of Westerners.

Active Posse membership generally requires the payment of dues above the amount of Corresponding member dues. However, this does not take effect until the calendar year following election to the Active Posse.



## Westerners Bookshelf



**Calamity Jane. *The Woman and the Legend*** by James D. McLaird. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005. 37 pp. Photos, bibliography, index. Paperback, \$19.95.

What attracts many to the history of the “Wild West” are the stories of characters like Calamity Jane. However, anyone who takes the time to study the “true” history of the West, realizes that the tales of most of these legendary figures are either considerably exaggerated or completely made up. It is instructive to try to peel back the layers of legend to discover the real stories. This book on Calamity Jane does just that.

James D. McLaird has made a careful study of the life of the real Calamity Jane, Martha Canary, a life much more mundane than the legend. McLaird’s goal was to “tell the intertwined stories of Martha Canary, pioneer woman, and Calamity Jane, legendary heroine.” (p. 6)

His research seems impeccable and his analysis clear and convincing. He used newspaper articles, interviews and whatever else he could find from her lifetime to piece together as accurate a picture of Martha’s life as possible. As McLaird says, “Sadly, after romantic adventures are removed, [Martha’s] story is mostly an account of uneventful daily life interrupted by drinking binges.” (p. 5)

Martha Canary, born in 1856, became an orphan as a teenager shortly after her family moved from Missouri as part of the Montana gold rush. She took up traveling to railroad camps and frontier settlements, taking on a habit of wearing men’s clothing and heavy drinking. She led a wild life, was an alcoholic and at times working as a dance hall girl and prostitute. She also hung around military camps and expeditions. In 1876, she accompanied General Crook’s expedition to tame the Sioux and then went to the Black Hills with gold prospectors, including Wild Bill Hickok.

There were a number of other women who lived similar lives, but Calamity stood out for her ability with horses and guns and her prodigious use of alcohol and swearing. What established her fame, though, was to appear as a featured character in Edward L. Wheeler’s *Deadwood Dick*, a dime novel published in 1877. Her fame was enhanced by further appearances in novels and newspapers and later in her life she toured the country in the show about her “Life and Adventures.” Her later life was spent mostly earning money by cooking and doing laundry and trying to get extra cash by selling her autobiography and signed photographs. After her death,

her fame grew in movies and books, taking on even more fabulous layers far removed from her actual life.

McLaird's goal was "to show how the legend of Calamity Jane emerged from its historical roots." (p. 270) He does this well. I found the book interesting because it gave a detailed picture of the everyday life of regular people in the West: a sad story, but enlightening.

--*Christopher Lane*

**Denver Inside and Out**, Colorado History 16, 2011, a publication of History Colorado (Colorado Historical Society), Denver, 2011. 124 pages, photographs, footnotes, bibliography, \$19.95.

In his foreword to this collection of essays celebrating Denver's 2008 sesquicentennial, State Historian William J. Convery points out that Denver is a city of recent memory. Its entire 150-year story has played out in just two lifetimes. And, oh what a story it is!

Several of Colorado's finest historians trace Denver's rollicking rise from a shabby mining camp "too dead to bury," to the Queen City of the Plains. Subjects range from railroads to the red light district to Denver's mountain parks. We meet urban Indians, consumptives, the brides of the multitude (as Dr. Thomas J. Noel says) and the Imperial Commander of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan.

Laurena Senter presided over the WKKK during the height of Klan popularity in Colorado in the 1920s. Mrs. Senter was a meticulous record keeper who saved everything related to her Klan experience: formal portraits in her regalia, the elaborate white robes themselves, photos of Klan gatherings and unmasked member as well as ledger books and detailed Klan records documenting meeting places, banks and businesses favored by the Klan all fill her treasure trove of memorabilia. She detailed the ceremonial rituals of "klankraft" and of the WKKK's charitable efforts extended to the needy, well, at least to the needy white people. Her materials offer helpful suggestions such as not patronizing Neusteters department store in downtown Denver because it was "run by Jews" who did not welcome Klan business.

While never formally denouncing her Klan involvement, Senter expressed disappointment that its "pure values" had been sullied. She became a pillar of Denver society. Her Klan past was revealed when her family donated many boxes of her papers to the Denver Public Library upon her death in 1986.

Perhaps the moral of Senter's story is: Always check the contents of those dusty boxes you're donating!

--*Kimberly Field, C.M.*

**On the Edge of Purgatory: An Archaeology of Place in Hispanic Colorado**, by Bonnie J. Clark. Series: Historical Archaeology of the American West, University of Nebraska Press, 2011. Illustrations, photos, bibliography, index. 148 pages, cloth, \$45.00.

The Spanish called it El Rio de Las Animas Perdidas en Purgatorio (The River of Souls Lost in Purgatory). French fur traders shortened it to Purgatoire, which became Picketwire in the vernacular of the Plains. Dante's Purgatory, a kingdom that is neither heaven nor hell, is an apt descriptor of southeastern Colorado. These high plains were the northernmost boundary of New Spain in the sixteenth century. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the flags of Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas and the United States flew over this borderland. Called "a howling wilderness" by 19<sup>th</sup> century explorers and labeled "the Great American Desert", this starkly beautiful land is classic fly-over country.

It looks empty, but people have come and gone here for tens of thousands of years. Indians hunted these windswept plains. Traders moved goods along the Santa Fe Trail, cattle barons ran longhorns until the harsh winter of 1886-87 killed off up to 90 percent of the stock and dry-land wheat farmers tried to make a go of it until the land blew away in the Dust Bowl of the Dirty Thirties. But it seems the Great American Desert always drives most away; witness today's declining populations. In this book, archaeologist Bonnie J. Clark shines the spotlight on *la Gente*, as the Hispanic residents of this borderland called themselves.

Clark, an associate professor of anthropology at the University of Denver, investigates the unwritten history of this unique Hispanic population. Combining archaeological research, contemporary ethnography and oral and documentary history, she examines the everyday lives of *la Gente*. Framing this discussion within the wider context of the economic and political processes at work, Clark looks at how changing ethnic and gender identities were experienced on a daily basis. Clark poses her research questions in her introduction. Who are these people? How did they live? The reader is quickly drawn into the details of daily life in this challenging land.

Historical archaeology is the study of the culture of any period for which there remains documentary records. In short, it is the marriage between archaeology, material culture and documents. Too often, women, minorities and children aren't visible in history. Archaeology illuminates the dim recesses where those without land or power or influence reside. Clark approaches this as the study of a marginalized people as, indeed, *la Gente* were. They weren't property owners, so they typically do not appear in the



public records. Though they ranched and worked in the area's coal mines, they remained an "other" despite the plethora of Spanish-language place names in the area.

Clark looks at two 19<sup>th</sup> century home sites in the Pinon Canyon area. Her archaeological excavations reveal a "placeway" that mirrors classic Hispanic settlement patterns of northern New Mexico. She integrates ethnographic detail, including interviews with settlers about life in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. She heralds the Hispanic place-based knowledge of weather-savvy site planning, water conservation and use of wild resources, and makes the case that the settlers of one site, La Placita, intended to stay. However they occupied this site for less than a decade.

It seems the Great American Desert always has the last word.

*--Kimberly Field, C.M.*

**Twelve Hundred Miles by Horse and Burro – J. Stokely Ligon and New Mexico's First Breeding Bird Survey**, by Harley G. Shaw and Mara E. Weisenberger. University of Arizona Press, 2011. 244 pp. Map, photos, appendices, bibliography, index. Paperback, \$26.95.

### **The saga**

J. Stokely Ligon made, in 1913, an amazing journey to survey New Mexico breeding birds. From Chloride in southwestern New Mexico he went east to Artesia, north to Chama. Commissioned Field Assistant by the U.S. Biological Survey, he followed the instructions and route prescribed by the Survey's Vernon Bailey and E. W. Nelson.

Bailey's May 24th letter requests data on breeding habits of waterbirds and other birds encountered at target localities and elsewhere. Ligon's diary emphasized waterbirds though he found few until he reached Stinking Lake, near Chama. He produced a "daily diary of the journey, a brief itinerary written in a government-issued pocket notebook" and a handwritten bird report (now at the Smithsonian).

Stinking Lake impressed Ligon. He recommended it as a "Candidate for a Preserve as a Breeding Place for Water Fowl." On July 20, he estimated 11,878 nesting birds – 1050 grebes, 2000 coots, 7500 ducks, 1100 blackbirds, 228 herons, yellow-throat, and marsh wrens; also, "abundant" bull frogs and "Water Dogs" [Tiger Salamanders, the author explains]. As part of the Jicarilla Apache Reservation, the lake could not gain designation as a federal refuge.

### **The book**

The main text describes the saga. It interlineates Ligon's laconic diary entries with extensive, often distracting, comments by the author.

(Shaw followed Ligon's route 96 years later and photographed sites; then-and-now photographs, poorly reproduced, show changes.) Lacking theme or organization, his comments cover myriad topics: geography and status of sites visited (then and now), explanation of terms used by Ligon, Shaw's experiences (often extraneous), historical asides, Ligon biographical excerpts, and reminiscences by Ligon. The diary section has far more comments from the author than text from Ligon.

Two appendices provide some substantive value to the book. One contains Ligon's account of 100 species of birds observed and collected. It provides location, numbers, dates, and abundance of species observed. Another appendix, with useful comments by the author, details specimens collected by Ligon and sent to the Smithsonian.

--Hugh E. Kingery



## We mourn the loss of Westerner Wayne Smith

Wayne Smith passed away September 28, 2012. He was born May 14, 1927 in Blackwell, OK. His first eighteen years were on his parents' ranch. Wayne worked in various capacities: filling station operation, owner of an organic fertilizer company, custom-home builder, and artist. But he was always the true Westerner, an accomplished horseman, and enjoyed living the life of the American Westerner. However the greatest impression that Wayne made on us was his talent as an artist and sculptor.

A member of the Denver Posse of Westerners since 1978, his brothers Dale and Max soon joined him, and the three, well-known at our meetings as the "Smith Brothers," were very active participants of the Denver Westerners. In particular, the three jointly presented "Some Northern Douglas County Ranches" in August 1989.



Wayne was also active in community and other historical groups such as the Douglas County Historic Preservation Board. He was a great listener and had a life-long passion for learning. He read constantly and enjoyed being around learned folks. He was a great part of the Westerners' monthly meetings and we will truly miss his cheery participation.



*The* DENVER WESTERNERS  
**ROUNDUP**

November - December 2012



The narrow transportation corridor of Glenwood Canyon

**The Colorado River**  
**Western Colorado's Grand Waterway**

**By Lee Whiteley**  
**(Presented September 28, 2011)**



## Our Author

Lee Whiteley is a posse member and past sheriff of the Denver Westerners, a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Coloradan, a U. S. Army veteran (including one year in Vietnam), and a retired computer programmer-analyst.

He and his wife Jane began writing books on the transportation history of the West and entitled their first book: *The Cherokee Trail: Bent's Old Fort to Fort Bridger*.

They are also associate producers of a PBS documentary "Paving the Way: the National Park-to-Park Highway."

Lee received the Denver Posse of Westerners Lifetime Achievement award in 2003. This is the text of Lee's seventh program for the Denver Posse.

## THE DENVER WESTERNERS

# ROUNDUP

VOL. LXVIII NO. 6



November - December 2012

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## **The Colorado River**

### **Western Colorado's Grand Waterway**

**By Lee Whiteley**  
**(Presented September 28, 2011)**

#### **From Source to Sea**

The Colorado River, with headwaters in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park, descends 1,450 miles to the Gulf of California. The river supplies water to 25-million people and irrigates 3.5-million acres. More water is exported from the river's 250,000-square-mile basin than from any other river basin in the world. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation built a series of large dams on the lower Colorado River starting with Hoover Dam in 1931.

The Gunnison, Dolores, and San Juan rivers, tributaries of the Colorado, have their headwaters in Colorado. Colorado's Yampa and White rivers flow into the Green River. Eighty-seven percent of water leaving the state of Colorado is by way of the Colorado River basin. The Green, with headwaters in the Wind River Mountains of Wyoming, is the largest tributary of the Colorado. Flowing for forty miles through the extreme northwestern corner of Colorado, the Green River merges with the Colorado River in Canyonlands National Park, thirty-five miles southwest of Moab, Utah. This paper will concentrate on the Colorado River above the confluence.

#### **The Grand River**

The headwaters of the Colorado River are in Grand County, Colorado. Water from the Never Summer Range is diverted by the Grand Ditch, the first of many diversion projects along the Colorado. The waters of Grand Lake, Colorado's largest natural lake, empty into it. The river flows through the Grand Valley and beneath Grand Mesa, the nation's largest flat-top mountain. After merging with the Gunnison River at Grand Junction, the Colorado River enters Grand County, Utah.

The Colorado River above its confluence with the Green River was known as the Grand River until 1921. When Colorado Territory was established in 1861 and the state was created in 1876, there was no "Colorado River" in the state. This was remedied when Edward Taylor, U.S. Representative from Glenwood Springs, took action. An article in the June 1921 issue of *The Trail* noted: "*I congratulate Ed Taylor on getting the Colorado River bill through the National House of Representatives. That is a big step toward transforming the Colorado Grand into the Grand Colorado. . . . It is one more step toward identifying Colorado with*

*the rest of the world. We will have a stream carrying the state name to the open sea. The Grand Canyon of the Colorado will be our due reward for contributing the greater part of the volume of the lower stream."*

### Early Exploration

Father Eusebio Kino, missionary and explorer, was the first to publicly record the name "Colorado River." Spanish for red or reddish, he noted the river to be the largest in all of New Spain. His travels in present-day Southern Arizona and Southern California in the late 1600s also proved that California was not an island. He proved Baja California was a peninsula and "Alta" California could be reached by land.

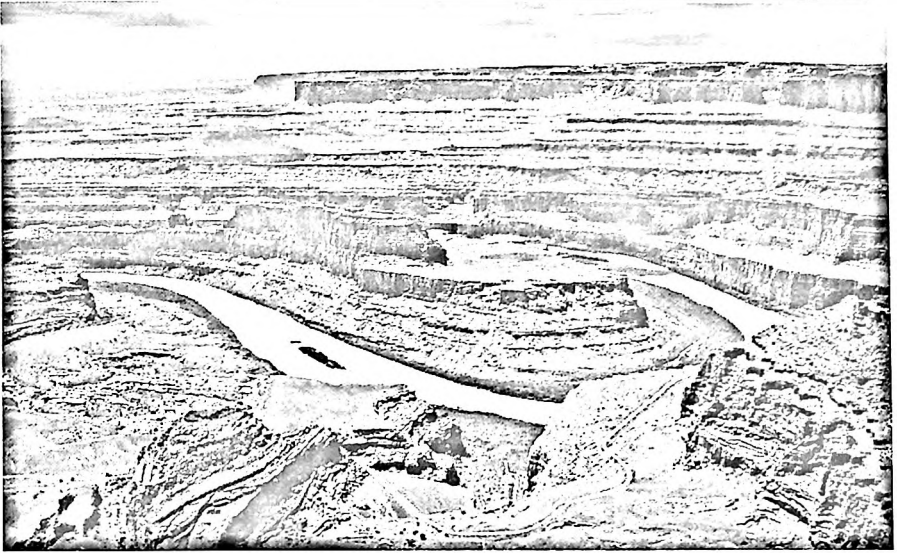
Francisco Dominguez and Silvestre Velez de Escalante crossed the Colorado River near present-day Debeque, Colorado, on September 5, 1776. A translation of their diary noted: *"arrived at a river which our people call San Rafael and which the Yutas [Utes] call Rio Colorado."* The expedition crossed the Green River near present-day Jensen, Utah. Returning to Santa Fe, the expedition re-crossed the Colorado River at "Crossing of the Fathers" near the Utah-Arizona border.

The 1836 Warren Faris map titled "Map of the Northwest Fur Company" labels the river above the Green River confluence "Rio Grand," including today's Gunnison

River, while present-day Colorado River above Grand Junction is labeled "Blue River." Members of the 1853 William Gunnison expedition repeated the names shown on the Faris map. Adding to the confusion is the fact that the Blue River is today a tributary of the Colorado. Thomas Jefferson Farnham gave a more accurate naming of the river system when he visited the Upper Colorado River in 1839. Near present-day Kremmling he recorded: *"To-day we struck Grand River, (the great southern branch of the Colorado of the west)."* Later he added: *"It is said to move with a dashing, foaming current in a westerly direction fifty miles, where it unites with Green River, or Sheetshadee, and forms the Colorado of the west."*

John Macomb, with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, pushed to within a few miles of the confluence of the Colorado and Green rivers in 1859, same year as the Colorado gold rush. He called the two rivers the Green and Grand, and below the confluence the start of the Colorado River. Gold-rush-era settlers of the early 1860s adopted the name "Grand" for the river and most mapmakers adopted that name.

William Henry Jackson, photographer for the Ferdinand Hayden expedition, visited the Middle Park region in 1874. Jackson took some of the earliest photographs of the area, from



The Colorado River below Dead Horse Point Overlook

Grand Lake to the mouth of Gore Canyon. They entered the region via Berthoud Pass and left by way of the Blue River.

### John Wesley Powell

John Wesley Powell, first to raft the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, spent the summer of 1867 with William Byers, publisher of the *Rocky Mountain News*. The newspaper noted on November 6, 1867: "*Major J. W. Powell left for the east this morning. He will return to the territory next spring to prosecute his scientific labors, and will go down the Grand to its junction with the Colorado river.*"

Powell did return to Colorado in 1868 but did not descend the Grand River. He spent time with Byers,

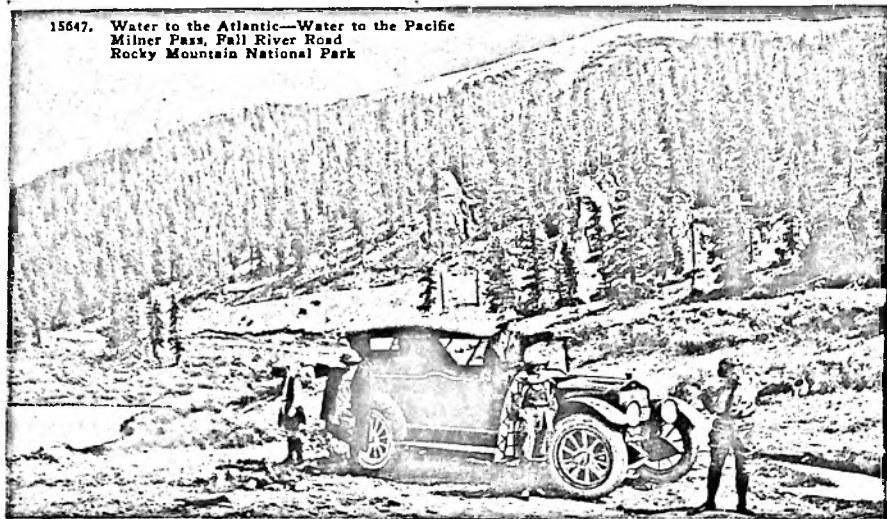
who had bought property at Hot Sulphur Springs. Powell, Byers, and Jack Sumner, Byers' brother-in-law, were the first white party to climb Longs Peak.

Powell's exploration of the Green and Colorado rivers started from Green River, Wyoming, on the newly opened transcontinental railroad, on May 5, 1869. Jack Sumner was one of the nine-member expedition.

### Samuel Adams

"Captain" Samuel Adams, self-professed authority on the Colorado River had a vision: "*The grand idea of the early explorers of the western continent was a continued water line from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Subsequent investigations*

15647. Water to the Atlantic—Water to the Pacific  
Milner Pass, Fall River Road  
Rocky Mountain National Park



The 1920 Fall River Road, replaced by Trail Ridge Road in 1933, crossed the Continental Divid at Milner Pass. Water flowing to the right reaches the Colorado River in the Kawuneeche Valley

*have proved this to be impractical, yet the same idea may be carried out by a judicious amalgamation of railroad and water communications. By this the wealth of the richest agricultural and mineral sections of Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and Arizona will have an outlet to the ocean.*" Adams tried to bluff his way onto the Powell expedition down the Green and Colorado rivers. After failing he immediately organized his own expedition. The *Rocky Mountain News*, July 7, 1869, reported: "Mr. Samuel Adams writes us from Breckinridge that he has almost completed his boats at that place and his expedition for the exploration of the Blue, Grand

*and Colorado rivers consisting of twelve men, will sail within a week. We look upon it as a very hazardous undertaking, but explorers are never satisfied until they reach some place that costs them their lives. Thompson and party who sailed from Breckinridge in 1860, were never heard of after. We hope Mr. Adams may meet with success and make his trip in safety.*" The very unscientific expedition started with ten men, four rafts, a dog, and a banner stating "*Western Colorado to California, Greetings.*" They immediately ran into problems, losing equipment and two boats before reaching the mouth of the Blue River at present-day Kremmling. The remaining two





The Colorado River at Bowen Gulch in Rocky Mountain National Park. Note the beetle-kill trees

boats, then makeshift rafts, were lost in treacherous Gore Canyon, which he called "Grand Canon of the Grand River." Gore Canyon has some of the most extreme rapids on the entire river system. The expedition was halted and they returned to Breckenridge. Adams went to Congress six times trying to get paid for his study and exploration of the Colorado River. He received nothing.

### **Denver, Colorado Canyon and Pacific Railway**

Frank Brown, Denver businessman, also had a dream, a river-level railroad along the Colorado River from Grand Junction to California, then overland to San

Diego. His company, the Denver, Colorado Canyon and Pacific Railroad, never materialized but an extensive survey was conducted. Frank C. Kendrick surveyed in 1889 the 140 miles from Grand Junction to the Colorado River junction with the Green River. He noted that only four miles of tunnels would be needed, but he also had to portage the twelve miles around Utah's Westwater Canyon. Robert Brewster Stanton, who was the structural engineer for the Georgetown Loop Railroad, extended the survey below the confluence. To save weight, Brown decided not to carry life jackets. A bad decision, for he and two companions drowned in Marble Canyon, upstream from the Grand Canyon.

9010—SULPHUR SPRINGS, MOFFAT ROAD, COLORADO.



The Colorado River at Hot Sulphur Springs. Note the depot at left

### Down the Colorado River Today

The Colorado River, from its headwaters to its confluence with the Green River, has served as a major transportation corridor, from Native American trails, railroads, "auto trails," U.S. Highways, to an Interstate. Many historic ferries and bridges have allowed travelers to cross the often perilous waterway.

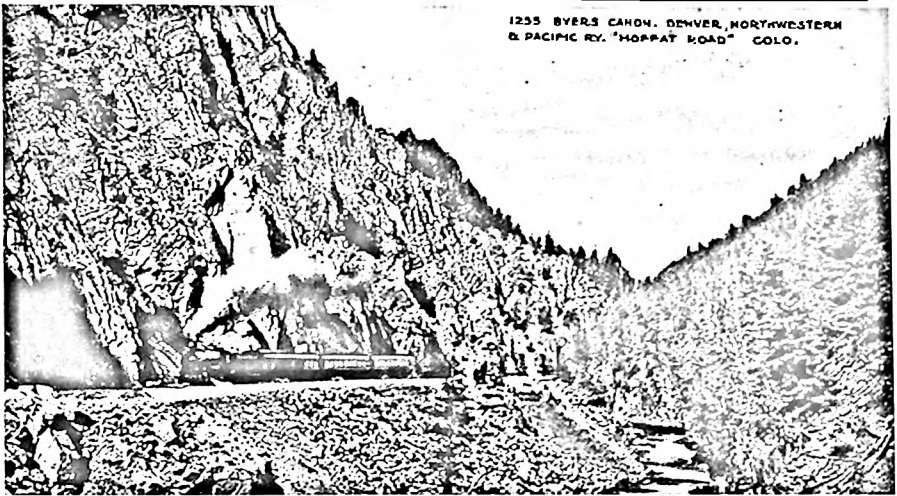
### Trail Ridge Road, U.S. Highway 34

Fall River Road through Rocky Mountain National Park, connecting Estes Park and Grand Lake, opened in 1920. This road crossed the Continental Divide at 10,758-foot Milner Pass and provided convenient automobile access to the upper Colorado River. The

road was replaced by Trail Ridge Road in 1933. This road followed in places the "Ute Trail" across the Continental Divide.

Farview Curve, west of Milner Pass, gives the motorist his first good look at the Colorado River and the Kawuneeche [coyote] Valley below. Across the valley to the west is the scar of the Grand River Ditch. The original 1894 eight-mile conversion project diverts water from the Never Summer Range to the Cache la Poudre River system at La Poudre Pass. The ditch was expanded to fourteen miles by 1936. The name was shortened to Grand Ditch when the river was renamed in 1921.

The Colorado River Trail follows the Colorado River 7.5 miles upstream to LaPoudre Pass,



### Byers Canyon, southwest of Hot Sulphur Springs

the very beginning of the river. The site of Lulu City, a gold and silver mining town established in 1880, is 3.7 miles from the trailhead. The first wagon road access to the new boom town was opened over Thunder Pass, three miles west of LaPoudre Pass. The road connected to S. B. Stewart's "Cache la Poudre and North Park Toll Road" from Fort Collins. A primitive wagon road was extended south to Grand Lake, which became the primary supply point for Lulu City and Gaskill, an 1881-1889 mining town at the mouth of Bowen Gulch, six miles north of Grand Lake.

U.S. Highway 34, the Trail Ridge Road Scenic Byway, follows the Colorado River's "North Fork" downstream to Grand Lake.

### Colorado River Headwaters Scenic Byway

From Grand Lake, U.S. 34, now designated the Colorado River Headwaters Scenic Byway, descends to Granby.

Shadow Mountain Lake, Lake Granby, and interconnecting waterways and pumps were constructed as part of the Colorado-Big Thompson Project. The water system keeps Grand Lake at a constant level, allowing water to be pumped through the 13-mile-long Adams Tunnel to the eastern slope at Estes Park and the Big Thompson River. The project was completed in 1946.

### "The Moffat Road"

The Denver, Northwestern & Pacific Railway was formed by David Moffat, former president of



Amtrak now follows the 1906 route of the "Moffat Road" through Gore Canyon

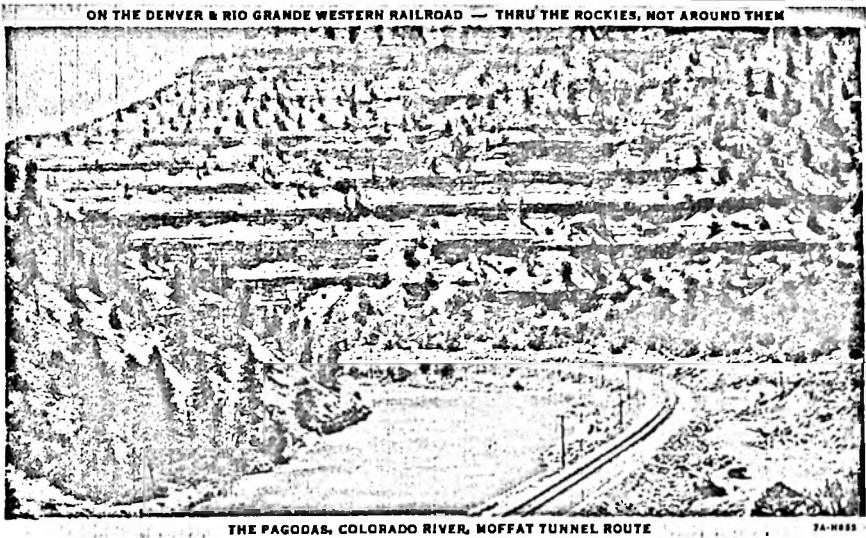
the Denver & Rio Grande Railway. From Denver the rails crossed the Continental Divide at Rollins Pass, and by July of 1905 had descended the Fraser River, a tributary of the Colorado, to Granby. Pushing west, it built through Byers Canyon, named for William Byers; and Gore Canyon, named for Sir St. George Gore, an Irish nobleman who, with Jim Bridger as guide, hunted in the region from 1854-56. The railroad diverged from the Colorado River near Bond, and continued northwest to Craig. The overly optimistic railroad name was changed in 1913 to Denver & Salt Lake Railway, but it never built west of Craig.

The Rocky Mountain Railway was a 16-mile-long line which ran from the Denver, Northwestern &

Pacific tracks just west of Granby to Monarch Lake, a man-made lake built to support the sawmill industry. The 1907 railroad followed up the then Grand River, then southeast up the "South Fork" of the river. Some of the route is now under the west arm of Lake Granby and Arapahoe Bay. The railroad, popular with fisherman, was dismantled for World War I scrap.

### **U.S. Highway 40, the Victory Highway, and the Midland Trail**

Just west of Granby, U.S. 34 ends at its junction with U.S. Highway 40. This highway follows the Colorado River west to Kremmling, where it turns northwest to Salt Lake City via Craig and Vernal, Utah. Predecessor to U.S.



“Red Canyon of the Colorado River where the Pagodas bear a remarkable resemblance to Buddhist Temples of the Orient”

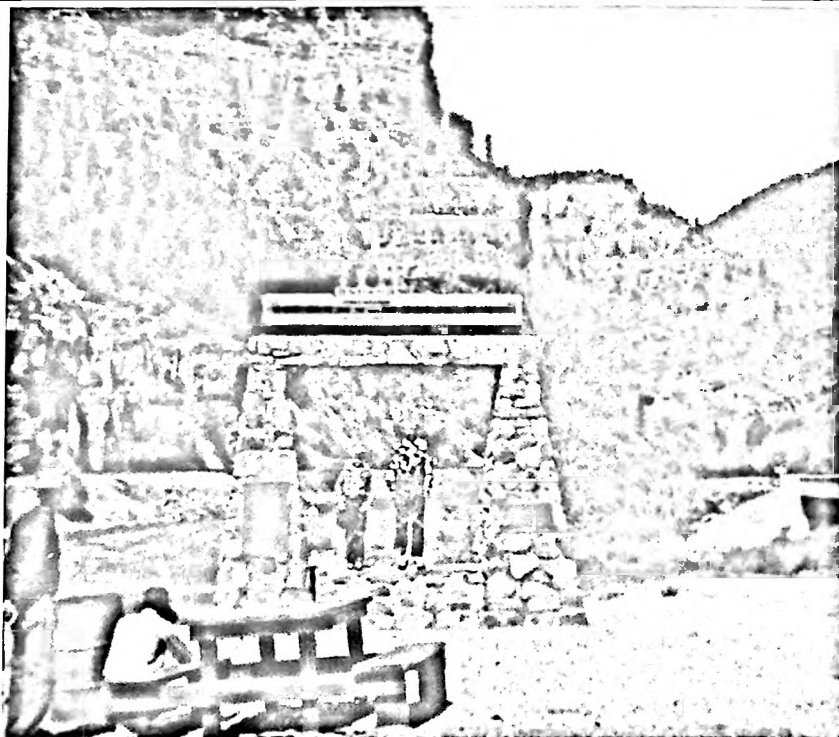
40 was the 1921 Victory Highway. This transcontinental “auto trail” ran from New York City to San Francisco.

From Denver, the 1915 transcontinental Midland Trail crossed Berthoud Pass. At Kremmling, the Midland Trail diverted from the Victory Highway and followed present-day Grand County Road #1, the “Trough Road.” A section of the Colorado River Headwaters Scenic Byway, the road offers scenic views of the Colorado River. At State Bridge, the Scenic Byway ends and the Midland Trail turned south to Walcott, where it joined the Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway, present-day U.S. Highways 6 and 24 and Interstate 70. The bridge across

the Colorado River at State Bridge was built in 1890. Costing \$6,000 it was the third bridge built by the State Engineer’s Office. All bridges built by the state agency were informally called “State Bridges” but a settlement called State Bridge developed around this one. The first bridge built by the agency was in 1886, the Fifth Street Bridge over the Colorado River in Grand Junction.

### Dotsero Cutoff

From Denver, the Denver & Rio Grande Railway build a circuitous route through Pueblo, Royal Gorge, and Tennessee Pass to join the Colorado River at Dotsero. With the planned Moffat Tunnel on the Denver & Salt Lake route, officials



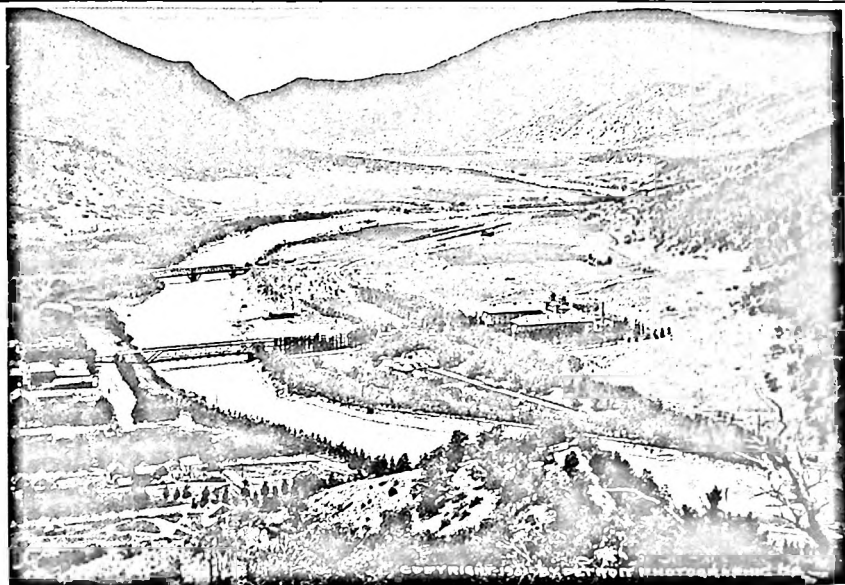
“Monument to an Idea.” The idea for Vista Dome cars was conceived by a General Motors Electro-Motive executive while riding through Glenwood Canyon in 1944. The grandfather, father and brother of the author pose at the site

of the Denver & Rio Grande Western, as it has been known since 1921, realized that the tunnel and a 39-mile-long link between the Denver & Salt Lake near Bond to its mainline at Dotsero would save 175 miles. This “Dotsero Cutoff” opened in 1934 and was constructed and operated by the Denver & Rio Grande Western. Timetables noted that the Colorado River was followed for 235 miles, from Granby west into Utah. The new line

became the 1949 route of the famed Chicago to Oakland *California Zephyr* which was replaced from 1970-1983 by the shorter Denver to Salt Lake *Rio Grande Zephyr*. Amtrak’s *California Zephyr* now uses this route.

### **U.S. Highways 6 and 24, Interstate 70**

At Dotsero, the Colorado River is joined by the old Midland Trail, U.S. Highways 6 and 24, and



*Courtesy of the U.S. Geological Society*

### The 1891 viaduct connecting downtown Glenwood Springs with the 1893 Colorado Hotel is shown in the William H. Jackson Photo

Interstate 70. The Colorado River, highway, and railroad then enter the 12.5-mile-long Glenwood Canyon.

The Denver & Rio Grande completed their narrow gauge tracks through the canyon in October 1887. It was upgraded to standard gauge in 1891.

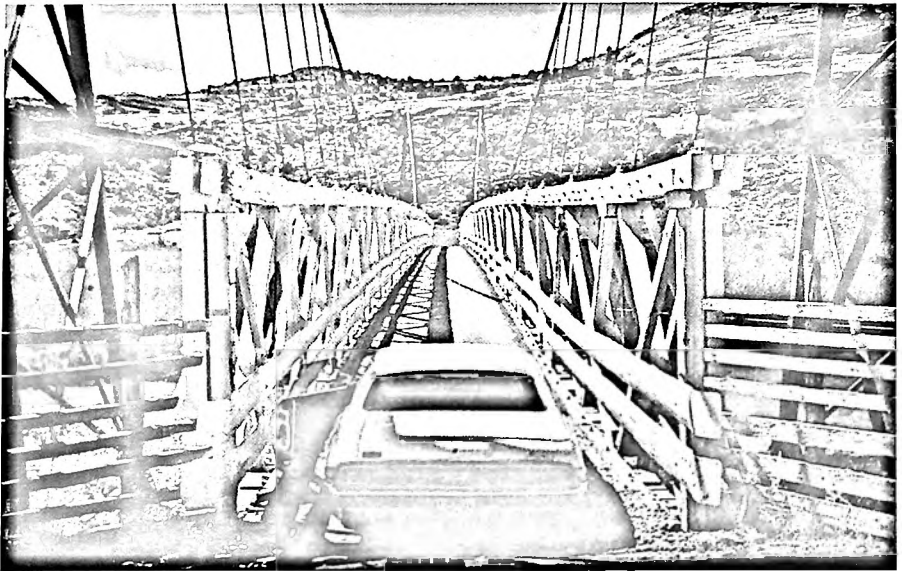
The first primitive automobile road through Glenwood Canyon opened as the Taylor State Road in 1902. It was named for the same individual who spearheaded the renaming of the Grand to the Colorado River. Convict labor upgraded the road by 1923, and the road was fully paved by August 1938. Money was allocated for

the final link of Interstate 70 from Denver to Cove Fort, Utah, in 1960. The environmental friendly interstate opened October 14, 1992.

### Colorado National Monument

Rising above the Colorado River west of Grand Junction is the Colorado National Monument. Established in 1911, the first superintendent, chief trail-builder, and promoter was the rather eccentric John Otto. Excerpts from his extensive letterhead of 1927 included:

*"The Colorado River Basin Chamber of Commerce. JOHN OTTO, Trailblazer-promotor -*



Utah's Dewey Bridge carried traffic across the Colorado River from 1916 to 1988

*Managing Director.*

*COLORADO - the heart of the Union - the Heart of the WORLD  
GRAND JUNCTION, the Basin City, the little Hub of the Universe. The Gateway to the Colorado River Rimrock Region*

*The Union Trail - The Colorado River Highway (development pending) From the Grand Mesa to the Grand Canyon—From the Grand Valley to the Sea*

*North and South—East and West—MEET in the Grand Valley of the Colorado River*

*The Colorado River . . . The River of Mystery”*

**Kokopelli's Trail**

West of Loma, Interstate 70 swings away from the Colorado River. Here Kokopelli's Trail, a mountain bike trail, follows closely the river to Dewey, Utah. The 142-mile-long trail then takes a more mountainous route to Moab.

The Loma boat launch is a popular starting point for rafting trips down the Colorado River through Horsethief and Ruby Canyons.

The Denver & Rio Grande Western traversed Ruby Canyon. Completed in 1890, the standard gauge line replaced the more overland narrow gauge route. The railroad leaves the Colorado River



near the head of Westwater Canyon, portaged by Kendrick in 1889. Westwater Canyon was the very last segment of the entire Colorado River to be traversed by boat, this in 1916.

### Upper Colorado River Scenic Byway

Utah State Highway 128, the Upper Colorado River Scenic Byway and a section of the National Scenic Byway known as the Dinosaur Diamond Prehistoric Highway, parallels the Colorado River for thirty-three miles. Originally built by Samuel King in 1899, Grand County took control of the road when he insisted on tolls for using his "Kings Toll Road."

The highway crosses the Colorado River at Dewey Bridge. The original bridge opened in 1916 and was built to support six horses, three wagons, and 9,000 pounds of freight. The eight-foot-wide, 502-foot-long suspension bridge carried traffic until 1988 when the present-day bridge was completed. The historic bridge burned in April 2008.

The historic White Ranch, now part of Red Cliff Lodge, was the filming site for western movies, including "Rio Grande" starring John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara, and numerous television commercials.

The Colorado River at the lower end of the byway forms the southern

boundary of Arches National Park. Here was the sinking of a steamboat, reported in the *Denver Times*, May 26, 1902:

*"Steamer Wrecked on the Grand Grand Junction, Colo. May 26 1902*

*Last Wednesday while attempting to navigate a difficult and dangerous turn in Grand river, about seven miles above Moab, Utah, the steamer Undine was totally wrecked and the captain and two men narrowly escaped drowning in the swift current. The steamer Undine had the distinction of being the only steamer to be set afloat on the Grand river above the cañon. . . . it was only recently that it was decided to inaugurate a service between Moab and Cisco." The steamboat "City of Moab" had successfully navigated the Green and Grand rivers from Green River, Utah, on the Denver & Rio Grande Western to the Moab area.*

The byway ends at U.S. Highway 191, three miles north of Moab. Here the western branch of the 1830s Spanish Trail from Santa Fe to Los Angeles crossed the Colorado River. An 1885 ferry, then a bridge, provided a river crossing for travelers and freight between Thompson, thirty miles north of the Denver & Rio Grande Western, and much of southeastern Utah.

## Potash-Lower Colorado Scenic Byway

Utah Highway 259 west of Moab, the Potash-Lower Colorado River Scenic Byway, follows the Colorado River for seventeen miles. At the end of the maintained road, jeep roads lead into Canyonlands National Park.

Dead Horse Point State Park offers a spectacular view of the Colorado River as it heads south into the maze of canyons that is Canyonlands National Park. The road into "The Island in the Sky District" of the national park provides glimpses of both the Colorado and Green rivers as they flow toward their confluence. Grand View Point Overlook, at the south end of this road, is eight miles north of the confluence. Charles H. Dimmock, with the Macomb expedition, noted: "*Across the chasm of the Grand River, over a country deeply serrated by cañons penetrating in all directions, whose valleys the rays of a meridian sun alone can reach, & whose intricacies can be only seen by the bird and aeronaut, the cañon of the Green River opens its ponderous and stone jaws.*"

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# Over the Corral Rail

*Compiled by Ed Bathke, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ed. Deadline is the 10<sup>th</sup> of the first month in the date of publication.*

## Westerner Fall Presentations

In October at the Boulder County Corral of Westerners, Denver Posse member Bob Lane presented “Colorado Sails the Oceans in the Nineteenth Century.” Bob described how steamships helped shape our nation and resulted in the United States becoming the strongest nation in the world. Ships named “Colorado” were highlighted. In November Boulder Corral founding member Jay Fell presented “100 Years Up High: Colorado Mountains and Mountaineers.” Jay and four co-authors developed a history of twentieth-century mountaineering in Colorado, to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Colorado Mountain Club in 2012. Their efforts are published, the title being the same as his talk.

Colorado Corral presentations were: in October, Dick Kreck’s “Denver in Flames”; in November, Catherine Spude’s “That Fiend in Hell,” based on her recently published book by that title, and telling the story of Soapy Smith in Alaska; and in December, Gail Beaton’s “Colorado Women: a History,” being a synopsis of her book by that title, published by the University Press of Colorado this year.

In Colorado Springs in October, the Pikes Peak Posse heard posse member Tom Van Wormer tell about “The History of Ice Production in the Tri Lakes Area,” documenting early ice houses in Colorado, especially

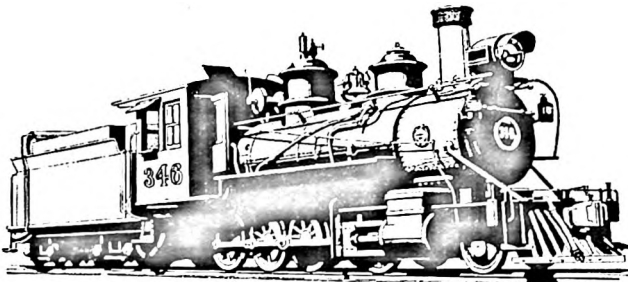
related to the Colorado Midland Railway. Curator of History Leah Davis Witherow, of the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum, presented "Courthouse Controversy: the History of the 1903 El Paso County Courthouse," to the posse in November.

## Denver Posse Doings

Jeff Broome spoke before the Ellis County Historical Society on December 1. In recognition of Jeff's research, documentation, and promotion of central Kansas pioneer history, Hays City Mayor Troy Hickman proclaimed December 1 as "Jeff Broome Day."

## New Hand on the Range

At the October meeting of the Denver Westerners, Dr. Jack Ballard was elected to membership in the Active Posse. Jack has a PhD in history from UCLA, and served as an Associate Professor of History at the U. S. Air Force Academy from 1964 to 1969. He retired as a lieutenant colonel after a 27-year career in the Air Force. Jack has authored five books on military history, as well as numerous articles. He is a member of several historical organizations, including the Friends of Historic Fort Logan, for whom he was the primary author in their recent Arcadia publication on the history of the fort. In September he presented "The U. S. Army in Denver: Colonel Henry C. Merriam and Fort Logan" to the Westerners. We welcome this valuable





member to the Active Posse of the Westerners.

**Max Smith (July 11, 1933 - November 25, 2012)**

With great sadness, we report that Max Smith recently passed away.

Max was a very active member of the Westerners. He was Sheriff of this organization, and was involved in many committees, including the Rosenstock Award Committee. He received the Fred Rosenstock Lifetime Achievement Award for his work in starting the Littleton Historical Museum, for writing historical plays depicting events that affected Colorado, and for his support of the various activities of the Westerners.

Max was a wonderful artist. He, along with his brothers Wayne and Dale, had an art shop in Heritage Square called the Smith Brothers Trading Post. Max drew beautiful charcoal sketches of historic sites in the West. His artwork is found on note pads, decorative rocks, sweatshirts and baseball caps. There are very few places in Littleton that one would go and not find some of his artwork. Many of his sketches are in the 1995 Denver Westerners *Fiftieth-Anniversary Brand Book*.

Max and his brothers did a presentation to the Westerners on the old ranches of Douglas County. Published in the Jan-Feb 1990 issue of the *Roundup*, it was well researched and well received by the Posse.

Max loved to produce and direct theatrical shows in the area. He had a show on Littleton Cable TV in which he would interview people of interest. Another very popular show, he did at Riverfront in Littleton was a takeoff on *The Prairie Home Companion*. He liked that because it allowed him to display many talents of people as the script could be adapted to various types of performers.

He was a playwright. Two of his most noteworthy plays were *The Orphan Train* and *The Ludlow Massacre*. These were performed many times, including a performance of *The Orphan Train* at the Denver Westerners' Summer Rendezvous, August 2005. There are a number of instances where people would come to him after seeing one of these plays and explain that they had a relative that was in one of those events.

Max was instrumental in creating a group of historically interested people

called *The Old Forts Society*. This group, which was part of the *Friends of Littleton Library and Museum*, traveled to old historic forts in Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas and even Washington, D.C.

One of the shows that he liked the most was called *Fiasco*. It was a spoof on the activities and people in Littleton that included politicians, school board members, sheriffs, newspaper publishers and anyone else that affected the everyday life in the community. Needless to say, because of the humor and sarcasm, it had an effect of causing the egos of many notable people to become more centered. These performances, which had to be rewritten every year, also had beautiful music and choreography. Max sang, danced and wrote many parts of these shows but, more importantly, he directed many of these.

Anything Max attempted to do, he did well.

--Ken Pitman, P.M.

