



The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

January - February 2014



Courtesy Verald Easterly

Lewis Easterly at 75th reunion of the Civil
War at Gettysburg, PA in 1938

**By An Act of Congress
by Bob Easterly, C.M.
(Presented October 23, 2013)**



Our Author

Bob Easterly was born in Gunnison, Colorado and has a deep love and respect for the history of the Western Slope. His early years were spent on ranches around the state. After college, he was commissioned in the Navy and retired with the rank of Captain in 1996. He was a senior officer in two of Denver's pioneer financial institutions. He joined the Posse in 2004. Following a passion for sailing, Bob and his wife Linda enjoyed traveling the Florida Gulf coast for a number of years, and just recently returned to Colorado full time.

THE DENVER WESTERNERS

ROUNDUP

VOL. LXX NO. 1



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The *ROUNDUP* (ISSN #2078-7970) is published bi-monthly by the Denver Posse of Westerners, Inc., founded Jan. 25, 1945. Subscription is included with a paid-up membership. (Corresponding membership is \$25 yearly, due Jan. 1) Submission of manuscripts is encouraged, but publication cannot be guaranteed. Illustrations are the responsibility of the author. Manuscripts must be submitted electronically, PC format. All copy is subject to revision and/or correction at the editor's discretion. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy of content, but such accuracy is the ultimate responsibility of the author. Periodical postage is paid at Denver, CO. *ROUNDUP* layout and pre-press by Jim Krebs, 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220. Printed by Oran V. Siler Printing Company, Denver, CO

POSTMASTER: Send address changes for *ROUNDUP* to 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220

**By An Act of Congress
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I am going to share with you the story of Lewis Easterly, a fifer in the Union Army of the United States. I won't dwell on the War Between the States because he was involved for only a short time. Rather it is the tale of his life from the time he was a Jackson County, Illinois farm boy through his pioneer ranching days in Gunnison County, Colorado. And I'll relate some incredible coincidences that I uncovered.

When I was a youngster, I saw pictures of a very distinguished looking gentleman seated on a beautiful white stallion, in some kind of uniform. But I never paid much attention since I did not know who he was.

Lewis Henry Easterly wasn't famous, rich or politically or religiously powerful – just an ordinary man who experienced some pretty amazing events in his lifetime. I submit that Lewis and the many unsung pioneers deserve some recognition as has been accorded William Byers, David Moffat, General William Palmer, Governor Evans, the Boettcher, Tabor and Bonfils families and many others. Not taking anything away from them, but it was

the common man that did the work to make their dreams come true.

Lewis was born November 17, 1851 near Murphysboro in southwestern Illinois at Dr. John Logan's home, the oldest of eight children of Philip and Sarah Jones Easterly.¹ His mother came from Ohio, his father from Tennessee. I got a copy of their marriage certificate from the Illinois Archives, and discovered that it was signed by Dr. John Logan's son and (later General) John A. Logan, County Clerk for Jackson County before he began his climb in the national political arena.²

Until very recently, the original family farm located south of Murphysboro, IL was still in family hands. I was saddened to learn that the property was sold for development and the stones have been removed. So goes history.

Lewis grew up as most typical farm kids did -- working in the barnyards and fields. But in July 1861, when Lewis was eight years old, a watershed event began to develop. His uncle, David Jones, was hired to take a herd of horses to Fort Defiance at Cairo, Illinois, about seventy-five miles away. The horses



Courtesy Verald Easterly

**Alderly Ranch - Lewis Easterly's homestead on Ohio Creek,
Gunnison County, CO**

were destined for the Union Army, in response to a call from President Lincoln for volunteers and supplies to defend the United States from the Confederate States of America. Lewis was sent along, although the reason and the circumstances have unfortunately been lost to history.

Cairo, Illinois was considered by many military strategists as second only to Washington, D.C. in importance to the Union.³ Fort Defiance is located at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Had the Confederacy been able to control that crucial junction, the West was wide open for occupation.

And the Yankees had stockpiled a large amount of supplies and ammunition at the chokepoint.

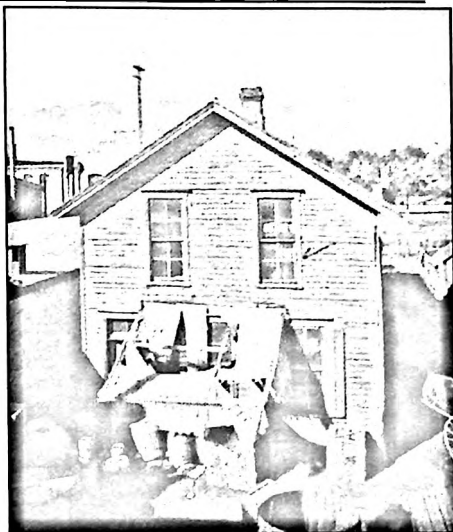
At the end of July 1861, the ranks of Ninth Illinois Volunteer Infantry, the unit that was guarding the fort, had been severely depleted when the initial three-month enlistment expired.⁴

Fortunately many of the officers and soldiers stayed on and actively recruited to fill their decimated ranks as well as guard the materiel staged there. When the horse delivery was made, the Ninth approached David about joining up. He was a healthy twenty-year-old

and their efforts were very persuasive. But what to do with this eight-year-old tag along? He's too young to fight — have to be sixteen, sort of. Can't send him home alone and we can't spare anyone to get him home. Solution — put him in the band — make him a fifer. So on August 1, 1861, Lewis became a Union soldier in Company G of the Ninth Illinois Volunteer Infantry. And the fife remains in family hands, unfortunately not my hands.

Lewis's band leader was Major Warren Young Jenkins and he got the boy outfitted with a uniform and instrument. Life in Fort Defiance was pretty dismal. As Jenkins later described it in personal correspondence with Lewis, it was built on a swamp, the pumps failed to clear the water seeping in from the river banks, the food was awful, and rats were everywhere.⁵ Camp life was not what these young men anticipated, but the war was not expected to last too long, so they, like most soldiers, just sucked it up. But things were moving fast and the Ninth would be there only a month.

As the war effort intensified, the politics of command surfaced and the maneuvering brought forth an interesting cast of characters. A former Mexican War captain whose reputation had been quite good, but who was recently a failure at everything else he did, including farming

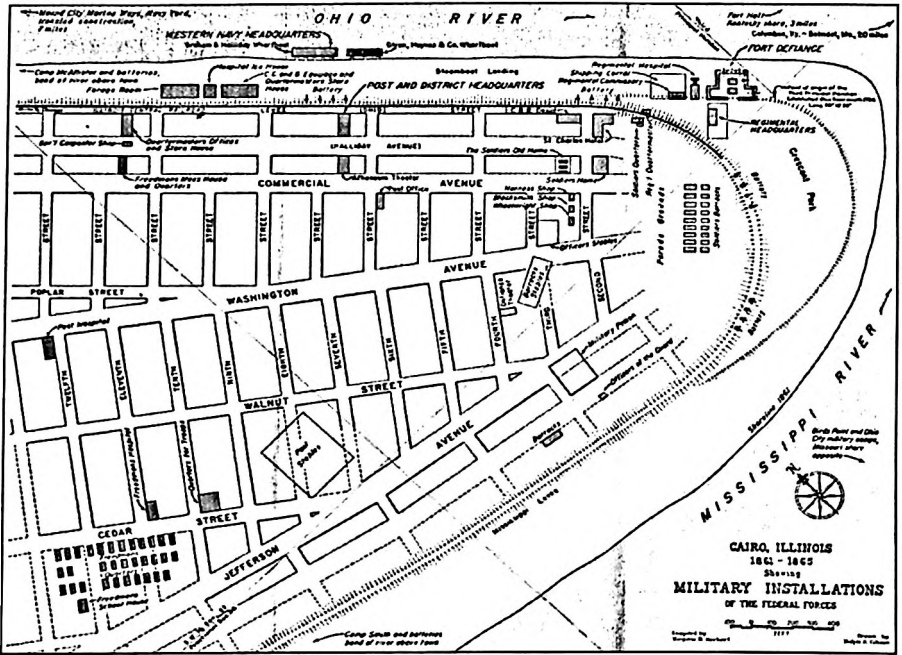


Courtesy Verald Easterly

Mangold & Easterly Laundry, Colorado Springs, CO

and as a salesman in his father's leather goods store, was chosen to lead the Ninth Illinois among other units and eventually commanded the entire Western Army.⁶ Ulysses S. Grant was appointed Brigadier General and Commander of the Army of the Tennessee and John A. Logan was appointed a general on Grant's staff. General Logan was the same individual who had signed Lewis's parents' marriage license, and the man for whom our own Fort Logan was named, although he died before it was established. (More of him later.)

Grant learned of a plot by the Confederate Army to occupy



Courtesy Custom House Museum, Cairo, IL

Fort Defiance, Cairo, IL

Kentucky in violation of a neutrality agreement.⁷ He moved the soldiers to Paducah, Kentucky in early September and established his headquarters at the Grace Episcopal Church. Camped on the church grounds above the Ohio River, life was probably a little better there. During the fall of 1861 Grant planned his assault to the south, intending to go all the way to New Orleans.

Lewis was involved in at least two battles – at Eddyville and Saratoga, Kentucky.⁸ As a fifer, he played the marches as the men went

into battle, and once the shooting began he would be pressed into carrying the wounded and dead from the battlefield to makeshift hospitals. On both sides of the conflict about 250 boys are known to have served, and several paid the ultimate price.⁹ Fortunately, Lewis was spared.

General Grant's battle plan solidified in January 1862 and in February he planned to move the troops up the Tennessee River by transport vessels to take Forts Henry and Heiman and Donelson south of Paducah.¹⁰ Uncle David must have had a premonition and asked his

colonel, Augustus Mersey, to send Lewis home. The colonel agreed that the boy had seen enough action and discharged him verbally on February 6, 151 years ago.¹¹

Sadly, the check that David made payable to the United States of America up to and including his life was cashed in the Peach Orchard at Shiloh on Easter Sunday two months later.¹²

Lewis eventually returned home, and under the guidance and mentoring of his cousin and best friend James Porter Easterly, Lewis became a teacher in southwestern Illinois and taught in several area schools including one in Grand Tower. He gained a number of other skills during this period including carpentry, surveying and was elected to a town clerk position. Oh yes, along the way he met a pretty young schoolmarm from Pennsylvania, Cynthia Husband. Her great-grandfather was Herman Husband, a patriot on two fronts before and during the Revolution.¹³

Cousin Port, as he was known, soon moved west to Colorado and got elected El Paso County Superintendent of Schools. The county needed teachers, so Porter invited Lewis to come on out. Lewis initially boarded with the Gideon Pratt family at their ranch on what is today State Highway 83 in south-

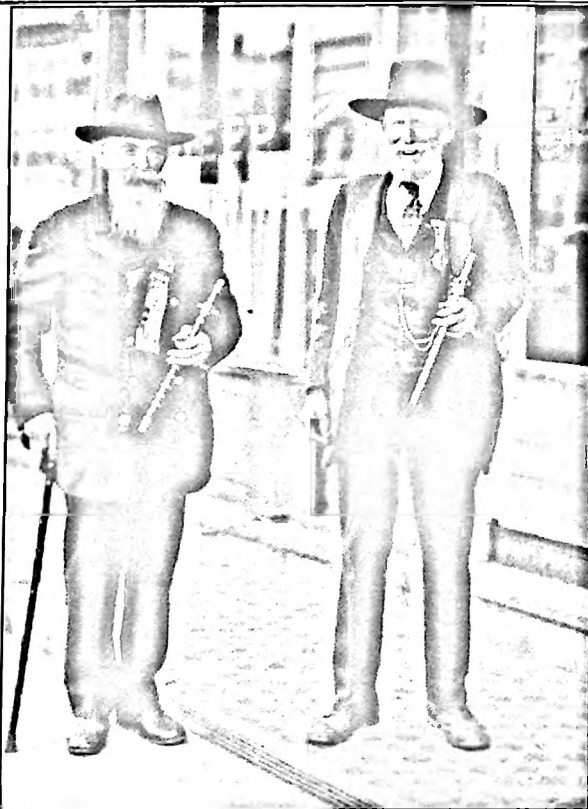


Courtesy Verald Easterly

Lewis Easterly at 75th reunion of the Civil War at Gettysburg, PA in 1938

eastern Douglas County. In the fall of 1878 he got a contract to teach at what the El Paso School District called the Pring School on Teachout Creek at the northeast corner of the U.S. Air Force Academy north of Colorado Springs.

Lewis's records reflect that it was the Borstville School.¹⁴ The school was located at a railroad wayside called Borstville, named for William W. Borst who was a Superintendent for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad and a Director of the German National Bank in Denver¹⁵. Borstville amounted to a depot and the schoolhouse just



Courtesy Verald Easterly

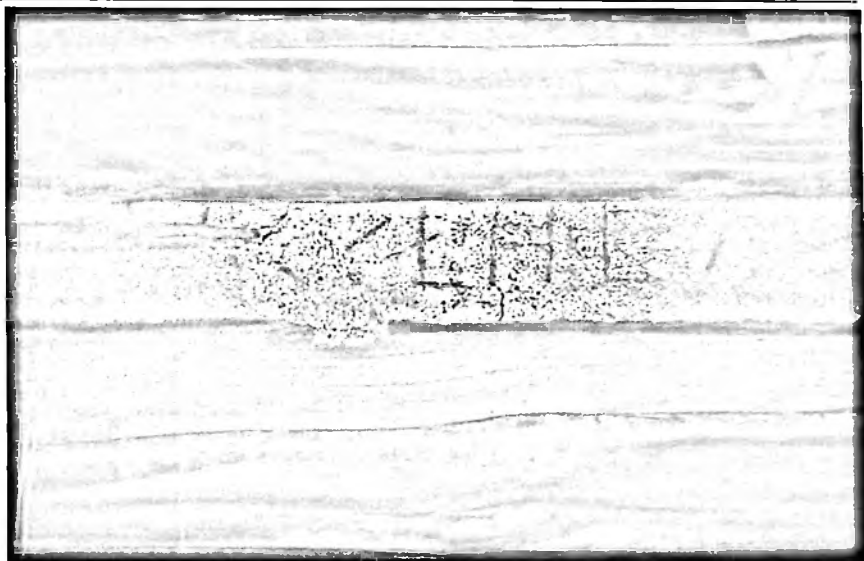
Major Warren Jenkins and Lewis Easterly in Boulder, CO in 1929

south of Monument. He also taught at the Pratt, Rich Valley and Spring Hill Schools in Douglas County, and earned his room and board doing chores for the Pratt, Teachout and Barker families. Amazingly the Spring Hill School, just north of County Line Road and west of Highway 83, still stands today as a private summer residence.

In May 1880 Lewis was finished with his school term but hired

on to drive a freight wagon across five mountain passes to a place called Gunnison.¹⁶ His landlord, the Teachouts, saw an opportunity to cash in on the freight business hauling supplies to the new mining areas of western Colorado, and so Lewis became a teamster.

The route from Colorado Springs took the wagons over Ute and Wilkerson passes through South Park to Hartsell and over Trout



Courtesy Judy Buffington Sammons

Lewis Easterly's initials carved in homestead walls

Creek Pass into the Arkansas Valley near Buena Vista. They turned south past the Angel of Shavano and summited Poncha Pass, resting at Villa Grove. The final leg was by the toll road built by Otto Mears over Cochetopa Pass, today known as North Pass.¹⁷ It must have been a bit unnerving as the group headed down Cochetopa past the recently abandoned Los Piños Agency from which the Ute nation had been “relocated.”

After twelve days the freight wagons reached Gunnison, barely a tent city then. The hastily-built earthen barricades were still visible – erected to protect the town

from a feared Indian attack stemming from the Meeker Massacre.¹⁸ The Teachout family had already filed homestead claims on land north of town on Ohio Creek and they encouraged Lewis to take a look at the area. He found a piece of ground next to theirs and thought this might be a good place to invest. So he went quickly back to town and filed a timber claim on 160 acres.

That summer Allen Teachout hired Lewis to build a cabin on his adjoining property. It was also the summer that he saw his former Commander in Chief, Ulysses S. Grant. Grant had just completed his around-the-world junket fol-

lowing his two terms as President. He stopped in Colorado to see a “rip-roaring mining camp” and arrangements were made to get him to Crested Butte and Irwin north of Gunnison. An assassination plot was uncovered in Irwin—seems a few of the former Confederates had not forgotten the war. The plot was put down and Grant stayed two nights instead of one. On his way back to Gunnison, Grant drove his wagon down the Ohio Creek valley.¹⁹ That day, Lewis had gone down to the creek to fetch water, and as he climbed up the bank he saw a wagon coming down the road and recognized the driver. He waved the wagon down and sure enough, it was President Grant. They talked for forty-five minutes about the war, fishing and other things. Lewis wanted to be hospitable so he offered the President a glass of buttermilk. Since he and the Teachouts were tea-totalers that was the only liquid refreshment available. Grant reportedly thanked Lewis for his kindness but one might suspect that he would have appreciated something else.

As I mentioned Lewis filed a Timber Culture on his 160 acres, rather than the usual Homestead claim. He figured out that it was cheaper -- \$14 instead of \$16, and it was somewhat easier to prove up.²⁰ The main requirement in securing a Timber claim was to plow five

acres of the plot and plant trees on it within the first year. He didn't have time to do the plowing and planting that summer, but he knew he had to do something to prove his “forester” intent. Lewis returned to Illinois that fall and gathered a bag of walnuts around the family farm, sent them to his Colorado neighbor Allen Teachout and asked him to plant the nuts for him. I can tell you there are NO walnut trees on that property today, and I doubt that any ever grew there. Massive crop failure, I guess.

By this time Cynthia had moved closer to Colorado and was teaching in Salina, Kansas. I imagine Lewis stopped there on his way back to Illinois and they planned their wedding. They were married the following year in September 1881 and came to Colorado by railroad, not covered wagon, seeking fortune and a new life together. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad was running then from Salina to Pueblo.

Somehow, they found themselves in Colorado Springs. Another mystery in the life of Lewis is how they got into the laundry business. They both had good educations and connections, as Porter was still in the Colorado Springs school district. Their first daughter Sara was born in this building on South Tejon Street which housed their business. In the spring of 1883, they sold the laundry



New Fairview School

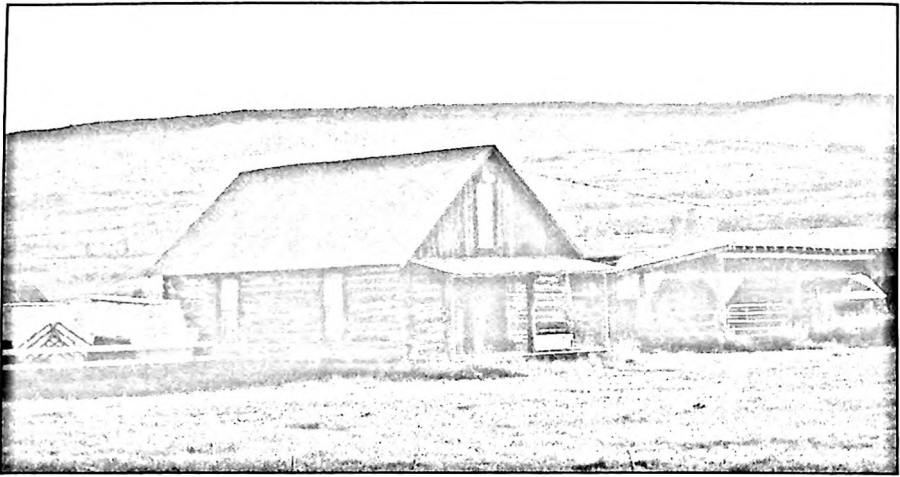
Author's collection

due competition and moved on to Gunnison. They initially rented the Teachout cabin that Lewis built in 1880, as Teachouts had built a large new hotel in Gunnison and moved into town.

Lewis got right to work on his own dwelling. Just as he finished it, an "opportunity" presented itself. A neighbor up the valley had completed seminary and had been called to serve as pastor in the local Baptist Church. Because he had leased out his own ranch, he needed a place to live. He approached Lewis about staying in his new home. Coincidentally, Lewis was in the process of trying to acquire another eighty

acres next to his Timber claim with a Homestead claim, but he couldn't abandon the original claim or it would be taken by someone else. The deal was done on a handshake, but I'll bet the conversation around the dinner table in the small, crowded Teachout cabin got a bit heated. It all worked out and Lewis eventually moved his family in.²¹ He named his ranch Alderly, although the family does not know or remember why. Another mystery.

When the home was remodeled several years back, a number of the original walls were found intact. During the remodeling, the con-



Original Fairview School built in 1886

Author's collection

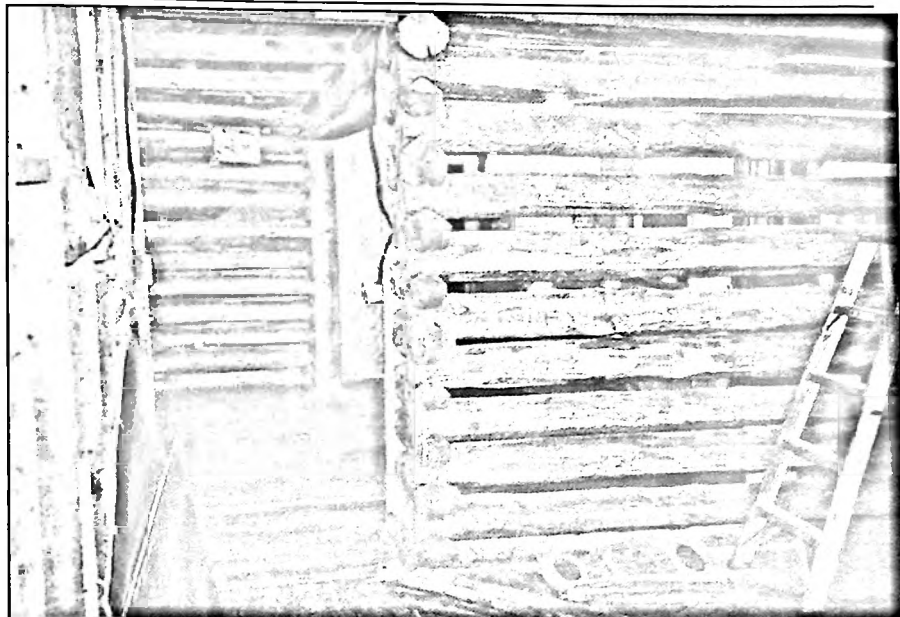
tractor found Lewis had carved his initials in the mortar when he built it.

Lewis had apparently put the war behind him and he never referred to it in his personal journals.²² Perhaps the most amazing coincidence that I found in this journey occurred on Decoration Day, 1900. Decoration Day (now Memorial Day) was formalized in 1868 to honor the Civil War dead by John A. Logan when he was Grand Army of the Republic National Commander.²³ Lewis walked the seven miles into town (he never drove and seldom rode a horse) to watch the local parade. There naturally was a Grand Army Band in the line of march so Lewis paid particular attention. And in the band was his old Fife Major, Warren Jenkins, who had also

moved to Gunnison.²⁴ Thirty-eight years after they had parted, the two old soldiers reunited in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado on a holiday set aside by one of their leaders. It must have been quite an exciting discovery for both of them. The old Illinois connections kept coming back.

Jenkins asked Lewis if he ever got a discharge. Lewis said no, but never bothered much about it. As a result he was denied admission to the Grand Army of the Republic since he could not prove his service, but he had a lot of other things going on with raising a family, ranching and getting involved in the community.

Raising cattle and hay to feed them was the main occupa-



Courtesy Judy Buffington Sammons

Original homestead cabin walls still standing

tion of the ranchers on Ohio Creek. Haying was a hard, dirty, itchy job. A cabin that was the summer home for cowboys who stayed with the herds when they were on the high ranges still stands in the Anthracite Range at the north end of the Ohio Creek valley. It once belonged to my family and is now owned by Judy Buffington Sammons. Lewis's homestead was sold in the 1940s to her grandparents and she grew up on the main ranch.

Because of their backgrounds, Lewis and Cynthia intended their offspring to have good educations. The picture shows the origi-

nal Fairview School, built in 1886 just up the road from the homestead. Lewis helped finish the construction of this one-room building. When it was replaced after a few years, Lewis convinced the School Board to give it to him and he and his sons rolled it on logs about a half mile down the road to his place. It is still on the ranch and a few of us would like to get it preserved and moved to the Gunnison Pioneer Museum. Lewis was Secretary of the Fairview School for over fifty years and most old timers knew it simply as "The Easterly School."²⁵ Also shown is the "new" Fairview School. Daughter Sara taught there, sons LeVan

*Author's collection*

Spring Hill School, Douglas County, CO

and David attended there, as well as my father. The building serves today as a community center for the Ohio Creek ranchers and was restored about ten years ago with the help of French architecture students.

As Lewis's family matured, he began turning over the day-to-day operation of his ranching to his sons. And he became more and more active in the Gunnison area. He was a founding member of the Gunnison County Stockgrower's Association, serving as Secretary for many years and eventually as President. He was appointed to the county's Good Roads Committee, joined the Ancient Order of United Workmen

and ran for County Treasurer on the Populist Party ticket in 1893. Always interested in telling about or making history, he was founder of the Gunnison County Historical Society – winner of the Posse's prestigious Rosenstock Award two years ago. In 1932, he was made a Gunnison County Deputy Sheriff, but I suspect that was more a ceremonial appointment than anything else due to his age – 81.

In 1921, Cynthia died and Lewis was without portfolio. By then he had sold the ranch to his sons. On his way to or from Pueblo to help his brother deal with the devastating effects of the flood that

year, circumstance or coincidence led him to Warren Jenkins again. They talked and decided to try to finally get Lewis recognized as a Civil War veteran.²⁶

They began by writing letters to the State of Illinois, then to the U.S. Army, and finally to the President.²⁷ Since the band rolls were destroyed or captured at the Battle of Shiloh, there was no official record that Lewis had served. When the rolls were reconstructed, Lewis was long gone and forgotten. Letters were sent to the few surviving members of the Ninth Illinois who might remember Lewis. No good luck in that effort.

Finally, taking a cue from some other soldiers, appeals were sent to the local Congressional delegation. The first appeal went to Congressman Guy Hardy who represented Fremont County, Jenkins's home of record as he was living in Cañon City. Hardy sidestepped the issue by referring it to Congressman Edward Taylor. The pair lobbied Taylor as well at Senators Lawrence Phipps and Alva Adams. Taylor and Phipps did the heavy lifting, introducing bills in Congress to get the records corrected. For the first several years the proposed legislation never got out of Committee, but eventually they prevailed.

On April 21, 1928 they succeeded in getting Private Act No. 79 of the 70th Congress passed which gave Lewis Henry Easterly an honorable discharge from United States Army.²⁸ Sixty-six years after the fact! A year later he was awarded a \$50-a-month pension but no back pay in House Resolution Private Act 456. The final piece of evidence was a handwritten note in Jenkins' personal diary recording Lewis having joined his unit in August of 1861. Here are the two old warriors in 1929 in Boulder, probably the final time they were together. Jenkins would pass away not long afterwards.

With discharge in hand, Lewis quickly became involved at the local, state and national levels of the Grand Army of the Republic. He was welcomed enthusiastically, probably because he was a relative "youngster." Lewis traveled to many of the national encampments.²⁹ He attended the 75th anniversary reunion in Gettysburg in 1938, the only time the Blue and Gray met again. A very brief clip of him attending that reunion appeared in Ken Burn's PBS Civil War documentary.³⁰

In 1939 the United Confederate Veterans held their only reunion outside of the South in Trinidad.³¹ Deep resentment remained between the North and the South, and the National GAR Chaplain,

who was from Colorado, attempted to dissuade Governor Ralph Carr from providing any financial help to defray the cost of hosting the event. Governor Carr told the group that the war was over and allocated \$7,000 of the \$12,000 requested. The former rebels invited the national GAR commander to the reunion, but he was unable to attend. Lewis had just been elected Commander of the Colorado and Wyoming so he filled in and had a wonderful time.

Also that year he led the GAR parade as Grand Marshall in Pittsburgh on the Mayor's beautiful white stallion. That's the picture I had seen as a boy. In 1941 he was caught by a local newspaper photographer drumming at the 75th Encampment in Columbus, Ohio.

Lewis became an incorrigible story teller in later life. He told one writer in Boulder in 1941 that he was at the Battle of Shiloh and saw Clara Barton run between the Yankee and Rebel lines during a cease fire.³² Neither he nor Ms. Barton were at Shiloh, although she did enter a battlefield a few years later. And he said that he was at the Battle of Muddy River in Illinois when he returned home. I can no evidence that there was a Civil War battle fought in Illinois. In later years one of his delights was a walk into Gunnison in uniform to regale students about his experiences during the war.

One of Lewis's additional duties as GAR Department Commander was serving on the board of the Old Soldiers Home in the San Luis Valley. He was perhaps interested in the operation of this facility since he was a prospective resident. In the winter of 1943, Governor Vivian called a meeting of the board in Denver, so Lewis rode the train over the mountains. Upon returning home, as he left the train he became disoriented in a blizzard and it was six hours later that he was found. He contracted pneumonia but was never able to shake it and he passed away in July, ten years short of his goal to live to 100.

But he had a quite a life as a soldier, educator, rancher, father, pioneer. On Memorial Day, 2004, the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War recognized Lewis as the last surviving veteran in Gunnison County of that terrible conflict.

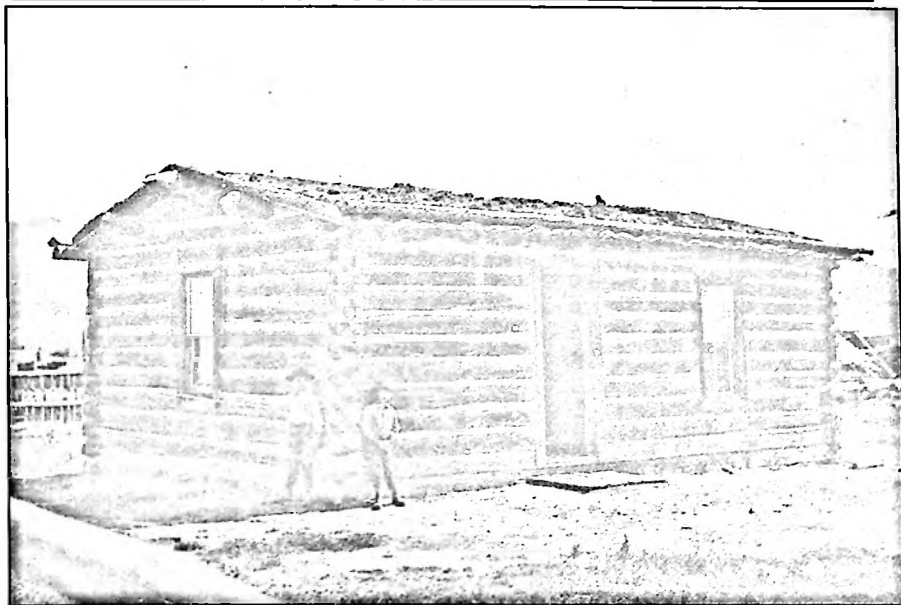
Endnotes

¹ Philip Easterly, *Easterly Family History*, (unpublished, 1884).

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³ William A Pitkin, *The Cairo Rendezvous* (Southern Illinois University).

⁴ The Illinois USGenWeb Project, 9th



Courtesy Gunnison County Historical Museum

Allen Teachout cabin built by Lewis Easterly in 1880, Ohio Creek, Gunnison County, CO

Illinois Infantry History, Adjutant General's Report (<http://illinoisgenweb.org>, 1997).

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⁹ Jay S Hoar, *The North's Last Boys*

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¹⁸ Duane Vandenbusche, *The Gunnison Country* (Gunnison, CO: B & B Printers, 1980) p. 28.

¹⁹ Robert L. Brown, "The Celebrated Grand Tour of Ulysses S. Grant" in *The Denver Westerners Monthly ROUNDUP*, April 1969).

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²¹ Op. Cit., David H. Easterly.

²² Op. Cit., Lewis H. Easterly.

²³ General John A. Logan's Memorial Day Order (<http://suvvw.org/logan.htm>).

²⁴ Op. Cit., David H. Easterly.

²⁵ Noraetta Piatt Rockwell, *The Early History of Gunnison County, Colorado Schools* (Unpublished Master's Degree thesis, Western

State College, 1953).

²⁶ John Alden, "The Helping Hand at Pueblo" in *The Rotarian*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, September 1921.

²⁷ Original correspondence of the parties involved owned by the author.

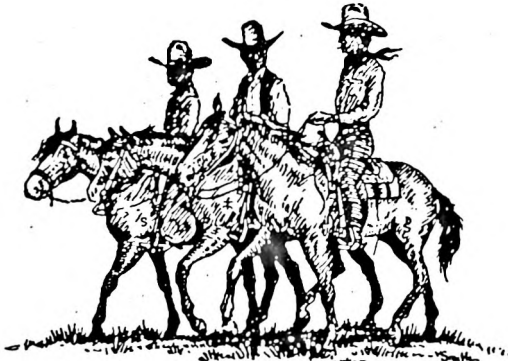
²⁸ *The Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, Vol. XLV, Part 2, pp 1723, 2344-2345.

²⁹ Official programs of the Grand Army of the Republic for the years recorded owned by the author.

³⁰ Ken Burns, "The Civil War," Disk Four, Public Broadcasting Service, 2004, DVD.

³¹ Ronnie T. Clemmons, "Away Out West in Dixie" in *Confederate Veteran*, July-August 1989, p. 24-33.

³² Forrest Crossen, "Git Thar Eli" in *Western Yesterdays, Vol. III* (Boulder, CO: Boulder Publishing, Inc., 1965) p 1,2, and 43.



Over the Corral Rail

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

Westerners mourn the loss of longtime member Eugene John Rakosnik

Gene John Rakosnik, a longtime member, sheriff (1986) and winner of the Denver Posse of Westerners 1998 Rosenstock Lifetime Achievement Award, passed away January 31, 2014.

Born to a Czech farming family in Pawnee City, Nebraska in 1935, Gene studied geology at the University of Nebraska. While a student, Gene worked at the Nebraska Book Company. In 1962 he moved to Denver to become part owner-manager of Bargain Book Store, at 15th Street and Tremont Place. Bargain Books had branch college stores at Metropolitan State College of Denver, Arapahoe Community College, Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and the College of Santa Fe.



Gene became famous for fair book prices, his amiable nature, trademark grey Stetson, and a novel marketing approach combining shelves of new and used books by subject. Bibliophiles and book dealers alike appreciated his knowledge and love of Western Americana. In 1968, his peers elected him president of the Colorado Booksellers Association, which has evolved into today's Mountain and Plains Independent Booksellers Association.

In 1975, Gene sold Bargain Books and opened his own shop, Page One, in the Goldsmith Shopping Center at 8000 E. Quincy Ave., followed by two years with Chapter One Books at 1645 Welton Street. He also began working as a carpenter, employing "basic skills I learned on the farm from my dad." In 1978 he established Gene's Woodworking, a one-man carpentry firm that specialized in custom bookshelves, cabinets, kitchens, bathrooms and furniture.

Fred Rosenstock introduced Gene to the Denver Westerners in 1962 and he became a posse member in 1972. Gene celebrated by treating the everyone to drinks and dinner at the Golden Ox but his fine example has not been followed since. As the September 1972 *Roundup* put it, "Posse member Gene Rakosnik, in an unprecedented move of good will, underwrote the entire cost of the evening for all concerned."

Gene not only fed the Denver Westerners, he also made the plaques awarded to speakers from 1975 to 1996. In 1978, he edited the *Roundup*. Gene served as the Denver Posse's longtime liaison with Westerners International, of which he was Vice President. After the death of Fred Rosenstock in 1985, Gene worked with the Rosenstock family to establish the Rosenstock \$1,000 Prize for organizations making outstanding contributions to Colorado and Rocky Mountain History and also a Lifetime Achievement Award for distinguished Westerners.

Gene and his wife Shirley have two daughters, Lonna and Ann, three sons, Dean, Wayne, and Robert, and eight grandchildren, Kevin, Joshua, Joseph, Brittany, Billy, Jeremiah, Jennifer and Hunter. He also left behind six great grandchildren with one still on the way. Many Westerners probably share the sentiments of Gene's grandson, Kevin: "My grandfather is more than a great man, he is a great friend, someone who listens, who I call tell my secrets to safely."

-Tom Noel, P.M.



Gene Rakosnik, left, makes one of his many presentations at the Westerners, this one to Bob Terwilleger for lifetime achievement

The Denver Westerners gains many new members to the Posse in 2013

In 2013, the Posse was pleased to welcome the following new corresponding members: in February, Dick Cavenah (Arvada), and Dick Hayes (Denver); in March, Debra Faulkner (Thornton); in May, Tom Morton (Denver); in June, Mary Jane Bradbury (Denver); in July, Steve Lee (Arvada); and in August, a total of four, Al Frank (Wheat Ridge), Bob Audretsch (Lakewood), David Wood (Fort Morgan), and John Gordon (Twin Lakes). Please add your personal welcomes as you meet these new members at our meetings. All new members are encouraged to seek out the officers if they have questions concerning the operation of, and membership in, the Westerners (information on membership in the posse was included in an *Over the Corral Rail* column last year).

January Westerner Programs

Starting off the new year, the Boulder County Corral of Westerners heard Denver Westerners member Bob Audretsch present "Shaping the Park and Saving the Boys: The CCC at Grand Canyon, 1933-1942." Bob's fine program was also presented to the Denver Posse in January. For more information on this subject, we recommend Audretsch's book, titled the same as his program.

The Colorado Corral program, "City Beautiful 2.0," was presented by Kris Christensen, of the department of Geography and Environmental Sciences at University of Colorado, Denver. Kris talked about the preservation and revival of the City Beautiful Movement from the time of Mayor Federico Pena to the construction of the Ralph L. Carr Colorado Judicial Center.

The Pikes Peak Posse also drew upon a Denver Posse member for its January program. Bob Easterly presented "By Act of Congress: Lewis Easterly is recognized," featuring his great-grandfather's Civil War experiences, followed by his family history in the Gunnison area and other Colorado locales.



Westerners Bookshelf



Riding Lucifer's Line. Ranger Deaths Along the Texas-Mexico Border, by Alexander, Bob. University of North Texas Press, Denton, 2013, 404 pages. Photos, bibliography, endnotes, index, hardback, \$29.95.

Riding Lucifer's Line is a collection of the stories of the deaths of twenty-five Texas Rangers who were killed in the line of Duty along the Rio Grande between 1875 to 1921. Bob Alexander was a professional Lawman with over forty years of service, and the author of several books on similar subjects. Beginning with the account of seventeen-year-old Sonny Smith in a fight with Mexican Bandits in 1875, Alexander devotes a colorful chapter to each of these Rangers, with colorful being the operative word. Despite the drama contained in the accounts of their deaths, he amplifies the stories with what this reviewer found to be excessive use of often bizarre metaphors and dramatically stylized language. Some of it is amusing, some of it amplifies the stories, and some of it is just plain annoying.

The vast majority of these deaths occurred at the hands of Mexican bandits, cattle and horse thieves, or vengeful villains, who ambushed the Rangers over and over again. All too often, two rangers, maybe with a local sheriff alongside, were tracking stolen horses and cattle and simply ran into a setup where usually one of them was killed. There followed a posse of locals who tried to beat the gangs to the border, usually without success. Many of these murders went unpunished, though sometimes the Rangers overstepped the line by killing rather than capturing a wanted man. This usually produced further attacks upon the Rangers.

Sometimes the problems were amplified by Mexican Revolutionaries, such as Pancho Villa, who purchased large numbers of smuggled weapons from the American side. There was also a number of Mexicans who held a grudge for the loss of Texas, and looked for opportunities to settle the score. Alexander is, however, very fair in his account of what happened, and will blame the Rangers when they were at fault.

Surprisingly, the worst years were 1915-1919 when no less than nine rangers were killed, much of this the byproduct of smuggling on top of the usual cattle and horse theft. And then it settled down; the last Ranger to be killed was Joseph B. Buchanan in 1921. By that time, police techniques had improved enormously, along with communications and transportation. Yet,

the Rio Grande border remains a relatively dangerous place up to our present times.

Alexander brings his experience in law enforcement to bear in these accounts, though sometimes the materials are scant and sources limited. His focus on the family background of the Rangers adds much to the telling of his story. He uses mostly secondary sources, though he has clearly worked the archives at the Texas State Library, the Archives Commission, and the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum. His bibliography is extensive and comprehensive.

--Alan Culpin, P.M.

Pidge, Texas Ranger, by Chuck Parsons. Texas A&M Press, College Station, 2013. First edition. 200 pages. Photos, index, notes, bibliography, hardback, \$29.95.

This is an intriguing story of a young man who grew up in Virginia and headed to Texas in 1874 to escape a conflict. He grew up on a farm and was attracted to the girl on the neighbor's farm. Similarly the neighbor, Jesse Mitchell, was attracted to Pidge's sister, but crossed the line and was banned from seeing her. Inevitably this led to trouble. But when Pidge got to Texas, he found even more conflict.

He joined the famed McNelly's Rangers, run by Captain Leander McNelly, and was first sent to De Witt county with a number of others to attempt to restore law and order there. It appears that a major feud had arisen between the Sutton and Taylor families, both originally from Alabama. The numbers involved rivaled the Hatfields and McCoys, though with fewer killings. The handful of Rangers had their work cut out for them, being outnumbered by somewhere around 250 to around fourteen. Among their opponents was the famed John Wesley Hardin.

Pidge, whose real name was Thomas C. Robinson, was a talented, educated young man, who proceeded to write letters to the *Austin Daily Democratic Statesman* and other Texas papers. The letters are humorous parody, that, while providing an account of what is going on, are loaded with poetry and classical references, interlaced with Pidge's wonderful sense of humor. Even today, 140 years later, they are a delight!

When things settled down a bit in De Witt, the Rangers headed for the Rio Grande, in an attempt to stop the rustling and killings that were a major part of life west of Corpus Christi. Tracking Mexican rustlers was comparatively easy, until the Rangers crossed the Rio Grande, in pursuit of Juan Cortina and his notorious gang.

Pinned down by far larger numbers than expected, it caused the U.S.

Eighth Cavalry to come to their rescue in what became a famous and much publicized event. Ultimately, Pidge is called back to Virginia by his desperate sister, who is being blackmailed by Mitchell. It is a dramatic tale.

What adds tremendously to this story, are the very detailed editing and notes by Chuck Parsons. The endnotes are a book in their own right, and enhance the history of the Sutton-Taylor Feud and life on the Rio Grande enormously. Parsons has done a great deal of checking to establish the origins of many of the poems and comments that Pidge includes in his letters. It is a thoroughly enjoyable read, with an unusual insight into Texas history.

--Alan Culpin, P.M.

Crucible of Pueblos: The Early Pueblo Period in the Northern Southwest. Edited by Richard H. Wilshusen, Gregson Schachner and James R. Allison. Monograph 71, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, University of California, Los Angeles, 2012. 268 pages, maps, photos, tables, illustrations, fold-out illustration, bibliography, index, paperback, \$34.95.

It's no wonder that three editors combined with twenty-five of the top archaeologists working in the Southwest could deliver the definitive compendium of thought on the early Pueblo period on the Colorado Plateau. However, the accessibility and readability for even non-technical readers of *Crucible of Pueblos: The Early Pueblo Period in the Northern Southwest* is a delightful surprise.

Crucible of Pueblos is an important scholarly work that will be referenced by archaeologists for decades to come. It also is a must-have on the shelves of anyone with an abiding interest in the archaeology of the area. The editors endeavored to produce a book that presents an insider's view of Southwest archaeology to an informed lay person or graduate student. The writing is lively and understandable while still detailing solid research in a manner that reaches a balance between academic and popular.

What sets *Crucible of Pueblos* apart is its focus on people, taking the inhabitants of the ancient Southwest out of the dioramas and into the light of day. The thirteen chapters focus on who the people were, how they lived and their social interactions. Chapters detailing the roles of women, family lifestyles and community development paint a rich picture of not only the material culture but of the makers and users of the beautiful pottery, textiles and hunting and farming implements that fill museum cases.

The book focuses on the Pueblo I period, encompassing AD 650-950, a time that archaeologists previously regarded as a not-so-interesting developmental stepping stone before Chaco Canyon and the cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde. Thanks to large salvage projects such as the Dolores Archaeo-

logical Project in the late 1970s and early 1980s, thousands of sites were excavated before being inundated by water projects including McPhee Reservoir near Cortez, Colorado. Archaeologists were drowning in data, but their analysis has reshaped how we view the Colorado Plateau and its peoples as scholars realized that the seeds of Chaco Canyon and classic Mesa Verde were planted in the complex social structures centuries before.

I spoke with Richard Wilshusen, Colorado State Archaeologist and Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer at History Colorado and one of the book's editors. "Sometimes we forget how amazing the Southwest is. It is one of the best examples of early village formation in the world," he says. "This book is really a history of the modern Puebloan people. You can't take current Hopi or Zuni or the Rio Grande pueblos and map it onto people who lived here 800 years ago. But you can see how the society evolved. They experimented with social structures during Pueblo I. Some things got traction, some didn't. But we can see the development." Researchers whose work is chronicled in *Crucible* are using linguistics and ethnographic studies to see ethnic identity in rock art, weaving and pottery. "Imagine getting at prehistoric metaphor," Wilshusen marvels, but that is exactly what archaeologists can infer by examining the rich data sets present in the Southwest using the latest scientific techniques in biological and social anthropology, historic linguistics and archaeology.

Wilshusen, Scott Ortman and Ann Phillips examine the Procession Panel, a mesmerizing rock art site on Utah's Comb Wash. Procession Panel—detailed in an eye-popping foldout illustration—depicts a gathering of peoples from the east and the west. It is precisely dated to AD 650 to AD 800 based on the style of rock art, the presence of bows and arrows and the kiva architecture depicted. The panel may chronicle a specific, momentous meeting with the carefully detailed figures perhaps being recognizable as individuals to viewers centuries ago. The researchers give their candid view of what the panel means and infer social structure implications from it; it is refreshing to read conclusions when so many scientific journals are loathe to share any interpretations of rock art.

Another chapter author, Laurie D. Webster, examines the vast museum treasure troves of ancient textiles, weavings and sandals collected on archaeological expeditions nearly a century ago. Her analysis of design, style and craftsmanship show an ethnically diverse population living in close proximity to each other, incorporating new ideas and lifeways in a rich milieu.

Crucible is organized by geographic region with chapters on south-east Utah, central and eastern Mesa Verde region in Colorado, the Chaco region and the northern and middle Rio Grande in New Mexico. It includes

area maps along with tables listing area sites, pottery types and architectural renderings. Readers can examine artifacts via illustrations and color photos. A helpful introductory chapter sets the stage by putting the Pueblo I era and area in context. Subject matter experts including familiar established archaeologists and younger scholars offer deep dives into specialized topics and regions; Thomas Windes writes about Chaco Canyon, Winston Hurst covers southeastern Utah and Stephen Lekson places Pueblo I villages into a larger political picture. A clear synthesis chapter wraps up the book, offering conclusions and posing new questions.

Pueblo I was an exciting time in the ancient Southwest, marked by the rise of larger settlements and complex societies. Populations grew in times of plenty with bountiful agricultural yields and plentiful game. Ultimately, changes brought about by climate changes and population pressures stressed the society, leading to conflict and abandonment. The patterns of migration, societal fluorescence, stress and abandonment seen during Pueblo I emerge later in the rise of Chaco Canyon and later still during the classic Mesa Verde period in the thirteenth century.

As a rancher once told me, “You can’t swing a cat in the Four Corners without hitting a ruin.” If you spend a bit of time exploring this area, you’ll want to “dig” deeper into the lives of the people who lived here so long ago. And trust me; you’ll want this book with you!

--Kimberly Field, C.M.

This Far-Off Wild Land. The Upper Missouri Letters of Andrew Dawson, by Leslie Wischmann and Andrew Erskine Dawson. The Arthur H. Clark Company, Norman, Oklahoma, 2013. First edition, 336 pages, map, footnotes, bibliography, index, photographs, hardback, \$39.95.

When the Arthur H. Clark Company produces a book, it is almost invariably an outstanding one in the field of Western history, and *This Far-Off Wild Land* is no exception. It recounts the experiences of a Scotsman who left his native Dalkieth, seven miles from Edinburgh, to make his living and hopefully his fortune, in the American West. Dawson is one more in a long line of adventurous Scots who traveled the world and accomplished a great deal – one thinks of Mackenzie, Frazier, Livingston, and numerous others.

When he arrived in St. Louis in 1844, he had hoped to get find employment with a fur trade company. Despite letters of introduction from two well-known people associated with the trade, he was unable to initially land a job. He contacted Kenneth McKenzie who felt, due to recent massacres on the Upper Missouri, Dawson was not ready. McKenzie referred

him to a nearby dry goods store where he was able to get on as a book keeper. He held this job for a year until William Laidlaw, an American Fur Trade partner, offered him a job with the AFC. Between 1847 and the early 1860s, Dawson worked in several different forts, such as Clark, Berthold, and Fort Union, moving up the ladder quickly to become the Factor of each in turn.

He was an excellent money manager, and able to deal effectively with the Indians of the region. Most of the trading came from the Arikara and Gros Ventres, and most of the troubles came from the ever hostile Sioux. He made some extraordinary journeys on foot in the depths of winter, such that most people today would never accomplish. He was chased by hostile Indians, his fort was surrounded by Sioux at one point, but he managed to hold them off, thanks in part to the use of a cannon. Dawson married an Indian woman named Kuta, and after she died, Pipe Woman and had a total of four children with them and another Indian. He was a close friend of Alexander Culbertson, one of the great names in the AFC, and whose patronage enabled him to succeed.

After suffering a debilitating injury, he eventually returned to his family in Scotland, where he live out his days, dying in 1872. It is a fascinating tale, extremely well researched and told in this book. There are three parts, the first being the complete story put together by Wischmann and Andrew Erskine Dawson from a healthy number of sources and based on Andrew Dawson's letters home. Secondly most of the letters are reproduced, and the third part is composed of two stories, almost certainly heavily based on facts, that Dawson had written. The result is a very personal, very readable, first-class account of life on the Upper Missouri in that period.

--Alan Culpin, P.M.

Los Angeles in Civil War Days, 1860-1865, by John W Robinson. University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 185 pages. Table of contents, index, maps, photos, bibliography, paperback, \$19.95.

This book looks at the scene in southern California, especially Los Angeles, during the Civil War.

This quote pretty well sums things up: "A correspondent from the *San Francisco Bulletin*, in Los Angeles during the {1862} election, wrote, 'Secesh has carried this county again, body and boots, for Dixie – despite the volunteers' votes, and despite the fact that a large number of the usually bought votes of the Democracy is now at the Colorado mines...Unionism here is nowhere. To all intents and purposes, we might as well live in the

Southern Confederacy as in Southern California.””

Los Angeles was a hotbed of southern sympathy, kept under control and in the Union only by dragoons and infantry, both regular Army and California Volunteers (chiefly northern Californians).

Robinson draws chiefly on newspaper articles to give a good account of life in the westernmost state during the Civil War. This is an interesting look at a seldom considered facet of the ACW.

--Stan Moore, P.M.

Rough Water Man, Elwyn Blake's Colorado River Expeditions, by Richard E Westwood. University of Nevada Press. 259 pages. Table of contents, index, maps, photos, bibliography, paperback, \$19.95.

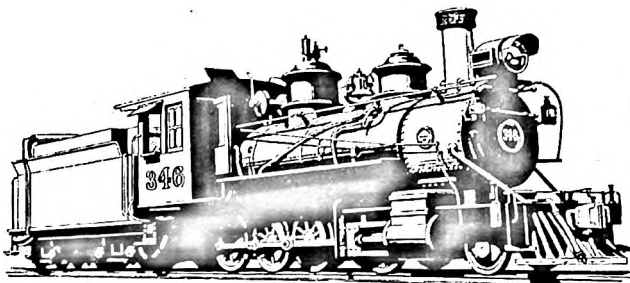
The Colorado River was not fully surveyed until the 1920's. Elwyn Blake was a twenty-three-year-old who landed with the expeditions to survey the Colorado, the Green, and the San Juan. The respective dates were 1923, 1922, and 1921.

Blake started as a general hand but soon became an oarsman. He also helped survey. This meant landing the surveyors on rocks and ledges in line of sight to the upstream party. The parties endured much including heat, rapids, flooding, low water, and monotonous diet.

The author is a descendant of Blake and offers good background on the political and economic issues of the day. Based on diaries, the book is an excellent look at the work done to explore and survey the desert wonderland drained by the Colorado.

For historians, river rats, and slickrock junkies, this is a book to read.

--Stan Moore, P.M.





The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

March - April 2014



Campo Jackpheasant

Coloroddities: Strangest Things About the Highest State
by Tom Noel, C.M.
(Presented December 18, 2013)

THE DENVER WESTERNERS

ROUNDUP

VOL. LXX NO. 2



March - April 2014



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Please check Tom's website: dr-colorado.com for a list of his books, classes, tours and talks. He leads tours for various groups including History Colorado and the Smithsonian Institution, specializing in architecture, preservation, railroads, walking, cemetery, saloon and church tours.

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The *ROUNDUP* (ISSN #2078-7970) is published bi-monthly by the Denver Posse of Westerners, Inc., founded Jan. 25, 1945. Subscription is included with a paid-up membership. (Corresponding membership is \$25 yearly, due Jan. 1) Submission of manuscripts is encouraged, but publication cannot be guaranteed. Illustrations are the responsibility of the author. Manuscripts must be submitted electronically, PC format. All copy is subject to revision and/or correction at the editor's discretion. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy of content, but such accuracy is the ultimate responsibility of the author. Periodical postage is paid at Denver, CO. *ROUNDUP* layout and pre-press by Jim Krebs, 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220. Printed by Oran V. Siler Printing Company, Denver, CO

POSTMASTER: Send address changes for *ROUNDUP* to 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220

Coloroddities: Strangest Things About the Highest State by Tom Noel, C.M. (Presented December 18, 2013)

Like every state, Colorado has its folklore, hoaxes, tall tales and humbugs. Indeed a gold rush that many called a humbug first put Colorado on the map. Three centuries earlier the first great Coloroddy attracted Spanish conquistadors. In 1540, Coronado set out from Mexico in search of the Seven Golden Cities of Cibola. All too well aware of the problems that the Spanish could cause, smart native Americans urged Coronado and his armored entourage to move on, assuring them that the golden cities were further away – far, far away way, perhaps in what would become Colorado. Neither Coronado or anyone else ever found those mythical seven cities of gold.

Golden rumors continued to drift out of Colorado. After the first major gold discovery in 1858, one hoaxer claimed that you could simply put a big blade on the front of a sled, slide down Pikes Peak, and pick up the gold shavings. Daniel C. Oakes, the first of the major league Colorado hoaxers, wrote an 1859 guide book purporting to provide the safest and speediest route to a Pikes Peak fortune. Oakes assured folks that “the whole country between the Cache la Poudre and Cherry Creek is a beautiful rich valley full of mountain streams of living water

and exceedingly rich in gold.”

Such promises helped launch one of the greatest mass migrations in U.S. history. Between 1858 and 1861, an estimated 100,000 fortune seekers rushed into what quickly became Colorado Territory. Most never found the guaranteed gold or the verdant valleys. Two thirds of them became “go backers.” Along the trails back to their homes they hanged D.C. Oakes in effigy and planted mock tombstones:

Here lies D.C. Oakes

Author of the Pike's Peak Hoax

Lost gold mines and swindled investors led many others to see Colorado as humbug. Of gold mining, Mark Twain supposedly said it best: “A gold mine is a hole in the ground owned by a liar.” Even that statement stretches the truth as the Mark Twain Library at the University of California Berkeley’s Bancroft Library reports it cannot find that statement anywhere in Twain’s papers.

In a state founded on a gamble for gold, get-rich-quick gurus have thrived on gullible greenhorns. Jefferson Randolph “Soapy” Smith sold them soap at \$1 a bar with assurances that \$100 bills lay hidden in many a wrapper. Soapy earned the title “King of all the Western Con Men” bringing

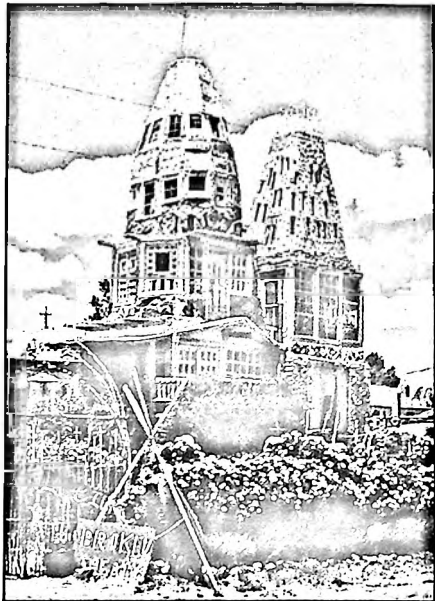
Colorado notoriety for its gullible citizens.

Gold and dollars prompted many scams, but so did diamonds. Diamond Peak in the northwest corner of Colorado commemorates the great Diamond Hoax of 1872. Two shaggy, dirty prospectors showed up in a San Francisco bank one foggy morning with a pouch of raw diamonds. In no time, the diamonds inspired creation of the New York and San Francisco Mining and Commercial Company capitalized at \$600,000 to exploit their discovery. It took U.S. Government surveyor Clarence King months to locate the site in a remote area of Moffat County and expose the hoax.

Even scientists were fooled by the Solid Muldoon Hoax, the name given to an alleged petrified man exhumed twenty-five miles west of Pueblo, Colorado on September 20, 1877. More recently the Heene Balloon Boy Hoax of October 15, 2009 joined a long list of schemes and scams in a state founded on what many called a gold hoax. Hoping for fame the Heene family and their “balloon boy” became one of the newest Coloroddities and a reminder, generally unheeded, that if it is too good — or too bad — to believe, suspect another in a long list of boondoggles.

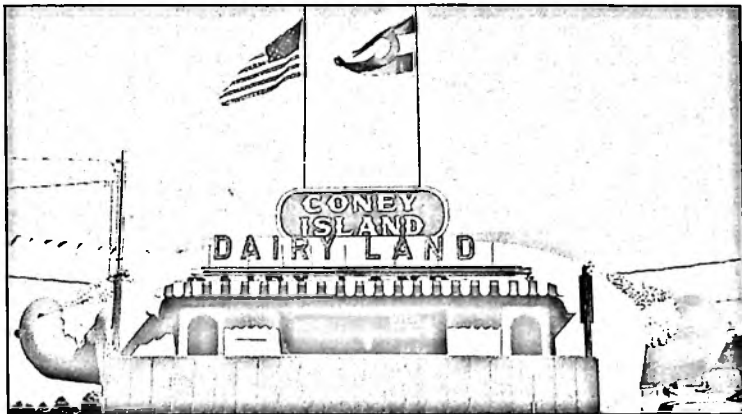
Other strange and curious things actually did happen

or do exist. Below are listed some of the most remarkable Coloroddites.



ANTONITO VIRGIN DE GUADALUPE SHRINE

10th Ave. n.w. corner of State St.
In 1988, a disabled veteran, Donald “Cano” Espinosa began building his residence using recycled lumber, and rubble stone, hub caps and aluminum cans. The irregular, four-story structure is topped by an open wooden tower housing a homemade statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Some of the poles bristling around and above the virgin form a surrealistic cross in a glittering fantasy reminiscent of the Watts Towers in Los Angeles. Credit: Photo by Tom Noel



BAILEY

THE BIG HOT DOG

The Coney Island Diner (1966: Lloyd Williams and Marcus R. Shannon) on U.S. 285 two miles west of Bailey is Colorado's most delicious example of roadside architecture: a fourteen-ton hot dog measuring, from wiener tip to wiener tip, forty-two feet, in a thirty-four-foot bun. The hot dog is decorated with bright yellow mustard and green relish that blend well with autumn aspen and the evergreen trees on surrounding mountainsides.

Credit: Photo by Tom Noel

(On cover)

CAMPO

JACKAPHEASANTS

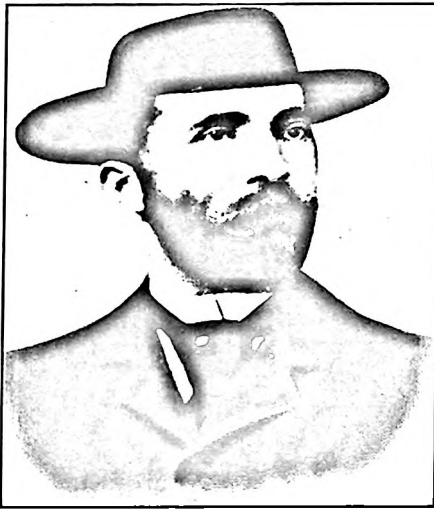
[*Lepus phasianus*] Campo is one of the few places where jackapheasant sightings have been reported. These creatures are a cross between jackalopes (see Walden in this chapter) and pheasants. Jackalopes are so rare

that they have trouble finding mates of the same species and have courted pheasants in their desperation, resulting in two-legged, jackalope-headed, pheasant-tailed curiosities.

CORTEZ

SLEEPING UTE MOUNTAIN

Fifteen miles s.w. of Cortez lies an elongated mountain that resembles a reclining Indian warrior with his headdress to the north, arms folded across his chest and toes tapering off to the south. Centuries ago, according to Ute folklore, he went to sleep, allowing the Spaniards to come into Colorado, followed by Plains Indians, and then by palefaced prospectors. Someday, Utes believe, Sleeping Ute Mountain will wake up and drive all



these newcomers out of Colorado.

CREEDE

SOAPY SMITH

Jefferson Randolph “Soapy” Smith polished his Colorado career in Creede and became the king of all Western con-man. An affable southerner, he could talk nearly anyone out of their cash. His name came from a favorite scam, hawking soap on street corners. To lure suckers, he would conspicuously wrap \$100 bills into soap bars and toss them into a basket then sell you a chance to pick whatever bar you wanted for only one dollar. After stints in Creede, Leadville and Denver, he pushed on to Skagway, Alaska where he was shot and killed as a public nuisance.

Credit: Denver Public Library

CRESTED BUTTE TWO-STORY OUTHOUSES

Like many high country folks, Crested Butte residents wrestled with getting to the outhouse on freezing nights in deep snow. While some built tunnels, Crested Butte has surviving examples of another solution – two-story outhouses. The two levels are offset to allow use of both stories. In Crested Butte, one such marvel is connected to the Masonic Hall by a covered wooden walkway. Another can be found on the rear of the Crested Butte Town Hall.

CRIPPLE CREEK TOMMYKNOCKERS

Although these miniature men can be found in nearly all hard rock mines, they are especially common in Colorado’s richest gold mining district – Cripple Creek. Welsh and Cornish miners probably brought these little guys with them to Colorado. Thought to be the spirits of dead miners, they stood about two feet tall and had big heads, old wrinkled faces and long beards. Rarely seen, Tommyknockers could be located by their tap-tap-tapping on mine walls. They were generally benign, leading miners to rich veins of ore or warning them of impending underground hazards. If miners failed to leave food for them, however, they could turn mischievous and steal picks, shovels, drills, lamps and lunch pails.

DENVER FIRST CHEESEBURGER

Along with the Denver Omelet (add diced green peppers, ham and onions) and the Denver Boot used to immobilize illegally parked cars, Denver brags about the first cheeseburger. Louis E. Ballast at his Humpty Dumpty Drive Inn, 2776 Speer Boulevard, sent in his patent application on January 1, 1932. He invented the cheeseburger by accidentally spilling cheddar cheese on his hamburger grill.



FAIRPLAY PRUNES, THE BURRO

Prunes is enshrined in a stone grotto monument in the center of this former mining town as “A burro, 1867-1930, who worked All Mines in this District.” This beast of burden did much of the work in pioneer mining towns. Whether with solitary prospectors or in pack trains, sure-footed burros could handle steep, dangerous mountain trails, even while carrying more than their own weight in supplies. This small member of the horse family is also known as an ass, donkey,

jackass and, in Colorado, as “the Rocky Mountain Canary” because of its noisy braying. Burros have a large head, long ears, small hoofs and average about four and one-half feet in height. Credit: Tom Noel Collection

FORT COLLINS BALLOON BOY HOAX

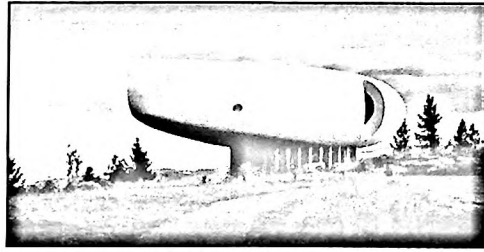
In 2009, the Heene Family of Fort Collins reported to media outlets – not to authorities – that their six-year-old son Falcon had accidentally been launched in a helium weather balloon tethered in the family’s back yard. For hours a worldwide audience soaked up non-stop television and radio coverage of the balloon as it drifted toward Denver International Airport. Only after DIA shut down flights, swarms of media team and National Guard helicopters went aloft in rescue attempts, and multi-million dollar search and rescue efforts did the balloon land in a farmer’s field fifteen miles northeast of DIA. Rescue crews rushed towards the balloon but found no child. Falcon was found hiding in his parents’ attic. Richard and Mayumi Heene, the press discovered later, met in a Hollywood acting school, and had long dreamed of television immortality.

FRUITA**MIKE THE HEADLESS CHICKEN**

Lloyd Olsen, a Fruita farmer, chopped Mike's head off while butchering chickens in March 1945. These birds sometimes flopped around after the heads were cut off, but Mike was still alive the next day. Word quickly spread and national newspaper and magazine articles celebrated "Miracle Mike, the Headless Chicken." Olsen kept Mike alive by using an eye dropper to give him water and ground grain down his esophagus. University of Utah scientists examined Mike and reported that the rooster could live because his brain stem was still connected to the spinal cord and his throat and windpipe were intact. Olsen turned Mike into a sideshow hit, traveling around the country to display him to paying tourists. He used the money to pay off his farm mortgage, purchase a pickup truck, and buy feed for Mike, who lived for eighteen months until October 1946. Fruita's famous fowl had faded from memory until 1997 when the town looked for a way to promote the area. Once again Mike received national, even international attention, as the star of Fruita's Mike the Headless Chicken Festival.

GENESEE**FLYING SAUCER HOUSE**

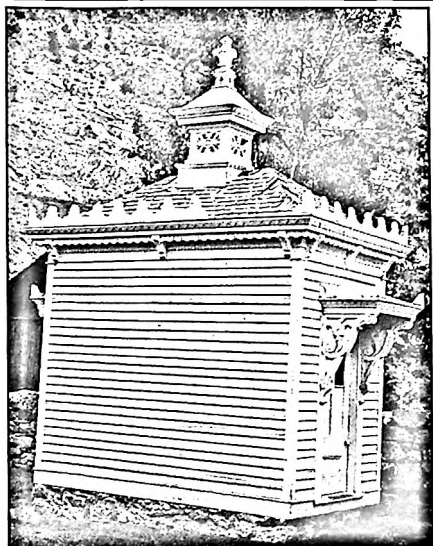
Listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Charles Deaton Sculptured House this clamshell-shaped residence is named for its



architect but is also known as the Sleeper House for the Woody Allen film shot there. Built in 1966 on Genesee Mountain overlooking I-70, it is made of a double shell of concrete sprayed on a welded steel frame. In this elliptical, three-story, cement and glass house, the doors, windows, walls, closets, and furniture are all curved, except for a few straight lines in the kitchen. This 3,000-square-foot house built for \$100,000 last sold for a reported \$10 million. Credit: Photo by Tom Noel

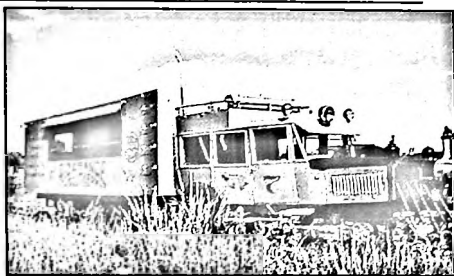
**GREAT SAND DUNES
WEB-FOOTED HORSES**

Roaming the sands of what is now a National Park, these web-footed horses are dramatic examples of Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory concerning survival of the fittest. Horses introduced by the Spanish in the 1500s became wild and found a haven in the Sand Dunes. Over the centuries, their hooves slowly grew larger and more like those of fowl, enabling them to gallop through even the softest drifting sands.



GEORGETOWN SIX-SEAT OUTHOUSE

Behind the restored Hamill House (1867, 1879) at 305 Argentine St. sits the state's grandest outhouse. Silver mining tycoon George Hamill built the six-seat house with a fashionable cupola crown and in the same Carpenter Gothic style as his nearby mansion. The three walnut seats in front served the Hamills. Backside, three plain pine seats accommodated servants who, archaeologists report, used their holes to hide broken Haviland china, empty liquor bottles, and other incriminating evidence.



GOLDEN GALLOPING GEESE

These narrow-gauge trains were powered by an automobile engine, an idea born on the struggling Rio Grande Southern line connecting Ridgway to Durango via Telluride, Rico, Dolores and Mancos. Engine flaps were opened like wings to cool the motor, a honking horn was attached and these contraptions waddled down their tracks inspiring the name. Two of the seven geese are at the Colorado Railroad Museum in Golden with one in operating order. Credit: Colorado Railroad Museum

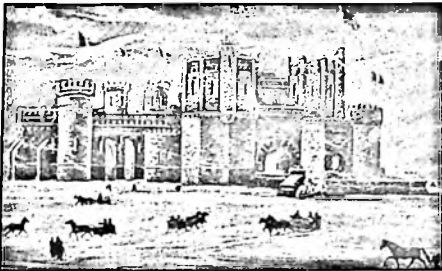
LAKE CITY ALFRED PACKER

Sometimes erroneously misspelled as Alferd, he is Colorado's most celebrated cannibal. In 1873, Packer agreed to lead five gold seekers into the San Juan Mountains despite the approaching winter weather. When spring finally came, Packer emerged alone from the still-frozen high country. Discoveries, including the gnawed corpses, surfaced slowly leading to Packer's trial for murder (cannibalism is not a crime). In the

Lake City Courthouse, the judge sentenced him to hang supposedly with the words: "Alfred Packer, you man eating son of a bitch, there were only seven Democrats in Hinsdale County and you ate 5 of 'em." Credit: History Colorado

LAMAR PETRIFIED WOOD GAS STATION

Built in 1932 at 501 N. Main St., this still-standing landmark was constructed with rock-like logs framing the front service bay, doorway, window and stepped parapet. W. G. Brown, a Lamar lumber dealer, conceived and executed the design to immortalize an otherwise standard concrete-block station and earned a listing in *Ripley's Believe It or Not*.



LEADVILLE ICE PALACE

Leadville's 1896 Ice Palace aspired to attract tourists to a celebration of winter in the Two-Mile-High silver mining city. Modeled after similar winter festival structures in St. Paul, Quebec and Moscow, it briefly helped Leadville recover from

the devastating 1893 Silver Crash. An early spring thaw put an end to plans to make this a lucrative annual festival.

Credit: Tom Noel Collection

MANITOU SPRINGS FAKE CLIFF DWELLINGS

Built in 1906 along U.S. 24, these were the brain child of Virginia McClurg, a grande dame of Colorado Springs. She spearheaded designation of Mesa Verde as a national park in 1906 but after a falling out with others involved in Mesa Verde's preservation she used her considerable energies to construct this replica of Native American cliff dwellings in a natural sandstone cliff.



MOSCA COLORADO ALLIGATOR FARM

Ewing and Lynne Young moved from Florida to this San Luis Valley hamlet in 1987 to start a fish farm, using a natural hot springs for raising tilapia and other warm water fish. They brought along alligators to dispose of the fish remains.

People began dropping in to see the gators, so the Youngs opened their large fenced lagoon to visitors. Along with more than 100 gators, the farm features other reptiles, a petting zoo, fish tanks and a chance to wrestle the gators.

Credit: Photo by Tom Noel

MT. SILVERHEELS SILVERHEELS

Near Boreas Pass ten miles north of Fairplay 13,817-foot-high Mt. Silverheels commemorates a silver-slipped dance hall girl. When small pox struck the mining town of Buckskin Joe, she nursed many of the miners either to good health or to their graves. Ultimately she contracted the dread disease which scarred her once lovely face and she disappeared into the mythical mists.

NEDERLAND FROZEN DEAD GUY

The small mountain town fifteen miles west of Boulder hosts perhaps the most macabre Colorado ritual. The mortal remains of an 89-year-old Norwegian named Bredo Morstoel, who died in 1989, was brought to Nederland in 1993 by a family member who dreamed of opening a cryogenic body-storage business. A caretaker was hired by the family to keep Morstoel cool while awaiting the advent of a future scientific breakthrough that could resurrect him. In 2001, the town started to capitalize on its unique attraction

with a Frozen Dead Guy Festival in early March complete with coffin races, a parade of hearses, the crowning of an Ice Queen, and tours of the dry-ice cryogenic chamber of Bredo Morstoel. By 2011, up to 20,000 revelers showed up for the three-day funeral festival, the town's greatest economic boon and claim to fame.



RED FEATHER LAKES GREAT STUPA OF DHARMAKAYA

In the midst of a mountain evergreen forest, the brightly colored 108-foot-high stupa houses the remains of Chogyan Trungpa Rinpoche, who founded the Shambhala Center in Boulder in 1971. Although Rinpoche became controversial because of his pursuit of worldly pleasures, his shrine was completed in 2001 with a giant gilded Buddha inside. It is the

centerpiece of a retreat center. Credit:
Photo by Tom Noel



MORRISON THE HEADLESS HATCHET LADY OF RED ROCKS

This legendary horror rides horseback, with her coat pulled over her head, brandishing a bloody hatchet. She is the terror of teenage couples, who come to explore Red Rocks Park and each other. The legend originated with a Mrs. Johnson who homesteaded nearby and was very concerned about her daughters' reputations. Some say that if she found a fellow fooling around with one of her daughters, she would chop off offending body parts. That is why the rocks are red at Red Rocks. Credit: Sketch by Grace Noel

PUEBLO SOLID MULDOON

One of the greatest Rocky Mountain hoaxes was the Solid Muldoon

"discovered" twenty-five miles from Pueblo and exhibited to paying customers as a petrified man – with a tail. The tail suggested this might be the missing link between humans and our ape-like ancestors.

RIDGWAY GALLOPING GEESSE

(See photo on page 9. They look the same.) These featherless railway locomotives are narrow gauge Rio Grande Southern engines powered by motors from Buick and Pierce-Arrow automobiles. In 1931, after steam locomotives had become too expensive to maintain and operate, this little San Juan Mountain rail line made the switch. To cool the engines, wing-like flaps were opened on either side. Horns that sound like geese honking were added and the way the train waddled down the track further inspired the name. All seven Galloping Geese survive in various museums where some of them still go flapping and galloping down the track as at the Ridgway Railroad Museum.

TINY TOWN A MINIATURE METROPOLIS

Construction began in 1915 and has continued over the years. Some of its 125 miniature buildings survived fires and floods, but not the moving of U.S. 285 in 1949. Bypassed, the town faded until 1989, when volunteers restored and reopened it. Hobbyists built and rebuilt more than one

hundred of the miniature landmarks at varying scales, including replicas of the Stanley Gold Mill and Mine in Idaho Springs, the Arvada Flour Mill, and the Fort Restaurant in Morrison. A fifteen-inch-gauge train, capable of carrying little people, has also been restored for excursions through this Lilliputian village.

URAVAN

THE HANGING FLUME

Gold miners constructed this wooden aqueduct in 1891 to divert some of the San Miguel River to their diggings. Located six miles north of Uravan on Colorado Hwy. 141, the six-foot-wide by four-foot-deep flume clings to the canyon walls 100 to 500 feet above the San Miguel and Dolores rivers. Workers were lowered in baskets to hand drill pin holes for the flume. Maintenance proved to be a constant problem and the flume was abandoned in 1893. After its 1980 designation as a National Register landmark, some sections have been restored.

VIEJO SAN ACACIO

ROMAN LEGIONS INVADE COLORADO

The 1856 chapel here is named for St. Acacio, a Roman soldier who converted to Christianity. When Ute Indians attacked this tiny Hispanic farming village, townsfolk prayed for help. Miraculously San Acacio appeared with a troop of Roman soldiers and chased off the astonished

Utes. San Acacio's statue adorns the altar *retablo* of this church which is also protected by its eighteen-inch-thick adobe walls.

VIRGINIA DALE

JACK SLADE

Slade built a hewn-log stage stop and named it for his wife. The Overland Stage Company had hired Slade to build and run this stop to keep him from robbing it. A notorious gunman, Slade was described by Mark Twain in *Roughing It* (1872) as an "ogre who, in fights and brawls and various ways, had taken the lives of twenty-six human beings." Since the stage abandoned it in 1869, the structure has been a post office, general store, dance hall, and women's clubhouse. It is thought to be the last intact stage station on the Overland Trail.

WALDEN

JACKALOPE

The jackalope (*Lepus antilocapra*) is the one of the rarest mammals in Colorado. This reclusive species, supposedly born of romantic encounters between lonely jackrabbits and antelope, has a rabbit-like torso but the horns of an antelope (prong-horn). Originally found in Douglas, Wyoming, the creatures have moved south into Colorado's North Park and reportedly maybe spotted in the Walden area.



WESTCLIFFE BISHOP'S CASTLE

James Bishop, a Pueblo ironworker, began building this fanciful castle in Colorado 165 twenty-seven miles southeast of Westcliffe in 1969.

A large iron dragon, capable of breathing smoke and fire, pokes its head over seventy-foot-high castle walls. This medieval-inspired stone castle flaunts arched portals, flying buttresses, towers, onion domes, a moat and a drawbridge. Working without blueprints or architectural training, Bishop used scavenged stone to construct his castle which he has adorned with wrought iron from his family's ornamental iron shop in Pueblo.

WRAY
GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKENS
(*Tympanuchus cupido*) This brownish chicken-like cupid stages an astonishing courtship dance during which males jump straight up several feet off the ground with inflated orange air sacs on the side of their necks and erect blackish neck feathers. The love-smitten bird also makes a hollow booming, oo-loo-woo sound while courting. This is Colorado's most exuberant courting rituals outdoing even any human endeavors.



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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 10th of the first month in the date of publication.

Colorado Westerners Activities

In February the Boulder County Corral of Westerners heard member (and Denver Active Posse member) Dr. Jeff Broome present "The Cheyenne War, Indian Raids on the Road to Denver, 1864-1869," which is the title of his recently published book. The result of over a decade of extensive research, he told the background of producing the book, and shared interesting stories that he uncovered in his research.

The March presentation to the Boulder Westerners was "Ghost Towns of the Denver Area," by Denver Active Posse member Carl Sandburg. In Carl's extensive research on Colorado ghost towns, he has enumerated over twenty towns that existed around Denver, and have disappeared, many of which were swallowed up by Denver. His program contained fascinating little-known stories of our local history.

The Colorado Corral February program, "Assayers, a Mining Camp Fixture in Colorado and the West," was presented by Bob Spude, a former sheriff of the Corral. Bob's talk focused on the key role of assayers in early-day Colorado and their role in the larger minerals industry of the West in the later 19th century.

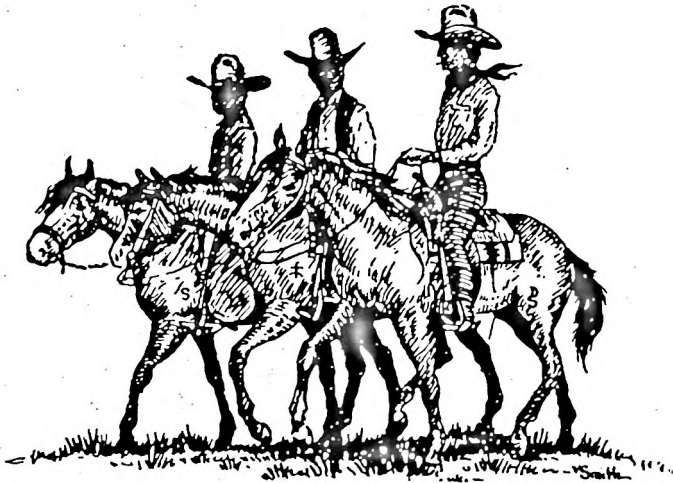
In March, member Rebecca Hunt told the Colorado Corral about "Churches in North Denver." Churches were a vital part of the community, especially in the ethnically diverse neighborhoods of North Denver.

The Pikes Peak Posse's February presentation by Prof. Chuck Benson, on "Parkitecture... Great Inns and Hotels of the National and Provincial Parks," covered such places as Old Faithful Inn, the Ahwahnee in Yosemite, and El Tovar at the Grand Canyon. These historic and mythical structures have become destinations within themselves.

In March member Doris McGraw presented “Pioneer Women Doctors of the Pikes Peak Region” to the Pikes Peak Posse. Her talk highlighted these pioneer female doctors, who numbered far more than readily known, and how 19th-century culture and history have slighted their existence, and made researching them difficult.

Attention: All Members of the Denver Posse of Westerners!

This column, “Over the Corral Rail,” is your column. This is your chance to lean up on rail, and chat about items and activities of interest to the Posse. Your submissions to the column editor are eagerly sought!





Westerners Bookshelf



Frontier Cavalry Trooper: The Letters of Private Eddie Mathews 1869-1874, by Douglas C. McChristian. University of New Mexico Press, 2013. 414 pp. Photos, footnotes, bibliography, index. Hardcover, \$55.

Memoirs of frontier military officers are relatively common, especially within the higher ranks. But detailed accounts from an enlisted perspective are relatively rare. In finding and publishing the letters of William Edward Mathews, Doug McChristian presents a real jewel.

Mathews, who was generally known as Eddie to his friends and family, enlisted in America's frontier army September 8, 1869 at age nineteen, though he claimed to be twenty-one. His motivations for enlisting are not entirely clear. Perhaps they involved the influence of bad companions or a love interest gone awry. Nevertheless, far from home and down to his last dime, Mathews introduced himself to an Army recruiting officer to avoid returning home to face the disgrace his actions had occasioned.

Mathews' letters are unique in that they are comprised not of later memories clouded by time, but rather they contain vivid, on-the-spot descriptions written virtually as events occurred. Stationed briefly in California and Arizona Territory, Mathews served the bulk of his time in New Mexico Territory, particularly in and around Forts Union and Bascom.

Throughout his letters, Mathews' regret for enlisting and his disgust with Army life ring as recurring themes. Still, he appears to have been quite diligent in his work. After a series of scouts, in which he observes and partakes in the horrors of frontier warfare, Mathews accepts a promotion to quartermaster clerk, and eventually to general company clerk. He says it was primarily for the additional pay, but the opportunity to remain at the post during exhaustive campaigns was no doubt also a factor.

As an observer of both field and garrison duty, Mathews provides the kinds of rich background details that Indian Wars students will deeply appreciate. McChristian's footnotes add incredible extra value to the text with their documentation of all manner of military slang, and operating procedures. McChristian's encyclopedic knowledge of the period is obvious in the way his notes add flesh and blood to characters and events that Mathews can only outline. In addition, the genealogical research required to take Mathews' story beyond this book's five years is impressive.

Matthews' correspondence is generally literate and descriptive. If the book has a down side, it is in Matthews' tedious and somewhat immature whining about not receiving enough mail from his family. And yet, most passages read like a very good novel, making the book difficult to put down. Matthews' story ends with a significant and very unexpected plot twist, which McChristian details in an epilog. A very worthwhile read, and highly recommended.

--Dennis Hagen, P.M.

When Law was in the Holster: The Frontier Life of Bob Paul, by John Boessenecker. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, 2012. 464pp. 71 B&W illustrations, 2 maps, notes, bibliography, index. Hardcover, \$34.95.

John Boessenecker has written another great book. This time he writes about a man who devoted much of his life as a dedicated lawman in California and Arizona. That man was Robert Havlin Paul. To his family, friends and enemies he was known as Bob Paul. One of Bob Paul's friends, Wyatt Earp said he was "as fast a friend as I ever knew." From his description, Paul made quite an imposing figure standing at six feet four inches. He was described by one writer as "utterly fearless." His years as a law enforcement officer, beginning as a constable, then sheriff and finally U.S. Marshal, started during the days of the California gold rush and lasted until shortly before his death in Arizona in 1901. He also worked for Wells Fargo as a shotgun messenger and detective and as a detective for the Southern Pacific Railroad.

Bob Paul was born to John and Mary Paul in the milling town of Lowell, Massachusetts in 1830. He was the youngest of three sons. A few years later the family moved eighty-five miles south to New Bedford on the coast. Since New Bedford was well known for being the most prominent whaling town in North America, it seemed fitting that Bob would follow in his brother John's footsteps in becoming a cabin boy on a whaleship at the age of twelve in 1842. After six and a half years at sea and an officer of one the best known whaling ships in the Pacific, Bob decided to try his hand at obtaining some gold when his ship put in at San Francisco in 1849. At one point he and several others while working a claim managed to take in about a \$1,000 each. He considered going back to sea, but within a few months went back to the mining region where he drifted from one town to the next.

In 1854 Bob Paul was elected constable Campo Seco, Township 4 of Calaveras County. This would be the start of his long career in law enforce-

ment. During the next fifty years Paul confronted lynch mobs and brought horse thieves, cattle rustlers, murderers, and stage robbers to justice. In several gun battles he killed five gunmen. Only once did an outlaw Bob was to bring in get the drop on him. Bob Paul was not without controversy either. In two elections for Sheriff in Arizona, as a Republican he ran against a Democrat, he demanded a recount that went to court. In one he was declared the winner and in the other he lost. Robert Havlin Paul (Bob Paul) died on March 26, 1901. Quoting the author he was "A true pioneer of law enforcement."

For those who have a interest in lawmen of the Old West, or would just like to read a very good book, John Bossenecker has delivered a first-rate account.

--Mark Hutchins, P.M.

Painters of the American West, Volume II, by Joan Carpenter Troccoli. University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 344 pages, 150 color illustrations, end notes and index. Hardcover, \$80.

The American Museum of Western Art--The Anschutz Collection, is a public museum on Tremont Place not far from the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver. In 2000, *Painters of the American West* was published and featured their most notable paintings. Since that time many significant works have been added to the collection and a second volume, the subject of this report, was published. Most of the paintings in this volume were rendered from the 1820s to about 1960. Included are the more familiar Western artists such as Catlin, Bierstadt, Remington, Russell, and O'Keeffe plus many others who were equally talented but little-known to a novice like myself.

Following an overview of the American West, the book presents six chapters of short essays on illustrated paintings. Most of the paintings are in chronological order and organized into themes including The Wider American West, Creating the Western Landscape, American Indians, California Gold, Cowboys and Cavalrymen, and ending with Skyscrapers and Desert Skies. Each of these chapters features paintings of a dozen or so artists plus an essay on the artist and a fascinating description of each featured painting.

For example, Seth Eastman was a painting instructor at West Point before marching west where he was commanding officer at Fort Snelling from 1841 to 1848. The posting brought him in contact with Indians and soon they were on canvas. His painting, *Chippewa Indians Playing Checkers*, demonstrated his skill in prosaic realism and accurate detail. The Plains Indians were attracted to Anglo-American games such as checkers, so Eastman painted two Indian men intent on the contest. Ironically, he depicted

two Chippewas playing the game on the porch of a Dakota summer house; normally these two tribes were at war with one another. Eastman's "purpose was to record accurately what was before him . . . his business was with the ordinary, the actual, the scenes and occurrences of the daily world." His wife was not pleased with the depiction, complaining that Indians who spent their days playing such games had forgotten that they were the "greatest warriors and hunters in the world."

Another example is Charles Nahl who arrived in California in 1851 and, after failing to find any gold, became the state's first resident artist. He developed into an accomplished illustrator of plants and wildlife—the grizzly bear on the State's flag was created by Nahl—as well as landscapes and people. One of his better known paintings is titled *Vaqueros Roping a Steer*. Starting with a glimpse of the ocean in the background and a deep canyon in the midground, the painting focuses on two men about to rope a well-fed steer in the foreground. Intense primary colors, furious action, and the perfect spatial balance of men, reatas, and animal immediately attracts the attention of the viewer. His brush presents a pastoral scene, somewhat romanticized, of Hispanic California, far from the gold fields and crowded cities.

The paintings and the prose in this high-quality book provide an enchanting depiction of the West and allows the reader, at least in the mind, to step back in history. It was hard for me to put the book down.

--Rick Barth, P.M.

Dragoons in Apacheland: Conquest and Resistance in Southern New Mexico, 1846-1861, by William S. Kiser, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2012, 354 pages. Illustrated with photographs, drawings, and maps; endnotes, bibliography, index. Hardback, dustjacket, \$29.95.

The author of this university press volume, William Kiser – the writer of a previous and excellent volume on the Mesilla Valley published by Texas A&M (2011) and purchased and read by the reviewer – is an up-and-coming scholar. Much more will be heard of this young man.

The scholarship of this tome is very good. The writing is outstanding. The book production – more-or-less typical of Oklahoma – is excellent. While there must be a typo (or two or three), the reviewer did not stumble upon any.

For students of the so-called peacetime U.S. Army prior to the Civil War, this book is a necessity. On particular incidents and campaigns – and political machinations – Kiser has provided much more information than

Robert Utley was able to do in his magnificent *Frontiersmen in Blue*. Kiser delves beyond the official reports and officer recollections to show that many fights and skirmishes were not as clear-cut as believed by students of the Indian Wars. Thus, any serious scholar writing on the antebellum U.S. Army on the frontier must consider Kiser's research.

However, having said that – and this is a consideration which promises many future university volumes from this particular historian – the author's seemingly dispassionate objectivity on his subject is assailable. For example – in keeping with the present-day political-correctness requirements among academicians – Kiser evidences a subtle bias in favor of the "Native Americans" and against those on the other side. Thus, he calls the Apaches in a skirmish "intrepid" (page 70), but concludes the army officers – in attempting to walk a fine line between the Hispanic settlers and the Indians – were guilty of "unintended duplicity" (page 80). As for concerns about the Union falling apart – proven so correct – the author calls this a product of "rampant paranoia" (page 273). In one of his many contemporary quotations (about the wrongful killing of Mangas Coloradas), it is presented that the Apaches "abhor[red] mutilation" (page 287) without the author pointing out that their concerns about their own afterlives meant that they intentionally mutilated the corpses of their enemies – to send them to the Apache version of hell.

This slant carries over into the author's descriptions of fights and skirmishes (otherwise well written). Every battle detailed seemingly resulted in the killing of "innocent" Indians. While this unfortunately is a byproduct of ugly guerrilla warfare, the author even claims this occurred in the Gila River Campaign – when the very murderer of Indian Agent Dodge was among the casualties. The other Indian dead were only guilty of being in bad company. When in doubt, the author seems to accept the testimony of civilian government employees over the statements of the hard-pressed soldiery. On the other hand, the author – who is so careful of official reports – rightfully also is suspect of so-called "oral traditions" of those who were not present.

Finally, as an important aside, while this author does commendable research, his reliance on one supposedly contemporary source is questionable – but understandable. Kiser quotes the Denver Public Library's production of Josiah Rice's *A Cannoneer in Navajo Country* (1970) about four times. While the reviewer was on active duty down Texas-way with the U.S. Cavalry in the late 1970s, he wrote DPL – and visited them about the issue – to show that Rice's narrative was almost completely a plagiarism of Frank Edwards' *A Campaign in New Mexico* (1847). Unfortunately, just as Arizona

University Press was reluctant to admit a problem with Glenn Boyer's *I Married Wyatt Earp*, DPL apparently never publicly has acknowledged the problems inherent with the Rice manuscript as a warning to even-careful scholars like Kiser.

In any event, with these reservations, *Dragoons in Apacheland* is recommended and well worth its modest price.

--John M. Hutchins, P.M.

Obstinate Hope: The Western Expeditions of Nathaniel J. Wyeth, Volume One, 1832-1833, by Jim Hardee. Museum of the Mountain Man/ Sublette County Historical Society, Pinedale, Wyoming, 2013. 500 pages. Illustrated with photographs, drawings, and maps; endnotes, bibliography, index. Hardback, \$24.95.

The volume is a welcome addition to those interested in the details of the very significant year of 1832 as it relates to the story of the mountain men, their rendezvous in Pierre Hole, and the competition with the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). While this story has been told before, this might well be the definitive study.

As for a brief summary of the contents, this book follows the travels of Nathaniel Wyeth, an entrepreneur who is well known for his two expeditions into the Oregon Country, hoping (futilely) to compete head-on with the HBC. This first volume details his initial attempt of 1832-1833, relying on Wyeth's journal as well as the numerous recollections of many participants during that seminal year in the fur trade. But the author – who previously produced an outstanding 2010 book on Pierre's Hole – also provides additional updated facts about every known stop and event occurring to Wyeth and his party (including the exciting fight with the Blackfoot – actually Gros Ventres – in Pierre's Hole). Thus, the book is not unlike similar ones tracing the travels of such wanderers as Zebulon Pike and Lewis and Clark.

The research and writing of the author is impressive. For example, the reviewer – who considers himself well-read in the subject of the early fur trade – learned (certainly belatedly) that the Owyhee River received its name from native Hawaiians who were in the fur trade. Thus, these islanders were not unlike Americans and Britons of the era – having the choice of whaling or trapping for wild adventure.

In summary, this book provides a wealth of information for true students of the mountain-man era. While the reading of all the detail sometimes seems as tiresome as the voyage itself, the rewards are much

greater than those garnered by Nathaniel Wyeth and most of his New England greenhorns as they learned the vocation of the fur trade. Fortunately for Wyeth, after his two expeditions, he was able to return east and make his fortune selling ice to a hungry and sweltering world.

--John M. Hutchins, P.M.

Cotton and Conquest. How the Plantation System Acquired Texas, by Roger G. Kennedy. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2013. 8vo, hardback, 352 pages, notes, index, maps, \$34.95.

It is rare for a reviewer to start by saying this is a badly written book. First, it has no real relationship with the title. There is almost nothing on cotton plantations in Texas, nor on the potential plans for such developments. It provides no evidence that the "Plantation System" acquired Texas, which, of course, it did not. It is riddled with bombastic and biased statements reflecting no sympathy for the cotton industry of the ante-bellum South. It is in fact, riddled with ignorance and prejudice.

The best part of the book involves all the intrigues of James Wilkinson, Aaron Burr, and William Dunbar and had the book carried a title that reflected that, it would have been considerably better. However, even that reads like popular magazine history, rather than in any sense a complex and comprehensive coverage of the story. In addition, he cursorily covers Philip Nolan's explorations of the Spanish-controlled area that was to become Texas, talks of the intrigues with Spanish and Mexican officials, and mentions Jefferson's interests and involvements.

His dislike of the South is extreme – he refers to Southern States as 'Neo-Colonial' because they sold cotton to Great Britain and France. He does not apply the same epithet to the Northerners who sold many goods to the same countries. He seems unaware that not all Southern States grew cotton. His errors on the growing of cotton in Texas flow continuously throughout the book - cotton cultivation as an investment was begun by Anglo-American colonists in 1821 towards the end of the period covered by his book. In 1849, long after the focus of this volume, a census of the cotton production of the state reported a mere 58,073 bales. In 1852 Texas was a minor player, in eighth place among the top ten cotton-producing states of the nation.

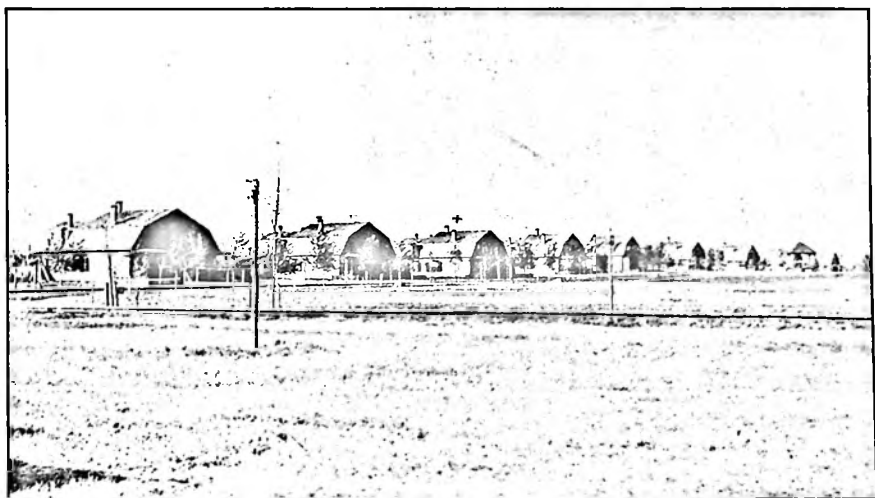
The book lacks footnotes, and the endnotes are very general and not very informative, and there is no bibliography at all. Roger Kennedy was a well-known Washington D.C. figure, who was Director of the Smithsonian Institution and who died September 30, 2011. Perhaps the blame for the poor quality of this tome may lie in his declining health.

--Alan Culpin, P.M.



The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

May - June 2014



Ft. Custer

Fort Custer: Bastion on the Bighorn
by Dennis Hagen, P.M.
(Presented February 26, 2014)



Our Author

Following service in the Air Force in Vietnam and Wyoming, Dennis Hagen shifted to a career in restaurant management, first for corporate fast-food outlets and later becoming an owner/operator. He also worked as a sales manager for a national software supplier. In 2002, Dennis returned to college and earned a Master's degree, his third, in library information sciences. He currently works as an archivist and special collections librarian in the Western History/Genealogy Department of the Denver Public Library. In this capacity he manages the World War II 10th Mountain Division archives. Dennis is also a former Sheriff of the Denver Posse.

THE DENVER WESTERNERS

ROUNDUP

VOL. LXX NO. 3



May - June 2014

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The *ROUNDUP* (ISSN #2078-7970) is published bi-monthly by the Denver Posse of Westerners, Inc., founded Jan. 25, 1945. Subscription is included with a paid-up membership. (Corresponding membership is \$25 yearly, due Jan. 1) Submission of manuscripts is encouraged, but publication cannot be guaranteed. Illustrations are the responsibility of the author. Manuscripts must be submitted electronically, PC format. All copy is subject to revision and/or correction at the editor's discretion. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy of content, but such accuracy is the ultimate responsibility of the author. Periodical postage is paid at Denver, CO. *ROUNDUP* layout and pre-press by Jim Krebs, 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220. Printed by Oran V. Siler Printing Company, Denver, CO

POSTMASTER: Send address changes for *ROUNDUP* to 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220

Fort Custer: Bastion on the Bighorn by Dennis Hagen, P.M. (Presented February 26, 2014)

Fort Custer rates little more than a footnote in most Indian Wars histories, yet the U.S. Army occupied the post for twenty-one years. Did anything ever really happen at Fort Custer?

By the late summer of 1874, war on the northern plains seemed all but certain. Lieutenant General Philip H. Sheridan, who commanded the Division of Missouri, understood this all too well. Yet he also knew that with the Red River War already flaring on the southern plains his options were severely limited as he struggled to deploy the remainder of his thinly-scattered, woefully unprepared army to deal with yet another conflict.

The situation left little room for optimism.

Lakota warriors, flushed with victory following Red Cloud's successful Bozeman war, flexed their muscles by raiding major forts, the very centers of army power in the region. None other than Libbie Custer described in detail the terror she and other dependents felt during such a raid at Fort Abraham Lincoln in 1873.¹

Intertribal warfare, a fact of life on the plains since long before the arrival of Europeans, continued unabated. Early in August 1873, reservation Sioux, under Chief Little Wound, haughtily ignored their agents and inflicted a devastating massacre on neighboring Pawnee, who were peacefully conducting their annual summer hunt.²

War parties harassed Northern Pacific Railroad survey crews despite formidable military escorts. Although Major Eugene Baker's detachment of four cavalry troops and five infantry companies successfully fended off a major attack on August 14, 1872, unnerved surveyors temporarily stopped work.

When Sioux warriors skirmished with Custer's Seventh Cavalry in 1873, Interior Secretary Columbus Delano, who seemed always to be at odds with the War Department, suggested that Sheridan arrest the responsible Sioux leaders. Sheridan acknowledged a sharp increase in depredations, but declined to press the matter. He understood that a movement against any Sioux faction would probably plunge the northern plains into a full-scale war—a war both he and Commanding General William Tecumseh Sherman, knew the army was unprepared to fight. Sherman lamented, "I suppose we had better let things take their natural course until the mass of Indians commit some act that will warrant a final war."³

The so-called "Panic of 1873" had offered a brief reprieve by forcing work on the Northern Pacific to halt. Militant Sioux, however, knew little of economics. Most saw the railroad workers' disappearance as simply the victorious fruits of their escalating raids.

The tribesmen believed they had scored another victory when they demanded their agencies be moved into northern Nebraska. Over Sheridan's

vigorous protests, the Indian Bureau capitulated, moving the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail agencies completely off the Sioux reservation.⁴

Events spiraled out of control in late 1873. With winter's approach, hostile "northern roamers" flooded into the Red Cloud Agency, doubling the population requiring food. Agent J.J. Saville described the new arrivals as "vicious and insolent," in their refusal to be counted and in their demands for rations. On January 14, 1874 Saville formally requested military intervention. Sheridan initially opposed the move, restating his belief that the agencies should first be moved back to the reservation. When the situation at the agencies deteriorated with employees killed and beef allotments hijacked, Sheridan reluctantly conceded. Camp Robinson quickly rose at the Red Cloud Agency and Camp Sheridan at Spotted Tail.⁵

As Sheridan viewed his map in 1874, then, he saw Forts Lincoln and Rice well-positioned to the north of the Sioux reservation. Forts Sully and Randall controlled the east and Camp Robinson bolstered the south. He also saw, a glaring hole looming to the west. Sheridan knew he could only fill that gap with one or two forts in the Yellowstone Valley and another fairly substantial post near the Black Hills. To deal with the latter, he dispatched Custer's Black Hills exploration.⁶ Lobbying for the former, both Sheridan and Brigadier General Alfred H. Terry pleaded their cases for the Yellowstone posts through their annual reports to the Secretary of War in 1875. Although forwarded to Congress with the Secretary's endorsement, the recommendations were

ignored, and war became a reality.⁷

Following the Seventh Cavalry's disastrous defeat, Congress predictably raced forward legislation designed to paper over its previous neglect. A special act, which passed July 22, 1876, barely two weeks after the politicians learned of Custer's demise, finally provided Sheridan the authorization for his long-sought Yellowstone posts.⁸ But the appropriations came too late for construction materials to go up the Yellowstone in 1876. Without these forts, Sheridan continued to face two critical problems: unsustainably long supply lines and slow, debilitating marches that often placed troops and horses into battle too worn down to fight.

Still, Sheridan worked with what he had. If he could not have his Yellowstone forts, he would place Colonel Nelson Miles and twelve infantry companies at a cantonment on Tongue River. If he could not have his Black Hills fort, he would order Brigadier General George Crook to establish a similar cantonment near the site of old Fort Reno.⁹ These steps helped to salvage a war that had begun very badly, and proved instrumental in ultimately forcing the Sioux-Cheyenne coalition to capitulate.

Sheridan's Yellowstone posts finally began to take shape in early spring 1877. Lieutenant Gustavus C. Doane, formerly of Colonel Gibbon's Montana Column, arrived at Crow Agency, where he enlisted the aid of scout Tom LeForge, to accompany him up the Big Horn River. "We set out some marker stakes for the guidance of the coming pioneer corps of workers," LeForge reported. "Not long afterward I guided [brevet] General Buell to the



Crow Scouts at Ft. Custer

place, which was on a bench hill near the junction of the Little Big Horn and the Big Horn rivers, about fifteen miles down the valley from the site of the last stand of General Custer.”¹⁰

The Yellowstone’s “June rise” spawned a burst of activity. Private William Zimmerman, Troop F, Second Cavalry noted in his diary for June 10, 1877 “It rained last night, & it’s been quite cold all day . . . A steam boat passed our camp this evening enroute [sic] for the Big Horn Post with 3 cos. of the 11th Infantry on board.”¹¹

Lieutenant Colonel George P. Buell reached the confluence on June 23, 1877 with four companies of the Eleventh Infantry and began raising barracks, employing soldiers and some 200 civilian mechanics. Construction lasted through the fall and into winter.¹² Buell’s command officially established the post July 4, 1877 as “Post No. 2, Big Horn River.”¹³

The following day Lieutenant Colonel Michael V. Sheridan, General

Sheridan’s brother and aide-de-camp, arrived at the construction site accompanied by Troop I, Seventh Cavalry. His detachment arrived from the Custer Battlefield bearing the remains of officers killed during the battle. Remaining two nights, Sheridan departed for Bismarck, Dakota Territory June 7.¹⁴

As traffic increased, Captain Erasmus C. Gilbreath, commander of Company H, Eleventh Infantry received orders to locate a spot suitable for unloading the armada of construction vessels churning upriver. Although steamboats could occasionally navigate to the mouth of the Little Big Horn, they could not deliver large quantities of freight there. Gilbreath therefore located his camp on the Yellowstone near the mouth of the Big Horn River. In setting up camp soldiers dispatched some sixteen rattlesnakes, and Gilbreath reported the surrounding country was “alive with game.” He named the depot “Terry’s Landing.”¹⁵

Almost immediately supplies began stacking up. Designed to house ten companies, Post Number 2 required immense quantities of lumber, hay, grain and other provisions. Although shingles, doors, windows and finishing lumber arrived on the river, a saw mill was established nearby to provide large, framing timbers.¹⁶ Some two thousand logs were cut. However, Buell, in an effort to preserve timber near the fort, forbade logging within an eight-mile radius of the post. Lodge poles, abandoned on the battlefield by retreating Sioux the previous year, found their way into the walls of some of the post's new barracks.

A former army colonel named Broadwater contracted to haul the roughly 6,000,000 pounds of freight over the thirty-three miles that separated the camp from the fort site. Primary transportation was via "bull trains," meaning wagons pulled by oxen bearing the Diamond-R brand. Most of the wagons were tandem rigs consisting of one large wagon trailing two smaller wagons. Loads often required eighteen to twenty plodding oxen teamed on a single rig.¹⁷

With construction underway, General Sheridan decided to acquaint himself with the country surrounding his new forts and to personally examine the site of Custer's demise. He spent most of July 21, 1877 groping for clues to explain his close friend's death. Michael Sheridan's detachment had recently policed the area, but hailstorms had again unearthed skulls and other "portions of the human anatomy." The deplorable condition of the battlefield moved Sheridan to urge that the site be declared a national cemetery.¹⁸ Upon

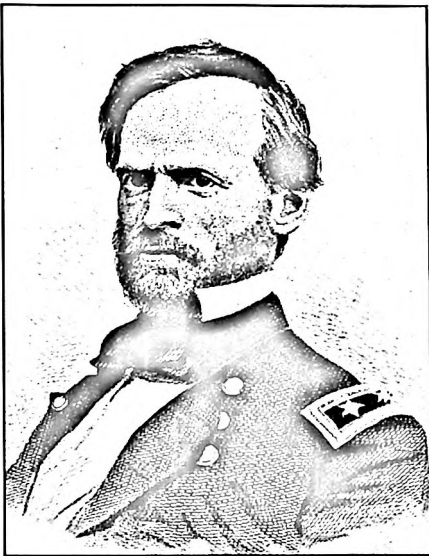


General Sheridan

his return to Chicago he successfully pressed his case, and the battlefield was so designated in 1879.

Sheridan foresaw a great cattle empire surrounding the battlefield. "The cattle-range here for hundreds of miles is superb," he declared, with "grass nearly high enough to tie the tops from each side across a horse's back."¹⁹

General Sherman also traversed the Big Horn region en route to the Pacific. Captain Gilbreath reported that as the Steamboat "Rosebud," piloted by Grant Marsh, chugged up the Big Horn River carrying Sherman and other notables, it encountered the steamboat "Silver City" paddling downstream with Sheridan and his retinue. Upon meeting, both boats tied up on shore, and Sheridan boarded the "Rosebud" for a conference. According to Gilbreath, everyone was admitted without regard to rank. "It was a notable gather-



General Sherman

ing for on board the 'Rosebud' that day, July 23, 1877, every grade in the army was represented except that of major-general."²⁰

On July 25, 1877, shortly after the anniversary of Custer's defeat, General Sherman penned a report to Secretary of War George McCrary describing construction efforts at the Big Horn post. Strategically, he emphasized, "With this post and that at the mouth of Tongue River occupied by strong, enterprising garrisons, these Sioux Indians can never regain this country, and they will be forced to remain at their agencies or take refuge in the British possessions."²¹

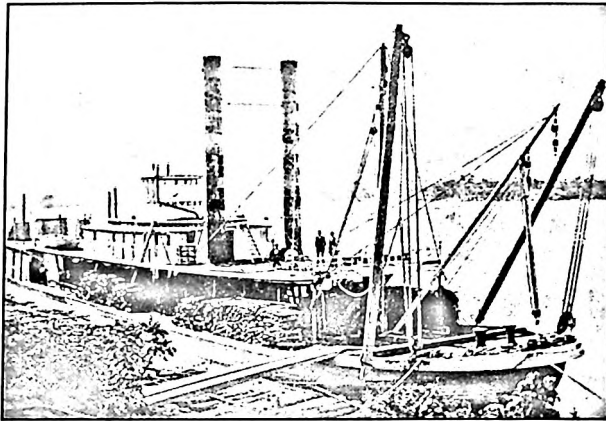
During September 1877, a group of Nez Perce transited the country near Terry's Landing as they moved toward Canyon Creek. This fact, along with reports of renegade Sioux in the area, prompted Gilbreath to construct

a block house. As the Seventh Cavalry pursued the Nez Perce, a steam boat sank, leaving them desperately short of supplies. Colonel Samuel Sturgis remedied the deficiency by requisitioning supplies from Terry's Landing. Following the Canyon Creek battle, General O.O. Howard also found it necessary to tap this resource, underlining the Fort's strategic location before construction had even been completed.²²

By November 8, 1877 construction had advanced sufficiently for the two Yellowstone posts to be formally named. Tongue River Post Number 1 became Fort Keogh, and Big Horn Post Number 2 became Fort Custer. However, these decisions had not come without controversy. General Sherman, in fact, even sought to pass the buck to Secretary of War, George W. McCrary. In a letter, he explained:

We have discussed the subject of names for the new post[s]. I suggested the names of Custer and Keogh, both killed last summer. I find General Terry indisposed thus to honor Genl. Custer, as he thinks he drew on himself the terrible calamity which involved the lives of 250 good soldiers, by disregarding his instructions and by pushing his command so rapidly as to ignore the cooperating force. Still, death generally ends all controversy, and I think General Sheridan agrees with me, still we dislike to act without General Terry's consent. I wish you would take the matter in consideration and give names to these two new posts, now among the most important of all."²³

Initial plans called for Fort Keogh to be the more important post,



Far West

designed to house the headquarters of a "District of the Yellowstone." Its buildings were of better design and perhaps better construction, with facilities for more troops. But when Crow Agency moved nearer Fort Custer, and a reservation for the Northern Cheyenne was established, troop strengths at the two forts tended to equalize.²⁴ As 1877 drew to a close, Lieutenant Colonel George P. Buell commanded Fort Custer. With him were four companies of the Eleventh Infantry: B, C, F and H, along with the headquarters and four troops of the Second Cavalry. Quarters were reported as good, though not entirely finished.

Early in 1878, Colonel Nelson Miles, Fifth Infantry, dispatched Lieutenant Frank Baldwin to construct flag and heliograph stations between Fort Keogh and Fort Custer.²⁵ This method of communication permitted messages to flash across the hundred-plus miles between the posts in as little as fifteen minutes.²⁶

Following resolution of the Sioux and Nez Perce campaigns, pro-

tection of Crow rights became one of Fort Custer's primary missions. Luther S. "Yellowstone" Kelly received an order dated July 10, 1878 from Colonel Miles, through Lieutenant Baldwin:

Yourself, Sergeant Gilbert, and one man will proceed without delay and follow up a party of prospectors and ascertain if they are trespassing on the Crow reservation; you will also ascertain what parties are infringing upon the right of the Crow Indians and any information you may glean on these matters you will report to the district commander.

Sensing trouble brewing with the Bannocks, Miles also directed Kelly to "endeavor to ascertain if the Bannocks, or their allies, are making any movement eastwardly and should they do so you will report the fact to the nearest post and the District Commander without delay." As a postscript, Miles added, "Should you need supplies you will go to Fort Custer or Ellis for them."²⁷

Although Miles noted in his memoirs that "the valleys of the Yellowstone, the Tongue, the Rosebud and the Powder Rivers were being rapidly occupied by settlers, and mail routes were being established,"²⁸ Kelly painted a somewhat different picture of the Big Horn valley when he stopped at Fort Custer for supplies:

We might have gone a shorter route across country to Fort Custer, but for the most part it is a rough and uninteresting region, hard on horses, and I wanted to see what changes had come over the valley in the two years of military occupation. In this I was disappointed, for there was little settlement below the mouth of the Big Horn on the north side; above that point embryo towns were in the course of building, with here and there farms in the making.²⁹

Kelly added, however, that Fort Custer commanded a fine view of the mountains to the west.

In September 1878, Bannock Indians living west of the Rocky Mountains did attempt to emulate the Nez Perce flight to Canada. When reports of their movements arrived, eight cavalry troops commanded by Buell and a contingent of fifty infantrymen under Gilbreath sallied out from Fort Custer September 7 to intercept them, accompanied by a pack train of 250 mules. As Buell's force moved into position to attack, they discovered that Colonel Miles had arrived before them and had already subdued the Bannock.³⁰

Yellowstone Kelly noted in his memoirs:

We returned through the [Yellowstone] park by another route and

found that the Bannock had slipped through despite our watchfulness . . . and had been intercepted and captured by [Brevet] General Miles, who was on his way to the park with a party of friends and guests and a detachment of soldiers as escort. Learning that the Bannock had crossed the mountain, he hastily changed his plans and sending his party to Fort Ellis, intercepted the Bannock with the aid of some mountain Crows, and in an early morning skirmish killed a number of them and captured the rest. Captain Bennett of the Fifth Infantry was killed in this action. The Crows, as usual, got away with the ponies.³¹

Miles noted in his memoirs that his party had been selected from: *among the most experienced veterans of the Indian Territory and the Northwest campaigns, and then, with a strong wagon-train, a well-equipped pack train, and all the appliances, camp equipage and field equipment necessary, we leisurely moved up the Yellowstone Valley. The party consisted of ten officers, four civilians, five ladies, three children, including my family, and one hundred soldiers.³²*

After the skirmish, Miles turned the captured Bannock Indians over to Buell for return to Fort Custer. Gilbreath recalls that Buell's command returned September 20, 1878 "after about as pleasant a campaign as I was ever in."³³

Stanley J. Morrow traveled to Montana in the fall of 1878, where he established photographic studios at both Forts Keogh and Custer. In April

1879, while working as photographer at Fort Custer, he accompanied Captain George K. Sanderson and a company of the 11th Infantry on an expedition to Little Big Horn Battlefield to clear it of animal bones and to remark the graves. Morrow replaced John H. Fouch as photographer at Fort Keogh, and though Fouch's views of the battlefield were recorded earlier, Morrow's became much more famous.³⁴

Private Rolando B. Moffett, H Company, 11th Infantry arrived at the Fort September 15, 1879. He complained that the post was far from complete. Since he had been a brick maker in civilian life, he may have been referring to upgrade work rather than basic construction. Nevertheless, Moffett could not understand how, with soldiers doing so much of the work, the post could have been so expensive to build.³⁵

As 1879 drew to a close, Colonel John W. Davidson, Second Cavalry assumed command of the Fort.

1880 seems to have been a fairly quiet year for the post. But when Indians at Fort Peck's Poplar River Agency threatened an uprising in December, two companies of the Eleventh Infantry were dispatched from Fort Custer to contain the situation.³⁶

General Sheridan returned to the region in 1882. This time he toured Yellowstone National Park with an escort of 129 soldiers, scouts and civilians. When he learned that poachers and hide hunters were slaughtering park wildlife, he flew into one of his famous rages, threatening that if the Department of the Interior could not protect the park, then he would.

I will engage to keep out skin hunt-

ers and all other hunters by the use of troops from Fort Washakie on the south, Custer on the east and Ellis on the north, and, if necessary, I can keep sufficient troops in the park to accomplish this object, and give a place of refuge and safety for our noble game.³⁷

Fort Custer had a primary role in the affairs on the Crow reservation and at Crow Agency. Captain Gilbreath was appointed inspector of supplies, giving him responsibility for weighing all cattle and flour and for examining all other goods destined for distribution. Fort Custer also handled annuity distributions for the Crow, with Gilbreath superintending. In 1882, Crow Agency was still over 100 miles west of Fort Custer, which added to Gilbreath's difficulties.³⁸

Gilbreath departed Fort Custer July 31, 1882 to assume command at Fort Buford, Dakota Territory. Upon leaving, he opined that Fort Custer "was a delightful station and I have never served at any place that I remember with more pleasure."³⁹

As tensions on the Indian frontier eased, "civilization" began to encroach. An example comes from an 1884 notice in the *Billings Post*. Discussing business trends in Billings, the editor reported that: "Private John Stanley, of the 5th Infantry, stationed at Fort Custer, came over last week, and invested about \$1,500 in Billings' lots. He has unbounded confidence in the future of Billings and demonstrates it by investing in the town lots."⁴⁰

On St. Patrick's Day, 1885 the Fort Custer enlisted man's club, the Rounders, sponsored an event billed as the largest dance ever given by soldiers



Ft. Custer

at any post in Montana. One hundred club members contributed \$5.00 each to fund the dance. Since their pay was but \$13.00 a month, this represented quite an investment. The men purchased turkeys, as well as fruits to be shipped from St. Paul, Minnesota via the Northern Pacific Railroad, which served Custer Junction, some 30 miles north of the fort. It was bitterly cold when an escort wagon retrieved the fruit. To protect the fruit during transport back to the fort, soldiers baked several large rocks all night in a fire pit. When the fruit arrived, they lined the wagon bottom with these blistering stones. Secured with a tarp, the fruit remained warm and arrived for the dance in fine shape.

At midnight, there was insufficient room to seat everyone properly for the celebratory meal. Protocol was happily jettisoned and "the officers'

wives and the laundresses, and nursemaids, and visiting ladies all sat down to the same table and had a good time." Following the dance, an audit showed the committee with a surplus of \$17.00, so they purchased \$17.00 worth of beer and disbanded.⁴¹

Colonel Nathan A.M. Dudley, First Cavalry, assumed command of Fort Custer July 8, 1885. Described as a mediocre man, who "suffered from muddled thought and bad judgment," a court-martial at Fort Union, New Mexico had removed him from command of that post. Moving to Fort Stanton, Dudley became embroiled in the Lincoln County War where, despite acquittal by both civil and military courts, his performance there had been controversial to say the least.⁴²

The spring of 1886 saw the arrival of Private James O. Purvis, Company B, First Cavalry. Purvis,

a particularly articulate and literate soldier, published commentaries about Fort Custer through an irregular column in the *Billings Daily Gazette* entitled "Fort Custer News" from about April 1886 through the tenth anniversary of the battle in June.

In his April 8 column, Purvis noted that "the appearance of Fort Custer is improving daily under a liberal application of paint which was preceded by a general and thorough 'polishing' of the garrison." He also reported the saw mill near McNutt's ranch had been dismantled, and that post Provost Sergeant Powers, had orders to shoot all stray dogs found wandering about the Fort.

The Fort Custer Comic Opera and Burlesque Company returned to the post following road shows at Bozeman, Billings, Livingston and Fort Ellis. The company's season opened at Fort Custer September 9, 1885 and they gave twelve performances in addition to the swing around Montana Territory. The season closed with a performance Tuesday evening, April 13, 1886. Fort Custer's band also produced a comic opera, "The Doctor of Alcantrara," and contemplated performing "Pirates of Penzance."

Purvis boasted to his readers that "nearly every troop and company in the garrison has a private library," while 194 volumes had recently been added to the main post library. In addition, "Our day school is in a flourishing condition. Joseph Henry is teacher. Frank J. Wills, Esq., gives instruction every evening to enlisted men. Penmanship and book-keeping are specialties."

Purvis also reported on Fort Custer's numerous social clubs. These

included the Officer's Literary Club, a Masonic Lodge of Instruction, Maennerchor Club, Custer Social Club, Ancient Order of Hibernians, Walker's Opera Company and the Fort Custer Comic Opera and Burlesque Company. The Fort also hosted a very prosperous Lodge of the Independent Order of Good Templars.

Sometimes Purvis' rhetoric seemed overly enthusiastic: "Our post hospital is a model institution; a credit to the medical department of the U.S. Army, and a godsend to many of its soldiers who have found there the oasis in the desert of their affliction and disease."

Occasionally, Purvis lapsed into humor. "In the German Army," he noted, "a soldier is obliged to write home to his wife once a month. This explains why so many Germans come to this country to escape military duty."

But on a more serious note, Purvis also editorialized that "Fort Custer is a long way behind the times in a great many things that affect the enlisted men." Complaining bitterly about the cost of "luxuries" like pie, sandwiches, coffee or beer, he railed, "Why, Delmonico's is a regular free lunch alongside a Fort Custer restaurant. We don't get a cent more for soldiering here than is paid elsewhere, and for that reason we ought to have an equal show for our money." Purvis also noted, "It is to be hoped that the issue of some sort of summer uniform to soldiers serving in warm climates may not be delayed much longer." He decried the necessity of wearing ragged overalls in order to keep cool, but concluded such eyesores were inevitable until summer uniforms became available.

Purvis had a lot to say about marksmanship. "The American army has followed no old world fashions in respect to rifle practice," he noted, "but adopted a genuine Yankee style of its own which has made nearly every soldier of two years' service, as expert with the rifle as a backwoodsman." He cited Troop B, First Cavalry. Of sixty-five men tested, fifty qualified as sharpshooters or marksmen.⁴³

Private Purvis published several observations regarding the Custer battle's tenth anniversary memorial ceremonies, which were primarily conducted at "Camp Crittenden," established by Company K, Fifth Infantry, near the battlefield. Purvis felt that remarks by Captain Edward S. Godfrey were intended to "present Major Reno in no enviable way. But we doubt the possibility of any attempt to attribute cowardice to this man [Reno] ever succeeding."⁴⁴

Fort Custer's hospital may have been an excellent institution. However, it primarily treated the same malady that afflicted all frontier posts: venereal disease. Although some men carried the disease with them from recruiting stations, most infections came through contacts with prostitutes or Indian women. Colonel Dudley sought to curb Fort Custer's epidemic by urging the creation of a large, well-defined military reservation to segregate his men from the principal sources of the disease. Dudley wrote to the Headquarters, Department of Dakota:

The class of Indians that settle round a post have a large number of worthless, lewd women along, who are more or less diseased. Two-thirds of the inmates of the

*post hospital have been placed there by the effects of diseases, contracted with these Indian women.*⁴⁵

It is perhaps simple coincidence, but in a letter dated November 27, 1886 Secretary of War William C. Endicott requested President Grover Cleveland to approve a reserve for Fort Custer, which was located within the limits of the Crow Indian reservation. The proposal comprised thirty-six square miles, a square six miles on each side, centered on the center stone of the Fort Custer parade ground.⁴⁶

During the winter of 1877, after Tom LeForge had assisted in locating the Fort, he lived with Crow scouts "in a buffalo-skin lodge at the foot of the hill below the post and by the Little Big Horn River."⁴⁷ It seems likely that a small village may have developed on that spot. The Department of Interior found that perhaps thirteen Crow families lived within the confines of the proposed military reservation. The Department agreed to the boundaries of the military enclave, but only with the understanding that:

*These thirteen families shall not be disturbed, but shall be allowed to remain where they are now located, and to retain their present allotments of land and be permitted the free and unrestricted enjoyment thereof, unless they shall voluntarily release or abandon same.*⁴⁸

Alcoholism apparently had no direct correlation to service on the frontier. One year, in fact, Fort Custer reported the lowest ratio for all the posts in the Army at three and a fraction cases per thousand men.⁴⁹

Corporal Frank B. Knight gave

a relatively high estimate of twenty per cent church attendance at Fort Custer.⁵⁰

According to Colonel Dudley, the deficiencies so bitterly denounced by Purvis had been mitigated through the establishment of a post canteen. Extolling its virtues, Dudley wrote that the pies, cakes, sandwiches, and canned delicacies stocked by the canteen enabled his soldiers "to live almost sumptuously."⁵¹

The countryside surrounding Fort Custer was thrown into turbulence during the spring of 1887. Henry E. Williamson, Indian agent at Crow Agency, reported to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs on August 31:

*In the early part of spring I received communications from the agents of Rosebud and Pine Ridge, Dakota, saying that they had given permission to a number of their Indians, "some of them non-progressive" to visit this agency. This was in the midst of a season when Indians were most actively engaged in their agricultural pursuits, and . . . in direct violation of your instructions.*⁵²

Williamson pointed out that an earlier visit by Sitting Bull had produced "pernicious results." Seeking to avoid a repetition, he requested military intervention to prevent the visitations. His report lauded [brevet] General Dudley for promptly removing the visitors, an action which "had a most gratifying result," in preventing disruption of the progress being made by "his Indians."⁵³

The Crow, however, required little outside agitation. As on other reservations, cultural upheaval bubbled everywhere, creating conditions that were nowhere near as idyllic as those

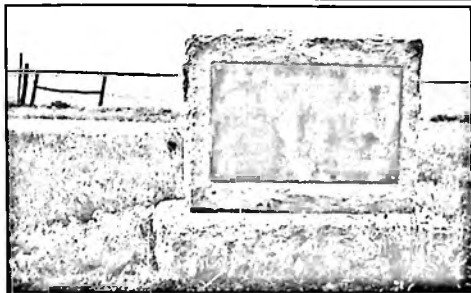
Williamson portrayed. While subjugation of the Sioux provided an unaccustomed security for the Crow, it also left young men bereft of outlets for their energy. Unable to attain prowess in battle or through hunting, they found little meaning in reservation life. The dichotomy between old men and young men festered.

"Friends of the Indians" advocated forced acculturation. Their agitation resulted in the Dawes General Allotment Act of February 1887, which sought to break tribal ties by providing individual land ownership. Sitting Bull protested and campaigned vigorously against this act, resulting in the "disruptive" visit cited by Williamson.

By August 1887, a young warrior named Wraps-Up-His-Tail had risen to prominence among the Crow. Perhaps twenty-four years old, his visions foretold his role as prophet and savior of his people. Accounts vary as to whether Wraps-Up-His-Tail participated in a sun dance with the Sioux or the Cheyenne, but they agree that his courage earned from his hosts a red, ceremonial medicine saber. Later, he claimed to have received it from the Great Spirit and took a new name: "Sword Bearer."

Sword Bearer convinced many disgruntled young warriors that he and they were invincible so long as he wielded the sword. Tribal members marveled at his uncanny ability to predict future events. Long before the Ghost Dance troubles, Sword Bearer had assembled a large and militant following.

Events came to a head in September when Sword Bearer led twenty-two young warriors on a horse-stealing



Monument

raid against the Piegan on the Blackfoot reservation. As a fundamental part of the warrior ethic, horse raids were almost impossible for young men to resist, even on the reservation. Whites protested, noting that their ranch stock often disappeared, too, during such raids.⁵⁴

Sword Bearer's victorious band returned to the Crow reservation September 30, driving some sixty captured ponies in a wild din of celebration. Preparations were in progress for the following day's ration issue, so crowds were large. Accounts agree that many shots were fired. Crow warrior Two Leggings suggests that during the ruckus only a single wild shot had passed near Agent Williamson's head.⁵⁵ However, Williamson claimed that warriors had deliberately fired into buildings and threatened employees.

Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger, recently elevated to command of the Department of Dakota, reported that trouble had erupted when rumors surfaced that Williamson planned to arrest the unruly warriors.⁵⁶ Before the situation got out of hand, Colonel Dudley dispatched 100 troopers to the agency. Enlisting the assistance of vari-

ous Crow head men, the chiefs and the troops cooperated to calm the situation without a fight. Nevertheless, a force of forty soldiers remained at the agency with orders to protect employees and property, but to make no arrests.

Despite obvious Crow cooperation in avoiding trouble, local newspapers blew the incident out of all proportion. Soldiers assigned to the agency dug trenches and threw up earthworks, fearing a negative response to these reports.⁵⁷

General Sheridan initially planned to take charge at Fort Custer, but after sorting through various reports, he directed General Ruger to make the trip instead. Ruger arrived on scene October 23 with orders to arrest the "turbulent and defiant" warriors and to confine them at Fort Custer.

Although Ruger believed Fort Custer's troops adequate, he called in a large force to overawe the Indians. Troops arrived from Forts Keogh, Missoula and Maginnis. Additional troops deployed from Fort McKinney, Wyoming Territory, to protect rail lines. Two Hotchkiss guns from Fort Custer and two more from Fort Keogh were also deployed. Fort Custer's officers felt that

no such preparations for war had been seen since 1876.⁵⁸

Sword Bearer was now in a bind. He could not back down without exposing a fatal weakness in his medicine. For his part, Ruger feared that piecemeal arrests would alienate and scatter the entire tribe. On November 5, he therefore sent for the headmen of the tribe and ordered them to arrest and to deliver all of the rebellious Indians within ninety minutes. The chiefs withdrew for a council. Tensions grew as Sword Bearer and his warriors raced forth and back before the troops, who nervously held their fire.

As Ruger's deadline approached, Sword Bearer turned away from the agency with some 100 or 150 Indians. Interpreting this as an escape attempt, Ruger ordered Dudley and two troops of cavalry to intercept them. A lively skirmish ensued. During the fight, a Hotchkiss gun killed at least one warrior. At some point during the melee, Sword Bearer was also killed, prompting several Indians to scatter into the brush to reemerge flying a flag of truce. The army lost one man killed and two wounded. The Crow lost perhaps seven killed and ten wounded.

No one really knows whether Sword Bearer was killed by a soldier or an Indian policeman. Nevertheless, surviving ringleaders were sent to Fort Snelling, Minnesota. President Cleveland urged that they be treated with "as much moderation as is consistent with safety," which appears to have been done. Within two years, all of the militants had been returned to the Crow reservation.⁵⁹

An 1887 report defined Fort Custer's section of the military tele-

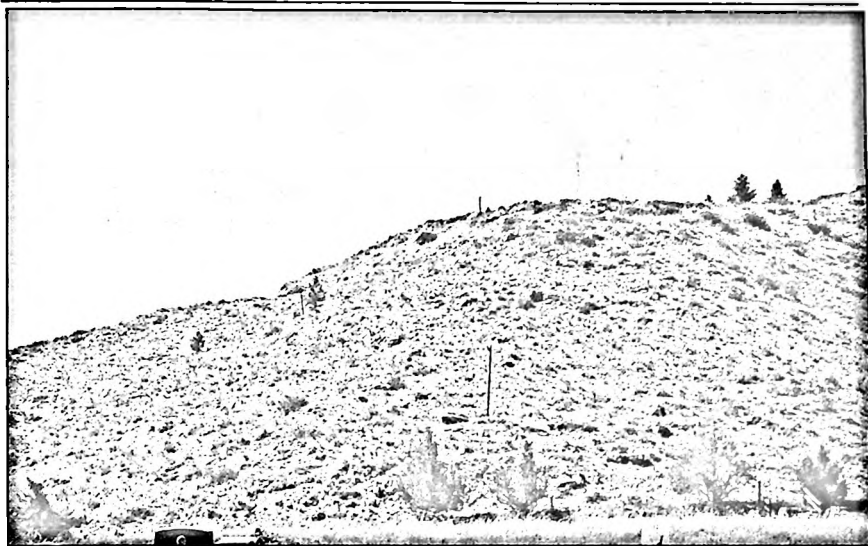
graph line as running approximately thirty miles from the Fort to Custer Station on the Northern Pacific Railroad. Soldiers repaired the line in November, noting that many poles were rotting away. Since only cottonwood poles were available in the vicinity, the rotten poles were slated for replacement with iron poles salvaged from abandoned lines.⁶⁰

Prior to the Crow troubles, troops D and G, First Cavalry, departed Fort Custer August 3, 1887 heading for the Cheyenne Indian Agency on Tongue River, where Northern Cheyenne belonging to the Pine Ridge Agency, Dakota Territory, were causing disruptions. The troops escorted 199 Indians back to Dakota, arriving at Pine Ridge without incident August 31. They returned to Fort Custer September 24.⁶¹

On June 15, 1888 Fort Custer's six Crow Scouts, under command of interpreter Charles Cacey, chased down a party of three Sioux Indians who had stolen some forty-three ponies from the Crow. The scouts picked up the Sioux trail about eight miles west of the Fort and quickly overtook them. During the ensuing fight, one Sioux warrior was killed while another was wounded. The third man reportedly drowned while attempting to escape across the Yellowstone. The scouts returned to the post the following day and restored the stolen ponies to the Crow.⁶²

In a similar event, Crow warrior Two Leggins, lost horses and also went after Sioux raiders:

Shortly after this raid, the commander at Fort Custer, whom we called Lump Nose, [most likely Colonel Dudley] sent for me. I expected him to put me in prison,



Suicide Run

*but I still went. When I entered his room he stood up to shake my hand and I felt better. He asked what had happened and after I had finished he said that enemies had stolen my horses and I had got them back, killing one of the thieves. He said I had done well.*⁶³

Two Leggins said that the Crow received weekly distributions from Fort Custer. He also mentioned that the soldiers had built a ferry. Regarding the ferry, Agent E.P. Briscoe wrote on May 10, 1888: "The military having possession of the desirable point of crossing, have established a ferry, and there is much complaint from them because they have to cross the Indians without pay."⁶⁴

Companies A and D, Twenty-Fifth Infantry Regiment, arrived June 10, 1888 from Fort Meade, Dakota Territory, to become Fort Custer's first

African-American troops.⁶⁵ They were joined in May 1892, by the regimental band and seven troops of the Tenth Cavalry. Returns for July 1888 showed twenty-eight officers, 411 enlisted men and six scouts residing at Fort Custer.⁶⁶

Troops B and E, First Cavalry were dispatched to the Tongue River Agency August 18, 1888 to intercept a party of twenty-five Sioux reported to be traveling from Pine Ridge Agency to participate in a sun dance. However, Crow Indian police had already begun to escort most of the Sioux warriors back to Pine Ridge, so the soldiers simply returned to Fort Custer, arriving September 1.⁶⁷

In October 1889, Company A, Twenty-Fifth Infantry, departed Fort Custer to place 106 headstones to mark the graves of officers, enlisted men and civilians whose remains had been moved to the Custer Battlefield Nation-



Tom LeForge

al Cemetery from the site of old Fort Phil Kearney. Troops often performed additional work on the Battlefield during subsequent years.⁶⁸

Perhaps Fort Custer's most bizarre incident occurred Saturday, September 13, 1890, when two young Cheyenne warriors, Head Chief and Young Mule, challenged a company of soldiers to a duel.

The two young braves admitted killing a young white boy, Hugh Boyle, when he confronted them as they butchered a stolen cow. Most tribal members, fearing retribution, agreed the boys should be punished. But for their part, the boys refused to be taken by soldiers and hanged "like dogs." Members of Head Chief's military society protected him from arrest at the Cheyenne camp while negotiations proceeded. Eventually, a compromise permitted the boys to "attack" a company of soldiers in a

suicide run, thus permitting them to die like men.⁶⁹

Following distribution on the next ration day, the hills near Lame Deer, Montana were covered with stoic Cheyenne, assembled to witness the drama. Troops D, G and E, First Cavalry, handled the ration distribution and occupied a nearby encampment named Camp Crook. Troop D, drew the unpleasant duty as de facto firing squad, while G and E were held in reserve in case of trouble.

At about 3:00 the two armed boys appeared on a hill overlooking the soldiers, clad in full war regalia and accompanied by a cohort of young admirers. Cheyenne head men ordered the agitated young men off the hill fearing an impulsive act that could lead to a massacre. Everyone knew what was about to happen. Village criers rode among the people, warning them not to shout or to sing during the run.

Suddenly, the boys kicked their horses into a charge. Young Mule's horse was shot from under him, but both boys made it back to the top of the hill. Head Chief wheeled his horse about and raced again toward the soldier line. He had vowed to ride through the soldiers, and though hit several times, he did not fall dead from his horse until he fulfilled his vow. Young Mule, still armed and on foot in thick brush, held the soldiers at bay for nearly an hour before he too fell, riddled with bullets. The Cheyenne, though mourning loudly, made no move against the soldiers. In their eyes justice had been served.⁷⁰

From 1890 to 1898, reports to the Secretary of War, post returns and similar reports show numerous practice

marches, often shuttling between Forts Custer and Keogh. Units made additional marches to temporary duty assignments at places like Camp Merritt. Most marches covered from 60 to 150 miles and lasted several days.

One movement of note occurred August 12, 1893, when First Lieutenant Leighton Finley and thirty-two enlisted men of the 10th Cavalry, left Fort Custer driving thirty-two horses to be used during cavalry competitions at Fort Keogh. The detachment arrived August 16, departed August 20 and returned Fort Custer August 25 having marched, 270 miles.⁷¹

In January 1890, Inspector Frank C. Armstrong of the Indian Department suggested to the Secretary of the Interior, that Indians could be enlisted as regular soldiers. In response, a company of northern plains Indians and one of southern plains Indians were authorized. Despite successes, army brass viewed the experiment with mixed feelings ranging from support to strong hostility.

Lieutenant Edward Wanton Casey, commanded Troop A, Department of Dakota, a unit composed of Cheyenne Indian scouts at Fort Keogh. While on detached service at Tongue River Agency from April 13, 1890 to July 23, 1890, Lieutenant Samuel C. Robertson, First Cavalry, observed Casey's success and sought to create a similar troop at Fort Custer using Crow Indians. His unit became Troop B, Department of Dakota.

Secretary of War, Redfield Proctor, in his *Annual Report* for 1891-92 reviewed the successes enjoyed by Indian police and Indian scouts and authorized each of the twenty-six regi-

ments serving west of the Mississippi to enlist one company of Indians. Troop L in each cavalry regiment and company I in each infantry regiment became an Indian company with an authorized strength of fifty-five men.⁷²

The authorization essentially eliminated Troops A and B, Department of Dakota. In addition, Lieutenant Casey was killed by Plenty Horses, a Brule, Sioux, in 1891, and Lieutenant Robertson died of an illness in 1893. The loss of the program's two strongest proponents proved a great setback. Enlistments dwindled steadily and by 1897 the experiment was officially abandoned.⁷³

The American economy slid once again into depression with the so-called "Panic of 1893." By 1894, many observers considered it the worst economic calamity in American history to that time. The depression spawned one of the first mass protest marches on the nation's capital. Officially named the Army of the Commonweal in Christ, the movement quickly became known as Coxey's Army, named for its primary leader, Ohio businessman, Jacob Coxey.

Initially, the movement, which was designed to protest unemployment and to demand public works jobs, fell somewhat flat. Eventually, a more militant group of railroad workers co-opted the movement. On April 21, 1894 approximately 500 protesters, led by William Hogan, commandeered a Northern Pacific train for their trek to Washington D.C. Friendly supporters along the way enabled them to elude federal marshals sent to detain them.

Four troops of the Tenth Cavalry under Lieutenant Colonel D. Perry left Fort Custer at 8 p.m. April 25 for

Custer Station to cooperate in the arrest of the Hogan contingent of Commonwealers.⁷⁴

A much more dangerous situation developed in July 1894 as continued economic hardship triggered a strike at the Pullman Company in Chicago. Plush Pullman sleeper and passenger cars operated on virtually every railroad in the nation. Thus, when railroad workers began a sympathy boycott, refusing to handle trains carrying Pullman cars, most of the nation's rail traffic west of the Mississippi stopped.

Brigadier General Wesley Merritt, then serving as commander of the Department of Dakota reported:

It was on the 26th of June that the sympathetic strike with the Pullman strikers was declared. Every wheel on the Northern Pacific Railroad was stopped in its course. Freight trains and passenger trains were halted where this order found them, and with untold inconvenience to the traveling public and great losses to the commercial, all traffic on the road west of Fargo was discontinued. This continued till the 7th of July, when by military intervention the railroad was open first to fitful service, and later kept in regular operation under military protection.⁷⁵

As part of the operation that Merritt described, Troops B and G, Tenth Cavalry were dispatched July 7 from Fort Custer to protect the Big Horn Tunnel, about a mile east of Custer Station. Troop K, Tenth Cavalry, rushed to Billings, Montana to protect railroad property at that location. Companies A and D, Twenty-fifth Infantry proceeded to Custer Station, and were

subsequently ordered to Livingston, Montana.⁷⁶

On August 25, Companies A and D were the last to be recalled. They broke camp September 1 to return to Fort Custer.⁷⁷

Fort Custer continued operations for almost four more years following the Pullman strike. Companies A and D, Tenth Cavalry, departed Fort Custer for the last time in November 1897 on their way to Fort Harrison, Montana.⁷⁸

The last twenty soldiers abandoned the post April 17, 1898.⁷⁹ When evacuated, many buildings were sold, some forming the nucleus of present-day Hardin.⁸⁰ Two Leggins gave his interviews in a homestead, consisting of a tipi and a house made of timbers from old Fort Custer.⁸¹

Prior to dismantling, Fort Custer was considered to be a million-dollar fort. French and German Army visitors had once pronounced it the finest cavalry post in the world, with running water in every building.⁸² Still, the frontier was said to be closed. Distant wars in Cuba and the Philippines rendered talk of maintaining Fort Custer academic. Soldiers were needed elsewhere, and the Fort was by that time in a sorry state.

Today, virtually all traces of the Fort have vanished, the plateau wiped clean by the fleeting occupation of an airfield and a golf course.⁸³ Little remains beyond a small monument placed by the Daughters of the American Revolution to keep a silent vigil over the ghosts and the memories of a once proud and bustling fort.

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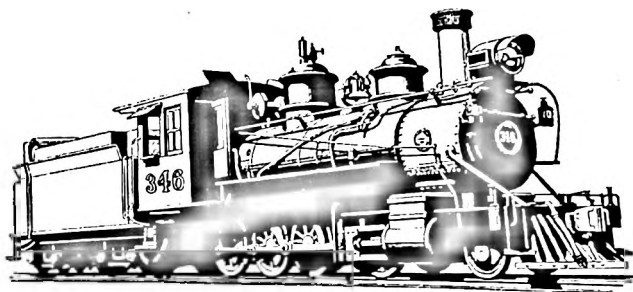
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Over the Corral Rail

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

Colorado Westerners Activities

Boulder County Corral of Westerners members have been presenting some very interesting programs. In April Pete Palmer and Crif Crawford presented the results of their research on the effects of the disastrous September 2013 Boulder flood, where the water that damaged the Frasier Meadows Retirement Center (where the Corral meets) came from, and then the various possibilities for future mitigation. Both speakers are geologists, Crif with a Ph.D. from Columbia University and a career primarily in the Middle East, and Pete, with a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota, and a career that included Cambrian specialist for the USGS, Professor of Geology at Stony Brook University, and manager of the Decade of North American Geology, the centennial project for the Geological Society in America.

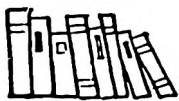
In May Bill Johnson and Gary Flauaus presented "A Grave Site in Gilpin County: 'On this spot are buried Two of Fremont's men' --Fact or Fiction?" Gary is a retired senior software architect, and Bill is a retired orthopedic surgeon with an interest in old bones.

The Colorado Corral of Westerners April program, by Steve Hart and Eric Twitty, had the intriguing title, "Glowing in the Dark." In explanation, the subtitle was "Colorado's 'Lost' Radium Boom: early 20th-Century Mining and Processing Landscapes on the Colorado Plateau and in Denver." Steve Hart retired from URS Corp. after a 40-year career as a geological engineer. He worked on radioactive waste disposal projects in the 1980s and also he was at the Colorado School of Mines in 1990s. Eric Twitty worked as an exploration geologist, and now as a consulting mining archeologist. His MA thesis for the University of Denver was "Blown to Bits in the Mine: a History of Mining and Explosives in the United States."

In May, Laura McCall presented "Thomas Cole and the Hudson River School" to the Colorado Corral. Cole found a "vanishing landscape" under siege by the "intrusions of civilization" and captured the early American West in a series of magnificent paintings. Dr. McCall is Professor of History at MSU-Denver. She has co-edited *A Shared Experience: Men, Women, and the History of Gender*, and *Across the Great Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West*.

For the Pikes Peak Posse in April, member John Anderson presented "Ute Indian Prayer Trees of the Pikes Peak Region." John Wesley Anderson, living in the Pikes Peak Region since 1956, was the 26th sheriff of El Paso County, from 1995 to 2003. He focused on the culture of the Utes between 150 and 450 years ago, discussing the extensive sacred living artifacts they left behind.

In May Denver Posse member Jeff Broome presented "A Story Stalks a Writer: The Making of *Cheyenne War*." A Professor of Philosophy at Arapahoe Community College since 1985, Dr. Broome has published a book on philosophy, but his passion for Western history has resulted in overshadowing that tome, by his three books on the Indian Wars.



Westerners Bookshelf



Under the Eagle, Samuel Holiday, Navajo Code Talker, by Samuel Holiday and Robert S McPherson. University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 265 pages. Softbound. Table of Contents, Index, Footnotes, Photos, Bibliography. Softbound, \$19.95.

The story of the Navajo Code Talkers is well known. Navajos and other Native Americans used their own languages for battlefield communication in WWII. All served anonymously, some in combat and some in the rear. Some died in combat.

This book follows Samuel Holiday. He was born in Monument Valley on the Navajo Reservation. His upbringing was shaped and informed by Navajo teachings and beliefs with a teenage dose of Christianity and boarding school.

Holiday tells his tale, joining the Marines, learning the Navajo code, and combat on Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima. McPherson examines how the Navajo outlook and thinking shaped his attitudes and protected him in battle. He discusses the creation myths, stories of Monster Slayer, Changing Woman, and others. McPherson compares the lessons of the myths with how Holiday prepared for, fought, and survived the war.

The Code Talker program was classified until the mid 1960's. On coming home, individual Code Talkers were unable to discuss their war with anyone. Holiday for one felt totally disenfranchised and unworthy because of this. It didn't help that there were two unfortunate instances of his being mistaken for a Japanese by white marines during combat operations. PTSD was a problem even for those veterans not constrained by secrecy. It was more so for Code Talkers. After coming home, many had an Enemy Way Healing, a traditional Navajo ceremony, to exorcise their ghosts. For a good number of them this helped them come back to civilian life.

The lid was lifted with the declassifying of the Program. Holiday and other

survivors then felt free to talk, compare notes, and organize an association. They took their rightful place in WWII history.

This is a good account of the what and how of the Code Talker Program. It is probably the only account by a traditional Navajo of how that helped and sometimes hindered the Talkers in their duties.

--Stan Moore, P.M.

A President in Yellowstone; the F. Jay Haynes Photographic Album of Chester Arthur's 1883 Expedition, by Frank H. Goodyear III. University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 147 pages, 1 map, 90 photographs, end notes, bibliography, appendix with 35 additional photos, index. Hardcover, \$36.95.

On July 30, 1883, President Chester A. Arthur left for Yellowstone National Park, a 4,550-mile trip taking six weeks. He was about to become the first sitting president to travel that far west. The trip was General Philip H. Sheridan's idea and he assured the president that there would be no compromises with comfort, thanks to 175 pack horses, a seventy-five-man military escort, experienced guides, a doctor, and military couriers who would take daily dispatches to the nearest telegraph line. Sheridan did warn the President of long days in the saddle, sleeping in tents, and possibly snow even though it was August. The cautionary note was pertinent. President Arthur suffered from the potentially fatal Blight's Disease and was considered to be in fragile health. Others reminded him that an extended trip might damage his political future--there was no vice-president to cover for him--and his responsibilities resided in Washington, not Wyoming. But Arthur was an avid outdoorsman, enthusiastic rider, and an accomplished angler, so he accepted Sheridan's offer.

Although the trip was billed as an opportunity for the President to put politics behind him for a spell, controversy and politics were as much a part of Yellowstone as they were of Washington. Sheridan and others wanted to expand the park and to protect the wildlife from illegal skin hunters. Others wanted to increase funding to better manage the park. Private concerns wanted access to build hotels and related infra-structure to attract tourists, conservationists worried that the park would be desecrated by those wanting to fleece the tourists, and the newly constructed Northern Pacific Railroad wanted to build a line within the park. Many were concerned about the Indians, and others about gold and silver mining adjacent to the park. Perhaps it was time for the President to see for himself what Yellowstone National Park was all about.

Almost as an afterthought, the expedition commissioned Frank Jay Haynes to accompany the party as its photographer. Haynes, 29 years old, had recently opened a commercial studio in Fargo, Dakota Territory and had taken several photographic trips to Yellowstone. He carried with him two cameras, a large-format one and a smaller stereographic model.

The above information is contained in an introduction written by Goodyear. Haynes' 1883 photographic album follows. It consists of twenty-five captioned

8-by-10 inch photos and fourteen pages of photos in stereographic format. These images show scenic landmarks, Shoshone and Arapahoe Indians, campsites, and the travelers themselves. All photos are sharp, interesting, and are worth considerable study to appreciate all the details. On the left-hand page opposite any given photo is a narrative (actually a newspaper dispatch written by Colonel Michael Sheridan) that provides an almost poetic description of rustic life, of peace, and of contentment. The four images of Arthur show him robust, at ease with his surroundings, and enjoying the excursion. Despite the pleasurable trip and his fondness for the West, Arthur never engaged in the debate over the park's future. However, his trip brought the problems of Yellowstone to the forefront and Congress started addressing the issues.

This is an elegant book, somewhat oversized (11 by 11 inches), and printed on heavy paper in sepia tones. Prior to the publication of this book, the 1883 photographs were available for viewing only in restricted collections. Now that album is available for just \$36.95, perhaps due to the "generous assistance" of the Yellowstone Park Foundation. Those interested in the history of Yellowstone National Park, historic photos, or of a remarkable western journey should have a copy of this book.

--Rick Barth, P.M.

Ned Wynkoop and the Lonely Road from Sand Creek by Louis Kraft. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011. 336 pages, 28 B & W illustrations, 2 maps, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$34.98.

Readers with any knowledge of the infamous 1864 Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado Territory know the name Edward W. "Ned" Wynkoop. But outside of knowing his involvement with the earlier rescue of four captive children – the result of August Indian raids in Nebraska – as well as testifying against Colonel John M. Chivington, showing that the fight at Sand Creek included terrible atrocities and was not a fight but a massacre, little else is known about Wynkoop, other than his later serving as the agent for the Cheyenne and Arapaho massacre survivors. Kraft's book is a welcome addition to these tumultuous times in Kansas and Colorado Territory.

One cannot explore who Wynkoop was without exploring the vast and mostly hidden government records from this era of American history. Kraft impresses the reader with his research and collection of data. He has taken this information and molded a story of an important man that enhances understanding of this time when Colorado was a territory. It should be emphasized that the collection of documents confronts the researcher with conflicting understandings. Reports from the War Department tell one story, while reports from the Department of the Interior tell another. It takes an historian reviewing these documents a strong critical acumen to be able to sort through these conflicting understandings to produce a manuscript worthy of study. Above all else, Kraft has handled this balancing of documents well. And if for no other reason than that, this book is a must read in American history.

The reader learns who the man Wynkoop was, where he was born and raised, when he came to Colorado Territory, how he rose in stature both politically and militarily, as a major of the 1st Colorado Volunteers, and what happened to his life after he ended his short career as the Indian agent for the Southern Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa and Plains Apache. He died in New Mexico Territory, after a brief illness, in 1891. His last job was warden of the New Mexico Penitentiary. But the book's more important value comes in carefully covering the events that led to his resignation from the military and his subsequent appointment as Indian agent. It is here that Kraft does a masterful job of sorting through conflicting documents to give the reader a deeper understanding of Ned Wynkoop and his efforts to work peace between the Cheyenne and the U.S. Government. Sadly, the final grade in this endeavor was "failed." But the failure was not the result of Wynkoop's efforts. Rather, he confronted face-to-face a conflict of two cultures that no herculean effort could overcome.

Probably the most important part of Kraft's book begins with the 1867 military campaign, led by General Winfield Hancock, which included a contingent of the newly formed 7th Cavalry, commanded in the field by a young, energetic and inexperienced Civil War hero named George Armstrong Custer, confronting the Indians under Wynkoop's care, to either fight the military or submit to peace. At every turn in this tinderbox of conflict, where a small spark could produce a raging fire, Wynkoop walked a middle road, a very lonely road, seeking to assure the government that the Cheyenne meant peace, while at the same time working with the Indians to walk that walk that he so believed they would. Ultimately it failed, when in August 1868 nearly 200 of his Cheyenne left their villages near Fort Larned and went into north-central Kansas where they soon attacked dozens of settlers, killing many, who had recently staked homesteads right where the Cheyenne earlier freely hunted the land, their land, but which had been given up in an earlier treaty.

The result of those 1868 raids brought on a winter military expedition, down into the Oklahoma panhandle, where the Indians had retreated for the winter. On November 27, almost four years to the day of Sand Creek, the military, this time the 7th Cavalry, again attacked Black Kettle's people, on the Washita River, destroying the village, killing dozens of Indians, including Black Kettle and his wife, and took fifty-three captive women and children. Wynkoop already saw the handwriting on the wall and had resigned his commission, learning of the battle from the newspapers. His efforts had failed, but Kraft's book has not. The reader is "Kraftfully" drawn into Ned's world, a lonely road from Sand Creek to the Washita.

--Jeff Broome, P.M.

An Archaeology of Desperation Exploring the Donner Party's Alder Creek Camp, edited by Kelly J. Dixon, Julie M. Schablitsky, and Shannon A. Novak. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011. 384 pages, 49 B & W illustrations, 8 maps, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$34.95.

One of America's best known tragedies in western migration occurred early in that long history. The winter of 1846-47 caught a late-leaving wagon train party, known as the Donner party, stranding them for several months in the Sierra Mountains. The emigrants consisted of eighty people of German, Irish and English descent. The majority of the wagon train – sixty-two persons - was trapped near Truckee Lake, now known as Donner Lake. Seven miles further along the trail another twenty-three persons were caught by the fierce weather. That camp was called the Alder Creek camp. What is famous in this winter weather prison was the fact that many of the people who survived, at both camps, relied on cannibalism to stave off starvation. Many of the stranded people were part of the extended Donner family, and hence the name Donner party. When finally rescued, thirty-seven survived at the Donner Creek camp. Twenty-six died, of which nine were children aged thirteen or younger. At the Alder Creek camp, twelve people survived. Eleven emigrants died, four of which were children, aged twelve and younger.

The value of this book is not its delving into the Donner Party history. While that is briefly given, the book instead focuses on using archaeology to determine what can be further learned regarding the Alder Creek camp, taking that information and blending it with oral history as well as contribution of historians who have analyzed the tragedy. Archaeology makes an important contribution to this understanding.

Two summers – 2003 and 2004 – were spent at the Alder Creek camp near Truckee, California by a team of archaeologists and volunteers. The data collected was then assessed by a team of people, including historians, to produce the chapters comprising the book. Kristen Johnson wrote the first two chapters, dealing with locating the Alder Creek camp. Three other authors wrote separate chapters assessing the archaeological findings, comprising Part II of the book. The titles in Part II indicate the fruit of labor: Donald Hardesty wrote “Historical Perspectives on the Archaeology of the Donner Party.” Kelly Dixon wrote “An Archaeology of Despair;” and Julie Schablitsky wrote “A Family in Crisis: Archaeology of a Survivor camp.” Not surprisingly, the archaeology substantiated the cannibalism that was later noted as having occurred in the camp, though that analysis is left for later chapters. Analysis revealed many mammal bones, indicating the Donner party initially survived on horse, cattle, dog and deer. But not included among the remains were human bone. Archaeology led the authors to conclude that the surviving parties treated the human dead differently than the animals, saying “the *absence* of human tissue in the food refuse is the most interesting result.” (179) Thus, the archaeological studies at the Alder Creek camp neither confirms nor denies cannibalism at that site.

The book is a fascinating and important modern study of cannibalism and the Donner party.

--Jeff Broome, P.M.

California Through Russian Eyes, 1806-1848. Early California Commentaries Volume 2. Compiled, translated and edited by James R. Gibson. Arthur H. Clark Company, Norman, Oklahoma, 2013. Illustrations, footnotes, bibliography, index. Hardback, \$45.00.

Professor Gibson of York University, Toronto, has put together a collection of thirty-two Russian first-person accounts of travel to what was called Alta or Upper California between the years 1806 and the start of the Gold Rush. The accounts are written by sea captains, crew members, directors of the Russian-American Company et al, all of whom visit and comment on various locations in Northern California. Many of these travelers were, in fact, German Russians, such as Otto von Kotzebue and Ferdinand Von Wrangell. The places visited include San Francisco, Monterey, San Rafael, Sonoma, Santa Clara, and many other missions, towns and villages.

The Russians were engaged in a variety of purposes: the Sea Otter fur trade was a major initiative at first, and was balanced by a need to acquire grains that were grown in excessive abundance in California; around-the-world voyages which they were just beginning to get involved with at the start of this period; the creation of Fort Ross and the settlement at Bodega Bay; and a desire to know more about Northern California.

In the process, they comment on the kindness and good manners of the Spanish, the poor treatment of the Indians by the missionaries, and the latter's greed for gifts, how the Indians liked the Russians, the lack of organization of the Spanish and various aspects of California itself. Compared to Sitka, they found California lush and fertile, and noted that it provided an easy life for the settlers. A surfeit of grain, cattle, deer, and edible birds meant that there was no shortage of food, and that life was easy.

The best account was "Excerpts From Alexander Markov's Recollections 1845." Beautifully written, he provides a fascinating and detailed account of his visit as far as Yerba Buena, and portrays the lifestyle of the Californios. He found camaraderie, visits monasteries, the Governor Don Carlos, trades for vegetables with an English settler, visits an Indian village, enjoys a fandango and has a one-armed vaquero as a bodyguard on the trip.

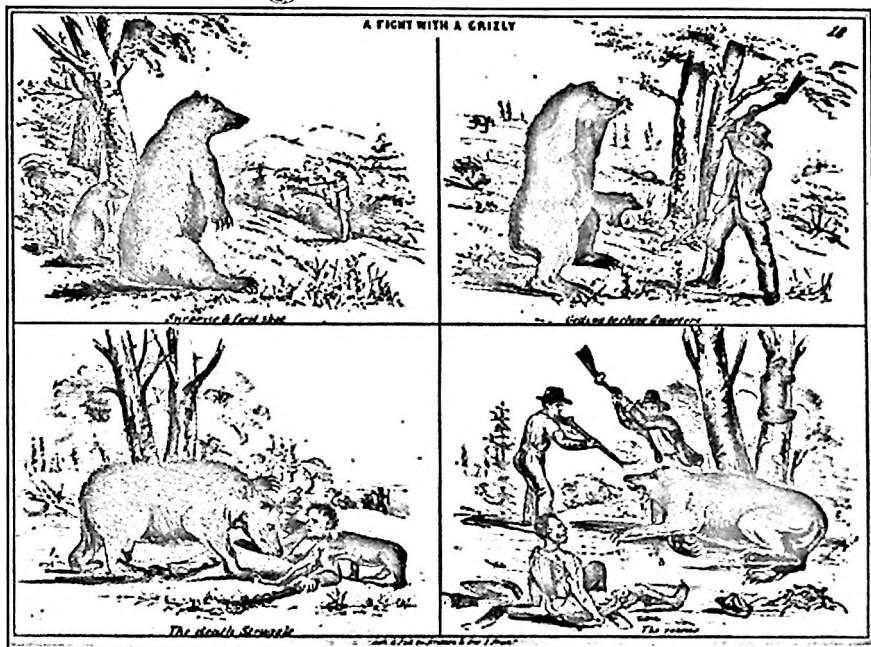
One major problem is the repetitiveness of many of the accounts. Most of the visitors comment on the beauty of the Spanish women, the unkind treatment of the Indians prior to independence from Spain in 1821, the terrain, the weather, the crops, the horsemanship skills of the vaqueros etc, etc. Nevertheless, this is an important and informative addition to our knowledge of the Russians on the West Coast, their sophisticated approach to their travels, their interests and motivations and their high degree of education.

--Alan Culpin, P.M.



The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

July - August 2014



Britton & Rey, lithographer (1850)

“Fight With a Grizzly” - A realistic series of events encountered while hunting grizzly with a flintlock rifle.

The Colorado Grizzly – History and Legend
by Dan Martel, C.M.
(Presented April 27, 2013)

THE DENVER WESTERNERS

ROUNDUP

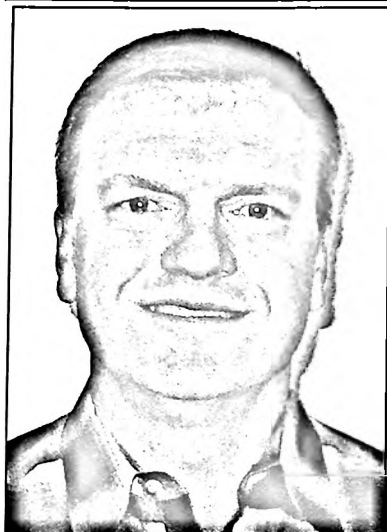
VOL. LXX NO. 4



July - August 2014

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Our Author

Dan Martel grew up in rural North Dakota and spent his childhood searching for arrowheads, tepee rings and buffalo rubs near the confluence of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, hence his interest in the upper Missouri Fur Trade. He earned undergraduate degrees in Computer Science and Accounting from North Dakota in 1989 and relocated to Colorado that same year. He worked for over twenty-five years in the computer industry specializing in what is now known as Big Data Analytics. He was principle architect on numerous platforms that measured everything from optimal ambulance placement to consumer behavior.

Dan retired in 2013 to devote his time to wildlife conservation and writing. Dan is very active in volunteer organizations and participates in a number of youth programs as well. He and his wife Janet enjoy bicycling and skiing, and spend well over one-hundred days per year in the backcountry. They also enjoy world travel and have visited some pretty-out-of-the-way places. They live in Lakewood, Colorado.

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The *ROUNDUP* (ISSN #2078-7970) is published bi-monthly by the Denver Posse of Westerners, Inc., founded Jan. 25, 1945. Subscription is included with a paid-up membership. (Corresponding membership is \$25 yearly, due Jan. 1) Submission of manuscripts is encouraged, but publication cannot be guaranteed. Illustrations are the responsibility of the author. Manuscripts must be submitted electronically, PC format. All copy is subject to revision and/or correction at the editor's discretion. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy of content, but such accuracy is the ultimate responsibility of the author. Periodical postage is paid at Denver, CO. *ROUNDUP* layout and pre-press by Jim Krebs, 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220. Printed by Oran V. Siler Printing Company, Denver, CO

POSTMASTER: Send address changes for *ROUNDUP* to 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220

The Colorado Grizzly – History and Legend

by Dan Martel, C.M.

(Presented April 27, 2013)

To modern-day Coloradans, the term “grizzly bear” most likely represents a place, mascot, or curiosity in a zoo. From the first humans inhabiting the state through the early twentieth century the term represented something far different: a ferocious creature with four inch claws standing up to eight feet tall and weighing up to 1200 pounds. *Ursus Arctos Horribillis* was, at times, dangerous to human life and economic livelihood. It wasn't until the early twentieth century that the bear was considered less a threat and perhaps worthy of protection. Sadly, changes in attitude were slow coming and by the time they were implemented, extinction was inevitable.

It's estimated that at the time of the Lewis and Clark expedition up to 100,000 grizzlies roamed what is now the lower forty-eight states. Native Americans first came in contact with the grizzly bear around 12,000 years ago. Perhaps the fact that a skinned carcass appears strikingly human or the bear sometimes walks on its hind legs fostered a spiritual relationship among all tribes encountering him. The Apache and Navajo feared the bear's supernatural powers. The Ute believe man and bear share a common origin. Ute culture also believes a warrior woke a bear that had overslept his hibernation. In gratitude, the bear shared the dance and song performed to celebrate their annual awakening. The Ute Bear Dance, a celebration of springtime, remains the most important celebration of the year.

Europeans likely encountered the Colorado grizzly as early as the 1694 Don Diago de Vargas exploration of the Rio Grande del Norte (Rio Grande) River.

In 1805 the trapper James Purcell was the first non-Spaniard to enter the region and by 1830 every drainage in the state had been scoured for beaver. In addition to beaver, grizzly was a desirable quarry, yielding claws and hide for trade goods and lard for everything from cooking to axle grease. Although “it tasted a little like polcat”, grizzly steak was common fare.

Federal explorers also encountered grizzly and the return of the 1807 Zebulon Pike expedition delivered the first live grizzly specimens to the east. Two cubs, allegedly taken near the headwaters of the Rio Grande del Norte, were purchased from an Indian in Taos, NM. Pike declared the cubs were docile as pets and they much preferred Americans over their Spanish escorts. The cubs were put on public display in a Philadelphia zoo. The maturing cubs became increasingly hostile and were eventually killed after pulling a monkey into their cage and devouring it on the spot.

Stephen Long's expedition traveled up the South Platte River and returned via the Arkansas River. The Pawnee warned the party never to hunt the bear alone, advising the expedition to “go to war with him with many warriors.”

Accompanying Long was Dr. Edwin James who not only recorded the first grizzly sighting in Colorado but also recorded four attacks on party members while in the territory.

In 1822 Lewis Dawson became what is believed to be the first American citizen to die and be buried in Colorado. Dawson, a member of the Fowler party on a trading expedition to Santa Fe, was killed while hunting grizzly on the Purgatoire River.

Bear attacks became increasingly frequent as more parties entered the territory. Those same river corridors extending from the plains into the mountain parks were not only important travel routes for man, they were also ideal grizzly habitat. Contact between man and bear was inevitable.

As official reports, yarns, and whoppers filtered back east for publication, the national imagination rapidly associated the grizzly as a marauding beast leaving innumerable maimed and dead bodies in its wake. Although telling tall tales to wide-eyed greenhorns was nearly an art form, scarred, disfigured and disabled survivors provided tangible proof that the grizzly was one of the supreme dangers of the frontier - perhaps second only to the Indian. The villainous reputation of the grizzly was reinforced throughout the nineteenth century and remnants of that legacy exist even today.

Although commonly described as a carnivorous predator, the grizzly in the lower forty-eight derives 90% of its

nutrition from plants and insects. The majority of meat in the bear's diet is carrion - either winter-killed animals or victims of other predators, particularly if wolves are in the area. That is not to say that opportunistic kills do not occur; the weak, wounded or unwary are routinely converted to an easy meal. The only period grizzlies actively hunt are the few weeks in late spring when newborn ungulates are especially vulnerable. Fanciful journals such as Pattie's stated the grizzly followed the great bison herds, earning a meal by a swipe of the paw. It's more likely the bear stayed within a few miles of the rivers and fed on wolf-killed carcasses when bison were in the area. In fact, modern studies suggest that any grizzly foolish enough to confront an adult bison is as likely to perish as feast.

Tales of the belligerent bear often ended in the hunter becoming the hunted. However those same tales predominately indicate an attack provoked by shooting or shooting at a bear, surprising a lone bear or coming into close quarters with a sow and cubs. Some accounts mention grizzlies tolerating several apparently mortal wounds. The bear's ability to tolerate and even survive such wounds are due to physical characteristics developed in response to the violent conflict encountered during mating, hunting and even seizing prey. Survival also dictated the development of particularly aggressive behavior in response to such threats. In referring to the great bear's aggressive behavior and difficulty in killing, Meriwether Lewis stated he would rather fight two Indians than one bear.

The single greatest tool for provoking a savage response from a grizzly was the woefully inadequate flintlock rifle. Hand-loaded from the muzzle, a skilled hunter could only fire up to three rounds per minute. The weapon had a maximum effective range of seventy-five yards and, upon discharge, betrayed the location of the hunter by producing a plume of smoke. A grizzly shot at seventy-five yards could spot the smoke and charge the shooter in as little as five seconds. The Lewis and Clark journals state the men typically would fire from forty yards.

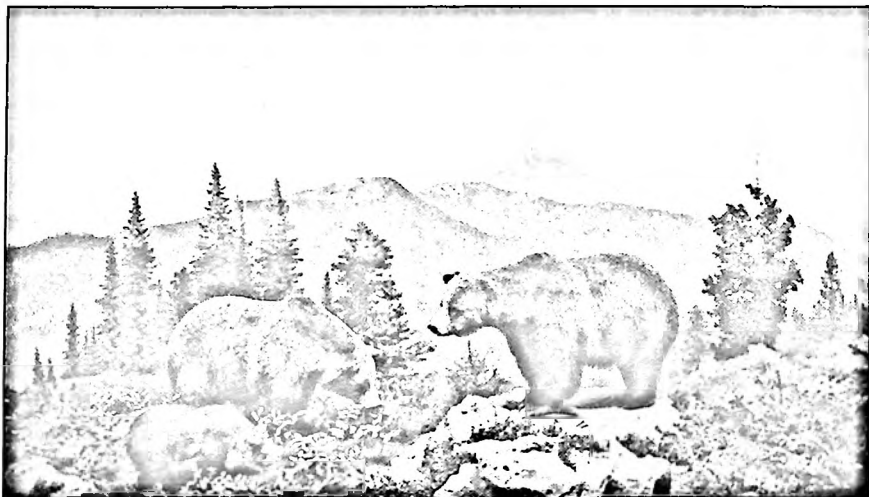
The advent of the breach-loading rifle in the 1860s changed the dynamics of a bear encounter from a “shoot and flee” proposition for the shooter to a mortal encounter for the bear. Not only could a shooter fire up to fourteen rounds per minute, technological advances such as longer and more accurate shots with large caliber cartridges provided a margin of safety for the hunter. The odds of killing a grizzly with a rifle forever favored the hunter.

By the 1850s Colorado’s primary transportation routes were the Cherokee and Santa Fe routes along the Arkansas River and the Overland Trail along the North Platte. The 1859 Pike’s Peak Gold Rush saw these routes flooded with up to 100,000 optimistic gold seekers headed west. And within a year’s time an estimated two-thirds of that number returned east broke and hungry. The hordes of men either going to or coming from the gold fields killed any animal that could be eaten. By 1860 any remaining grizzlies along Colorado’s plains rivers were gone.

The early 1860s saw mining camps spring up as far west as the Continental Divide. The Homestead Act of 1862 and the close of the Civil War generated a new influx of settlers creating towns, farms and ranches all along the Front Range. And wherever settlement occurred, wildlife populations suffered an immediate and profound decline. Predators were always first to be eliminated and by the end of the decade, grizzlies along the Front Range were rare indeed.

The last documented grizzly fatality along the Front Range occurred in 1867. That year a young man named Eddy Vance, a veteran of the Dakota War of 1862, was hunting near present day Evergreen, approximately twenty miles west of Denver. The story of his hunt was reported as “A Terrible Bear Fight” by the *Daily Rocky Mountain News*:

“On Tuesday morning Mr. Edwin Vance, a young man, about twenty years of age, and son of Mr. John Vance, who resides on bear Creek, went up the cañon about four miles to hunt, when he came across a grizzly bear. He approached to within a few yards and fired, when the bear fell. He loaded and shot again and as the bear lay upon the ground he reloaded and went up to dispatch him. The bear lay quietly until young Vance was within reach, when he arose on his hind legs and struck the gun from his hands which was fired at the same moment but without hitting the bear. The bear then with the same or another blow tore open



Courtesy Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

Grizzly Bear Diorama at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Grizzlies were harvested in 1913 along the Navajo River in southwestern Colorado.

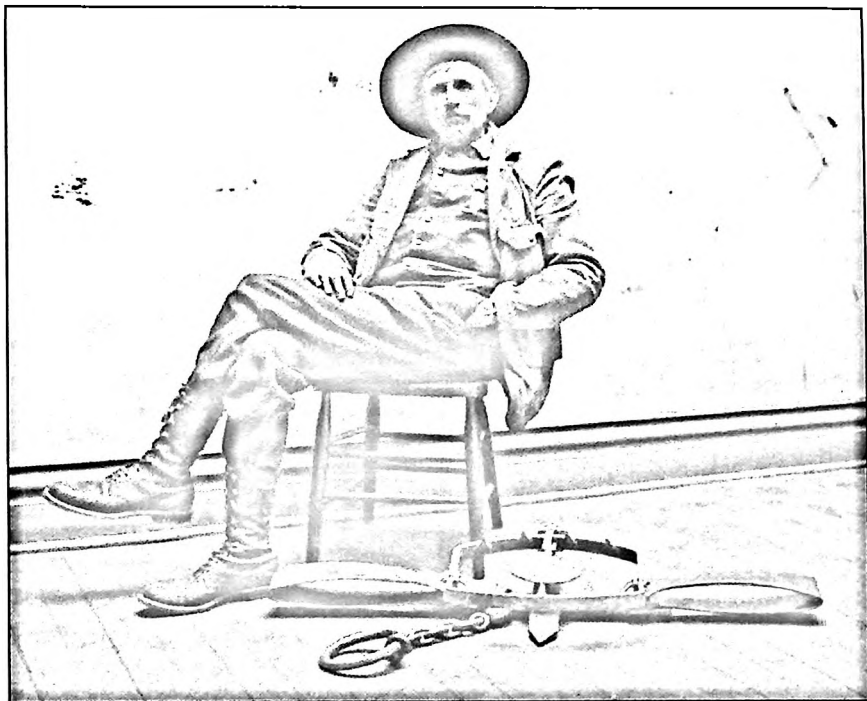
the flesh above Vance's right eye, cutting two gashes, dropping the skin and flesh down over the eye. The other nail caught the nasal bone at the root and tore a portion away and passing on tore out the left eye. The bear then proceeded to give him a hug and commenced chewing and lacerating him with his teeth. He dislodged his wrist and broke his forearm in one or two places. He then bit his left knee severely and cut a frightful gash across the front portion of his limb above it. He also bit both limbs from the knee down to the ankle.

The bear then lay down upon him and both remained quiet for some time, when the bear moved a few feet and laid down, watching him. After lying in this position for half an hour, Vance ventured

to get up and escaped, the bear still remaining where he lay.

Shortly afterward a young lad, son of Mr. Robinson, about twelve years old but under size, came up and seeing the bear shot four balls into him, then discovering the blood and seeing Vance's tracks followed after him. He found him about a quarter of a mile distant where from loss of blood and pain he became faint and unable to proceed further. The lad at once went for assistance and Vance was taken home.

Vance was taken to Idaho Springs and expired after three days. Eddy was interred in the private Vance-Crosson cemetery. The Cemetery is now part of the Mount Evans Ranch.



Courtesy Ernie Wilkerson

Newhouse Bear Trap

By the late 1860s large-scale cattle ranching was quickly becoming the cornerstone of the territorial economy, and ranchers paid handsome bounties for bear scalps. The cattle market collapse of 1884 triggered a transition to sheep ranching, and by 1900 over two-million sheep summered in the high country. The bear once again lived up to his bloodthirsty reputation by sometimes killing dozens of sheep in a single night. In fact, grizzly populations may have increased due to the introduction of a new and defenseless food source. Civilization pushed deep into the last unpopulated areas of the mountains during the gold and silver rushes of the 1880s and 90s. Market hunters, meeting

the demand for meat in the settlements, took a significant toll on wildlife populations. Bear was sold throughout the region for fifteen cents per pound and hides brought from ten to thirty dollars.

Although market hunting was outlawed in 1889, the fledgling Colorado Game and Fish Commission did not have the manpower to enforce the law. Market hunting's devastating effects on wildlife continued through the turn of the century.

Some Native American cultures hunted grizzly as a pastime and the Americans quickly joined in the fun.

Beginning in the 1860s Colorado newspapers mention multi-week bear hunts in North Park, South Park, and areas north and west of Boulder. A western grizzly hunt was touted as "the finest sport our country can afford." Hunters typically used hounds although hunting over bait was common for the less affluent. Hunting became a source of revenue for Meeker, Canon City, Glenwood Springs and Leadville. The legendary Jake Borah guided bear hunts for Grover Cleveland, Ernest Thompson Seton, Teddy Roosevelt, Zane Gray and others.

The most notorious hunt in American history occurred in 1855 when Sir George Gore arrived from England sporting fifty servants, one-hundred dogs, and thirty wagons laden with all the comforts he desired. Securing Jim Bridger as guide, the party spent a year hunting North, South and Middle Parks and slaughtering 3,000 bison, forty grizzly, as well as countless elk, deer and antelope. The expedition then moved north into present-day Wyoming and Montana. The expedition abruptly came to an end near present-day Sundance, Wyoming when Gore so angered the Sioux that they seized the party's horses, guns and clothing.

The men that hunted grizzlies were an exclusive group with Jim Bridger, William Wright and Grizzly Adams achieving fame for their exploits. Even grizzlies themselves became legends, and numerous bears achieved notoriety within the state. But one bear, Old Mose, became the most famous grizzly in history. And his pursuer, Wharton Pigg, was the most hapless grizzly hunter of all time.

The story began in 1883 when Jacob Radcliff, a market hunter, was killed by a grizzly forty-five miles southeast of Fairplay near Black Mountain. The Radcliff incident began a twenty-year quest by sixteen-year-old Wharton Pigg to end the bear's career. He encountered Mose every year, but seemed to consistently be outwitted by the wily boar. Pigg began calling the bear "Old Mose" as he seemed to mosey all over the countryside. In 1887, a seventy-five-dollar bounty was placed on a local stock-killing bear thought to be Mose. Old Mose was not to be found and Pigg managed to kill a sow and a cub. One of the sow's cubs escaped. In 1894 a very large male thought to be Mose was taken on Thirty-nine Mile Mountain. Fearing "his" bear had been killed, a relieved Pigg located Moses' familiar tracks on Black Mountain the following spring. Pigg only missed two years in his quest for Old Mose, and those were spent in Cripple Creek. By 1900 he had earned enough to leave the goldfields and purchase the Stirrup Ranch. In addition to being the largest cattle ranch in Fremont County, perhaps it was no coincidence it was also located in the heart of Moses' territory. He invested in a bear trap in 1901 and within two weeks successfully caught two of Moses' toes. In 1902 a human skeleton was found on Thirty Nine Mile Mountain and Old Mose was the prime suspect.

In 1903 Wharton Pigg met James Anthony, a professional bear hunter who had recently relocated to Canon City. Pigg and Anthony agreed to hunt Old Mose the following spring using Anthony's dogs. So, in March 1904,

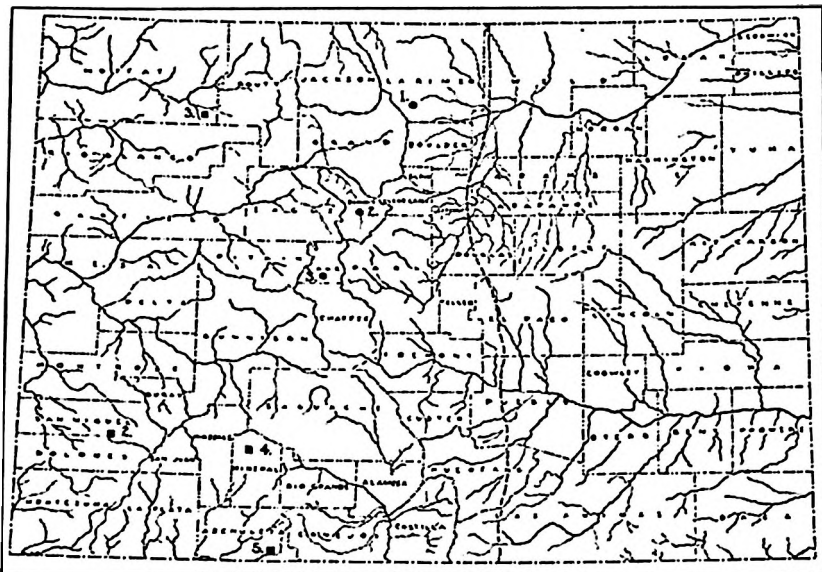


Courtesy Ernie Wilkerson

Wharton Pigg, Old Mose and James Anthony

Anthony and Pigg began a month-long hunt that yielded nothing but a rivalry between the two men. Finally in late April, Pigg located Mose, rounded up Anthony, and the hunt was on. The hounds trailed Mose for five days, finally ending in a small copse of aspen trees. As Anthony and his dogs entered

the trees, Pigg rushed to the other side of the trees hoping to intercept a fleeing Mose. Rather than flee, Mose made his last stand against the hounds and outwitted Pigg one last time. James Anthony was the man that ended Old Moses' twenty-year career.



Colorado, showing type localities, ●, and other records, ■, of Grizzly Bears as given by Merriam. 1—*Ursus shoshonei*; 2—*U. horribilis bairdi*; 3—*U. macrourus*; 4—*U. planiceps*; 5—*U. texensis texensis*. Note—The type locality of *U. planiceps* is not indicated on the map; though the type undoubtedly came from Colorado, the exact locality is unknown.

Courtesy Ernie Wilkerson

Map from "1918 North American Fauna" by C. Hart Merriam showing the locations where specimens were harvested between 1873 and 1911

Anthony became the celebrity and a melancholy Wharton Pigg faded into obscurity. Pigg family history states that he never spoke of his bitter quest and although his children remembered the event, they didn't know he wasn't the shooter until after his death.

Moses' violent end created a national sensation. The *Denver Post* dedicated an entire page to the event. Old Moses' accomplishments grew as the news spread. Eventually Mose was credited with killing three men, eight-hundred head of cattle and causing thirty-thousand dollars in damages. A more recent analysis of the reported facts revealed that between 1884 and

1904 area newspapers reported four head of livestock killed by predators. Of the three human fatalities, Jacob Radcliff was the only confirmed victim of a bear. The unfortunate owner of the skeleton could have met his demise in any number of ways, and there is no record of any third victim.

The *Denver Post* also revealed Old Mose was forty five years old and "possessed a smaller than average brain". A 1987 study of the skull by the Arizona Game and Fish Department estimated Old Moses' age at between ten and twelve years.

The grizzly's reputation as a man-killer and livestock predator began to be questioned. Memoirs of frontiersmen such as Osborn Russell, Jim Bridger, Kit Carson and others mention the grizzly may not have been the monster worthy of his reputation. R.L. "Uncle Dick" Wootton wrote:

"He (the grizzly) is not a professional man-killer. That he has been guilty now and then of staining his chops with human gore is true, but it was usually under circumstances which would have made "justifiable homicide" a proper verdict, if the affair had been between man and man."

The establishment of the Boon and Crockett Club by Teddy Roosevelt in 1887 began the first wildlife conservation movement and also advocated hunter ethics or "Fair Chase." Sportsmen Ernest Thompson Seton, William Temple Hornaday, William Wright and Aldo Leopold began calling for restraint and the establishment of game preserves.

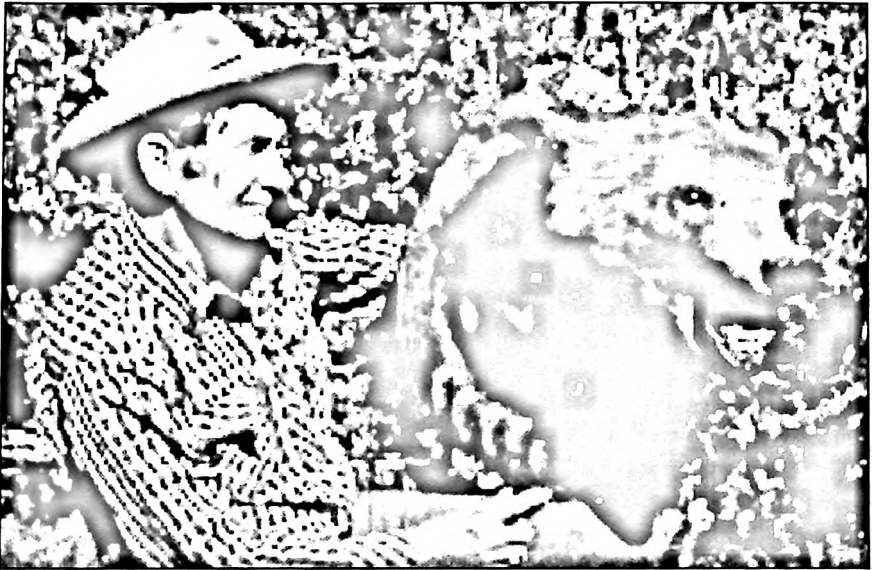
In Colorado, in the 1897 *"Biennial Report of the State Forest, Game, and Fish Commission,"* Commissioner JS Swan recommended a closed season for grizzly in response to sportsmen's *"strong feeling of protest against destroying them in any way but a sportsmanlike manner"*. He also expressed his belief that the grizzly's purported risk to domestic animals was false and cited a lack of credible testimony to support the contrary.

Killings and habitat loss of the nineteenth century caused a steady decline in Grizzly populations and by 1900 an estimated 150 bears still existed in the state. Grizzlies have one of the lowest reproductive rates of any terrestrial animal. A sow will be lucky to raise one or two cubs to adulthood and the loss of a single female can have devastating effects on a local population. The remaining grizzlies were not reproducing frequently enough to survive.

The 1911 biological survey stated that bears were non-existent on the Front Range since the 1870s and uncommon if not rare in the northern mountains. The survey stated that an occasional grizzly was still killed in the central mountains and Uncompahgre Plateau. The last holdout seemed to be the southwestern part of the state with frequent killings reported in the San Juan mountain range, particularly the La Plata and San Miguel areas.

By 1915 the ranching industry petitioned the federal government for direct predator control. Bowing to increasing political pressure, \$125,000 was allotted and the US Fish and Wildlife Service formed the Predator and Rodent Control (PARC) branch. Subsidized eradication spelled certain end for the grizzly.

The fledgling PARC agency initially had three-hundred trappers. The trappers were compensated with bounties and the right to sell hides, a lucrative proposition 1920 when grizzly hides brought one-hundred-and-twenty dollars. The trapper's tool of choice was



Courtesy Ernie Wilkerson

1951 grizzly trapped by Al Lobato

the Newhouse Number 6 Leg Hold trap. Having spiked jaws spreading sixteen inches and weighing forty-two pounds, the manufacturer claimed no bear had ever escaped the "The Great Bear Tamer". Setting the trap required a mechanical press and skeletons of unfortunates immobilized by the trap were found on more than one occasion.

In 1921 PARC located an Eradications Methods Laboratory in Denver with the express mission of developing poisons and devices for carrying out PARC's mission. The original poison of choice was strychnine but in 1931 PARC developed the "Coyote Getter", a bullet-like cylinder that deployed powdered cyanide into the face of the victim. The Coyote Getter indiscriminately killed any creature unfortunate enough to come in contact with it. Banned on

public lands in 1972, the Coyote Getter is still use on private lands.

PARC employed poisons, leg-hold traps, snares, hounds, aerial gunning, and even gassed dens. Evolving into an extremely efficient killing machine, the PARC reported killing over fifty-one hundred bears in Colorado between 1916 and 1971, stating in a footnote that in the early years a number of bears taken were grizzly.

Protection for bears was not established until 1933 when a hunting season was established from October through November, although stock-killing bears could be harvested at any time. The next few years saw conflict and resentment grow between sportsmen and ranchers over bear and other predator killings. Most of the predator control work was performed by fed-

eral agents, conflicting with the fact that wildlife was the property of the state. The issue came to a head in 1940 and by 1943 the state took over bear management based upon the recommendations of stockmen and interested citizens. Bear was declared a big game animal and a bear license was issued with every elk license sold. The bear tag made no species distinction and the department did not officially ban the killing of grizzlies until 1964.

The forest service began publishing population estimates of big-game species in the national forests in 1924. Colorado was thought to contain six grizzlies, four in the San Juan National Forest and two in the Rio Grande. By 1930, each national forest was estimated to contain two bears. In 1940, there were no bears reported in the San Juan and five reported in the Rio Grande. By 1948 the forest service estimated there were no grizzly bears left in Colorado.

In 1954 the Colorado Division of Wildlife, in the hope of protecting any remaining grizzlies, established the Rio Grande-San Juan Grizzly Bear Management Area in the national forests of the same name. Numerous studies were commissioned to confirm the presence of the animal. Tracks, digs, dens, scat and hair were discovered but black bears could not be ruled out. The most compelling grizzly evidence was a 1,500-lb. mule carcass dragged for 300 yards and cached. The evidence was deemed anecdotal, no carcass was produced and live trapping never yielded a bear. In 1964 the Division of Wildlife dissolved the grizzly management area

and outlawed grizzly bear hunting, but did not discontinue the bear coupon included with every deer and elk license issued until 1967.

The introduction of the 1973 Endangered Species Act provided federal protection for the grizzly. The act triggered reintroduction studies in former habitat still capable of supporting the animal. The Division of Wildlife, fearing the complexities of managing a population, formally stated its opposition to reintroduction in 1982.

Perhaps emboldened by being both extinct and protected, the grizzly had a minor resurgence in the years following 1948. In 1951, a sheepherder named Al Labato trapped a young male near the headwaters of the Navajo River in the Rio Grande National forest. That same year, a mere eighty miles from the Navajo River site, a government trapper named Ernie Wilkerson trapped a near-twin in the San Juan National Forest. In 1952 Lloyd Anderson, a PARC trapper with seven grizzly killings under his belt, caught a sow near the Wilkerson. He reported that two cubs fled when he arrived at the scene. In 1954 an alleged grizzly was killed near Saguache, but the carcass could not be located so the species was never confirmed.

The son of an outfitter claims that in the 1970s his father's client shot and killed a grizzly near Reudi Reservoir. A game warden allegedly investigated the case and stated it was likely a pet bear belonging to a resident in the Aspen area. Other sources contend that a popular wildlife program had lost a trained grizzly while filming in the area. The



Courtesy Historical Markers Database (HMDB.ORG)

Mountain Charlie Bear Fight

author has been unable to locate any official records of this event. Pet bear, trained bear or even wild grizzly, the answer is lost to history.

In all, eleven grizzlies were reported killed between 1948 and 1979. And credible witnesses - game wardens and government trappers - reported at least nine sightings during that same period. Each animal was Colorado's "last" grizzly.

In addition to grizzlies that were actually recorded, it's reasonable to assume an unrecorded few were taken intentionally or otherwise. A grizzly

trapped deep in the backcountry could not safely be released. A hunter may not have known that his trophy black bear was actually an immature grizzly. A herder, who routinely eliminated any potential threat to his stock, may have killed a grizzly and employed the "shoot, shovel, and shut up" method in order to avoid legal consequences. Or a grizzly may have even been poached, simply for the trophy.

In 1979 Colorado Wildlife managers were shocked to learn that, once again, the Colorado grizzly was not extinct. On September 23, an outfitter named Ed Wiseman was hunting with a client in the southern tip of the

Rio Grande National Forest near the headwaters of the Navajo River. Late that afternoon Wiseman was attacked by a grizzly. Pinned to the ground and literally being torn to shreds, Wiseman miraculously found an arrow in his hand and with a single thrust mortally wounded the grizzly. The incapacitated guide's client performed a heroic seven-mile nighttime ride to camp in order to summon the help of his father, a surgeon. The men returned to Wiseman by 4 A.M. and administered lifesaving first aid. Meanwhile, the camp cook performed an equally heroic ride to Platoro and the nearest telephone, eight dark and rugged miles from camp. A helicopter was dispatched from Fort

Carson and after fifteen hours of blood loss, shock and hypothermia, Wiseman was flown to the Alamosa hospital. Wiseman was treated for nearly eighty puncture wounds and, although permanently handicapped, managed to survive.

Two days after the incident the Division of Wildlife reached the scene with a helicopter to retrieve the bear. The helicopter suffered a mechanical breakdown. A horse at the scene was only capable of transporting the hide and skull. Six days after the incident a second helicopter was flown to the scene in order to retrieve the carcass and repair the damaged helicopter. The warm September weather had severely rotted the carcass and the team chose to leave it behind. The second helicopter crashed while landing in Platoro and although no injuries were reported, the helicopter had to be transported to Alamosa by truck.

A study of the grizzly by the Division of Wildlife reported that the bear was over sixteen years of age and in excellent health. An examination of the hide suggested nursing at least one litter of cubs but conclusive reproductive evidence was lost with the carcass. A two-year investigation once again yielded significant evidence but no live grizzly. The study concluded that although no grizzlies were located, the presence of grizzlies could not be ruled out.

The Wiseman grizzly was the last conformed grizzly in Colorado but credible sightings worthy of inves-



Courtesy Ed Wiseman

Ed Wiseman at the location he was mauled by Colorado's last grizzly

tigation by the DOW continued. All incidents were near the headwaters of the Navajo river, within a few miles of the Wiseman site. In 1981 two separate parties reported seeing a sow and two cubs. In 1990 another probable grizzly was spotted in the area. And in 1995 a photographer was charged to within ten feet by an alleged grizzly. The photographer observed proper grizzly protocol by "playing dead" and was unable to photograph the bear. A DOW investigation of the latter incident concluded the witness was credible and the bear exhibited both characteristics and behavior consistent with grizzly bears. Once again the DOW did not rule out the existence of grizzlies in Colorado.

In 1992 a man came forward stating he had seen a grizzly digging in the Wemenuche wilderness. He astonishingly produced hair from the scene and an analysis by Wyoming Division of Wildlife estimated a seventy-five to eighty percent chance the hair was from a grizzly¹. An investigation was performed and, as always, yielded spore but no bear.

By 1996 all federal and independent studies had been abandoned. The final consensus was that evidence indicated a remnant population of grizzlies may exist, but no actions were undertaken by either the state or federal government.

Grizzly sightings are still investigated but biologists within the state agree that, as of 2014, there is no remnant population of grizzly bears in Colorado². Efforts by non-profits to reintroduce grizzly have received little

support and the Division of Wildlife's opposition to reintroduction remains in place.

Today, the few remaining Colorado grizzlies are composed of hides and a few bones. The Wiseman grizzly resides at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. The paw of Ernie Wilkerson's 1951 grizzly is located in a drawer at his taxidermy shop in the San Luis Valley. Old Mose is located at the University of California at Berkeley. And a few hides, claws and skulls exist in private collections. The only Colorado grizzlies on public display are located in the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and can be found in a diorama containing a sow and two cubs taken near the Navajo River in 1913.

Of all remaining grizzly artifacts, the last to reside in the San Juan Mountains was a mounted head of the 1951 bear trapped by Al Labato. Displayed for years in an obscure corner of a Platoro, Colorado hunting lodge, the mount was taken in 2008 by a frustrated wrangler who had not been paid³. Hopefully this last grizzly will be located. A fitting tribute to the lost grizzly's astonishing ability to suddenly reappear.

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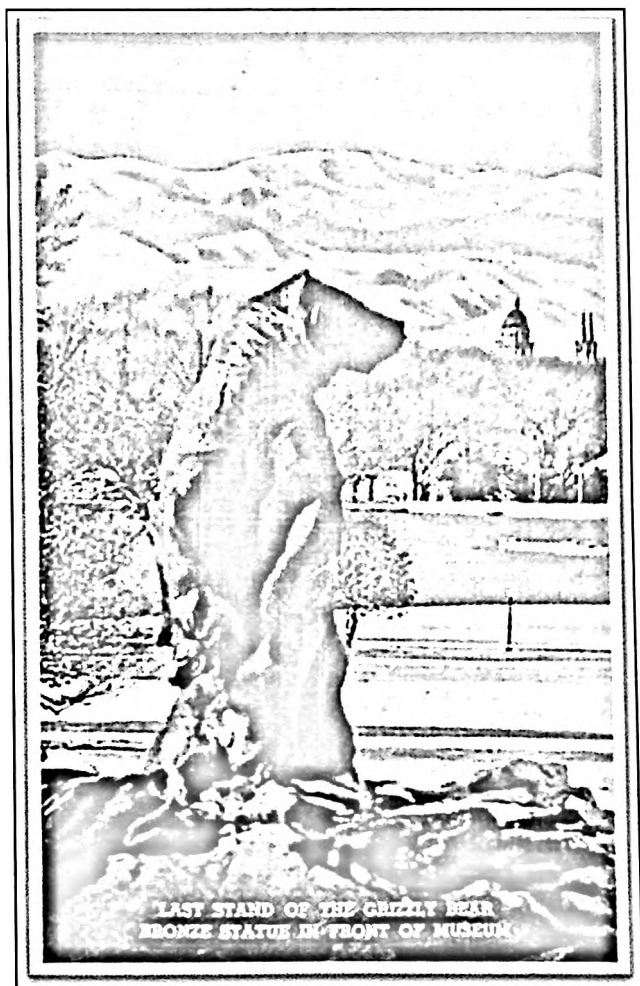
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Endnotes

1 (Peterson, 1995, p. 134)

2 (Ouren, 2014)

3 (Atanian, 2012)



Vintage Postcard of the statue "Last Stand of the Grizzly Bear" sculpted by Louis Jones in 1930.

Over the Corral Rail

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

Colorado Front Ranger Westerner Activities Taper off for the Summer

The Boulder County Corral and the Colorado Corral are currently on summer break. The Pikes Peak Posse met in June, when Bob and Carolyn Cronk presented "Outbound Journeys: Chief Manitou's Travels in Colorado and beyond." The program is based on Robert's book, *Outbound Journeys, a Pictorial history of Chief Manitou's outbound travels from the Santa Clara Pueblo to Colorado and beyond*, being the story of this very popular early Manitou Springs character.

Denver Posse Member sets Record

On June 25 Denver Posse member Jeff Broome spoke at Fort Caspar in Casper, courtesy of the Wyoming Humanities Council. The crowd eager to hear Jeff more than doubled their expectations, shattering the record for most attendees in their annual eight-week summer lecture series. Then Jeff talked at the annual symposium of the Custer Battlefield Historical and Museum Association (CBHMA) in Harden, Montana on June 27.

The Activities of Posse Member Bob Larson

The last couple of years Bob Larson has been very busy. He published his *Ernest L. Blumenschein: The Life of an American Artist*, which has received very favorable reviews. After a talk on the book at the Tattered Cover, he went to the Western Writers of America Convention in Sacramento, CA where he served on a panel to answer questions regarding how to write a good biography. He also won first prize in the New Mexico-Arizona Book Award and later, on June 10, the Colorado Book Award.

In June 2013, the University of New Mexico Press reprinted his *New Mexico Quest for Statehood*, previously published in 1968.

Denver Westerners express condolences to Posse Member Bob Easterly

Regular Posse Member Bob Easterly's wife recently passed away. Last October Bob presented "By an Act of Congress: Sixty-Six Years Later," the story of his great-grandfather in the Civil War and as a Gunnison pioneer.

Loss of Posse Member John Burdan

Regular Posse Member John Burdan passed away on July 16. Following John's thirty-year career in the Air Force, and retirement as a colonel, John and Winnie Burdan moved to Denver in 1980. Their interest in local history and the Colorado outdoors led to such activities as skiing and jeeping, and then joining the Ghost Town Club of Colorado. John served as its president in 1996. Both Burdans became corresponding members of the Denver Westerners in 1998, and then regular posse members in 2000. John was sheriff in 2006. The Denver Posse of Westerners extends its sincere condolences to Winnie and the Burdan family.





Westerners Bookshelf



Be Brave, Tah-hy!: The Journey of Chief Joseph's Daughter, by Jack R. Williams. Washington State University Press: Pullman, WA, 2012. 144 pp., map photos, illustrations, bibliography, glossary of Nez Perce words. Paperback, \$29.95.

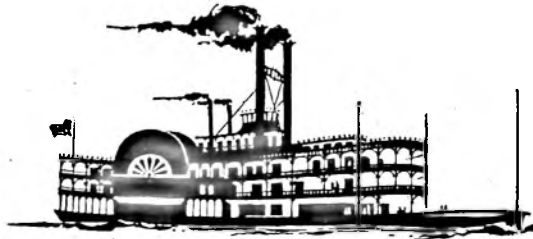
The journey of the Nez Perce from Oregon, through the Yellowstone country, to Canada, masterfully led by Chief Joseph, is one of the poignant stories of the American West. Coloradoan Jack Williams had a lifelong interest and then an education in Native American history, which he put to use in a thirty-year career in the National Park Service. That included five years on the Nez Perce Reservation in northern Idaho.

Williams relates the arduous Nez Perce trek through the eyes of Chief Joseph's twelve-year-old daughter, Tah-hy. He covers the life of Tah-hy, producing a biographical novel of an Indian girl, a topic generally slighted among Western historians. His original goal was a classroom text for the Nez Perce. He wanted to preserve and promote the Nez Perce language among its younger members. He skillfully merges over 150 Nez Perce words into the book, and includes a helpful glossary for the reader. This exposure to another language should be an enjoyable excursion.

Native American artist Jo Proferes partners with Williams, in producing twenty oil paintings for illustrations, plus many well-done pen-and-ink drawings. An excellent selection of vintage photographs enhances the illustrations, resulting in a most attractive book.

This diversion from the usual detailed and highly documented history, a book aimed at younger readers, and telling the life of an Indian woman, as interpreted through her eyes, is a different bill of fare for Western American buffs – one this reviewer recommends as very worthwhile reading.

--Ed Bathke, P.M.



Exploring Denver Mountain Parks, A Guide to 22 Historic Getaways, by Mike Butler. Open Range Publishing: Highlands Ranch, CO, 2012. 134 pp., maps, photos, bibliography. Paperback, \$14.95.

The City of Denver is blessed with an outstanding parks system. Many people may not realize that this system extends well beyond the city limits. Urged by John Brisben Walker, forward-thinking Denver Mayor Robert Speer, with his goal to develop the "City Beautiful," established the first Denver mountain park, Genesee Park, in 1912. Walker proposed linking the parks by auto roads, to prove that the automobile was not a passing fad, and Speer envisioned parkways linking the city with the mountain parks.

By 1920, the Denver Mountain Parks totaled ten sites. Today we have twenty-two such parks to enjoy. Mike Butler's concise book is well illustrated with photographs, provides the reader with the history behind each park, describes each park, featuring just what facilities it provides, and most importantly, describes in full detail with maps just how to get to each park. In this regard it fulfills its primary goal in being a valuable guide for the reader in visiting these great mountain sites. I recommend keeping a copy of Exploring Denver Mountain parks handy, when you need a bit of mountain "R & R."

--Ed Bathke, P.M.

New Mexico : A History, by Joseph Sanchez, Robert L. Spude, Art Gomez. University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 384 pp. Maps, photos, tables, suggested readings, index. Cloth, \$26.95.

The long history of a state as diverse as New Mexico is not an easy task to accomplish in a book of this size. That being said, the authors of this book still manage to do a very good job in covering more than 500 years of history. In the preface the authors state their intention to write an "accessible" history; I believe they accomplish that. It is a very readable book. The authors' backgrounds are rooted in the National Park Service, not the rarified world of academia. This is a style that may not appeal to everyone, but I enjoyed it.

So much of the New Mexico story revolves around the clash of cultures. The conflicts between the Spanish explorers and the various Indian tribes are examined. The lesser known troubles that developed in New Mexico before and after Mexican independence were very interesting. Of course the clash of the Hispanic, Anglo and Native cultures is an inescapable theme.

I particularly enjoyed reading of the ill-fated Texas invasion of New Mexico in 1841. Texas President Mirabeau Lamar sent 300 men across the border to claim the eastern part of New Mexico. Due to some clever maneu-

vering by New Mexico Governor Manuel Armijo the entire Texas contingent was captured without the lose of a single New Mexican life.

Various economic issues are also well chronicled: mining, agriculture, tourism and of course the impact of the military. The intriguing outlook for the new Spaceport America, the "first built-from-scratch commercial spaceport in the the world" near White Sands Missile Range is also examined. The importance of the various W.P.A. programs, as you might suspect with the authors' background, is also covered very thoroughly.

My main complaint with this book is the almost total lack of relevant maps. This is an oversight that really brings down the usefulness of this book. As an "accessible" history there are no citations, this will certainly bother some readers. With the lack of citations; I would have preferred to see a bibliography included, not a "Suggested Readings" list.

Overall the authors do a good job delivering an objective look at a significant number of issues that have shaped modern New Mexico.

--Ray Thal, C.M.

Native American Placenames of the Southwest, A Handbook for Travelers, by William Bright. University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 143 pages. Maps, bibliography, appendices. Paperback, \$19.95.

The Southwest for the purposes of this book is defined as Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Arizona.

These states are chock full of towns, sites, counties, landforms, and rivers with names attributable to Native American languages, people and customs. Sources run the gamut - from the indigenous, Navajos, Havasupais, and Hopis to Cherokees, Modocs, Pawnees, and other tribes transplanted to Oklahoma.

Some twelve hundred names are listed alphabetically. First is A'AI STO, a phrase describing the location of a Papago community in Arizona. Last is ZUZAX, a name invented by a curio shop owner in Bernalillo County NM, to attract attention (See and buy genuine artifacts from the Zuzax Indians!).

This book is of interest to students of the American Southwest. It ought to be in the glove box of everyone who drives through the area, from hard core archeologists to spring training groupies. It is interesting and fun to learn the origin of many names we take for granted.

--Stan Moore, P.M.

Cotton and Conquest. How the Plantation System Acquired Texas, by Roger G. Kennedy. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2013. 352 pages, notes, index, maps. Hardback, \$34-95.

It is rare for a reviewer to start by saying this is a badly written book. First, it has no real relationship with the title. There is almost nothing on cotton plantations in Texas, nor on the potential plans for such developments. It provides no evidence that the "Plantation System" acquired Texas, which, of course, it did not. It is riddled with bombastic and biased statements reflecting no sympathy for the cotton industry of the ante-bellum South. It is in fact, riddled with ignorance and prejudice.

The best part of the book involves all the intrigues of James Wilkinson, Aaron Burr, and William Dunbar and had the book carried a title that reflected that, it would have been considerably better. However, even that reads like popular magazine history, rather than in any sense a complex and comprehensive coverage of the story. In addition, he cursorily covers Philip Nolan's explorations of the Spanish-controlled area that was to become Texas, talks of the intrigues with Spanish and Mexican officials, and mentions Jefferson's interests and involvements.

His dislike of the South is extreme – he refers to Southern States as 'Neo-Colonial' because they sold cotton to Great Britain and France. He does not apply the same epithet to the Northerners who sold many goods to the same countries. He seems unaware that not all Southern States grew cotton. His errors on the growing of cotton in Texas flow continuously throughout the book - cotton cultivation as an investment was begun by Anglo-American colonists in 1821 towards the end of the period covered by his book. In 1849, long after the focus of this volume, a census of the cotton production of the state reported a mere 58,073 bales. In 1852 Texas was a minor player, in eighth place among the top ten cotton-producing states of the nation. Cotton as a motivation in the settlement of Texas prior to 1840 was a mere sideshow compared to all the other factors that contributed to its early growth.

The book lacks footnotes, and the endnotes are very general and not very informative, and there is no bibliography at all. Roger Kennedy was a well-known Washington D.C. figure, who was Director of the Smithsonian Institution and who died September 30, 2011. Perhaps the blame for the poor quality of this tome may lie in his declining health.

--Alan Culpin, P.M.

Splendid Service, The Montana National Guard, 1867-2006, edited by Orlan J Svingen. Washington State University Press. 526 pages. Table of contents, index, footnotes, maps, photos, bibliography. Paperback, \$29.95.

Big Sky citizen soldiers have participated in Montana, from early days to the present. The National Guard started overseeing and tempering frontier justice. Its troops participated in some way every decade since. They left traces from strike duty and fighting wildfires to active duty in almost every twentieth century American war (Korea being the exception). Across the century, Montanans contributed, fought and died. This service continues: in the 80s and 90s the Air Guard pulled runway alert duty as part of Cold War readiness under the Air Defense Command, and units participated in the various Middle East conflicts, 1990 to present.

Twenty chapters embrace various eras with different demands made on the Guard. The chapters were researched and written by a variety of authors. The approach is consistent for all. Style, layout, and the levels of objectivity, fact, and realism are similar.

Two chapters are dedicated to the 163rd Infantry Regiment and its parent 41st Division in WWII. Those units played an integral part in the struggle to take New Guinea and the Philippines. Their various campaigns are documented down to the platoon level with many quotes from men wielding the sharp end of the spear.

General Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Theater owed much to the 41st. That is true for other National Guard Divisions and the Australian infantryman as well. The Theater is little recognized in today's accounts of the World War. Terrain, conditions and combat in that theater were horrific. They were at least as bad as anything occurring in the better-known South and Central Pacific campaigns – Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa.

This is a well researched and documented book. For students of citizen soldiery or the nitty gritty of ground fighting in the twentieth century, this is a book to have and read.

--Stan Moore, P.M.





The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

September - October 2014



John Roberts papers, box two; American Heritage Center, Univ. of Wyoming

Lizzie Brokenhorn with husband John

**Collateral Damage: Sand Creek and the Fletcher
Family Indian Captivity Story**
by Jeff Broome, P.M.
(Presented March 26, 2014)



Our Author

Jeff Broome is a fifth generation Coloradan with a life-long interest in Western history. He has written three books on the Indian wars: *Dog Soldier Justice: The Ordeal of Susanna Alderdice in the Kansas Indian War*; *Custer into the West With the Journal and Maps of Lieutenant Henry Jackson*, and his new book, *Cheyenne War: Indian Raids on the Roads to Denver, 1864-1869*.

Jeff has won three awards in Western history: the Lawrence Frost Literary Award of the Little Big Horn Associates for outstanding article on Custer, 2001; Wild West History Award, for best article on the West for 2012; Philip A. Danielson Award of Westerners International, 1st Place - for best program/presentation in 2012; 3rd place for best book in 2013 also from Westerners International.

A former Sheriff and long-time posse member, this is Jeff's sixth presentation with the Denver Westerners.

THE DENVER WESTERNERS

ROUNDUP

VOL. LXX NO. 5



September - October 2014

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The *ROUNDUP* (ISSN #2078-7970) is published bi-monthly by the Denver Posse of Westerners, Inc., founded Jan. 25, 1945. Subscription is included with a paid-up membership. (Corresponding membership is \$25 yearly, due Jan. 1) Submission of manuscripts is encouraged, but publication cannot be guaranteed. Illustrations are the responsibility of the author. Manuscripts must be submitted electronically, PC format. All copy is subject to revision and/or correction at the editor's discretion. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy of content, but such accuracy is the ultimate responsibility of the author. Periodical postage is paid at Denver, CO. *ROUNDUP* layout and pre-press by Jim Krebs, 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220. Printed by Oran V. Siler Printing Company, Denver, CO

POSTMASTER: Send address changes for *ROUNDUP* to 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220

Collateral Damage: Sand Creek and the Fletcher Family Indian Captivity Story

by Jeff Broome, P.M.
(Presented March 26, 2014)

When gold was discovered in the Rocky Mountains in the late 1850s, life as the central plains Indians knew it began a rapid change. No longer was it just “mountain men” entering the territory to trade with Indians, or travelers crossing on their way to California, Utah or Oregon. The discovery of gold changed all of that. Denver City soon became the destination point for ventures into the mountains in the elusive search for mineral riches. The new route into Colorado Territory – technically Colorado was admitted as a new territory in 1861 - took freighters, miners, businessmen and settlers through what was for the Indians prime buffalo land, following the Platte River through Nebraska Territory and then continuing along the South Platte River at Julesburg and on to Denver.

Fur traders had developed working relationships with the Plains Indians, especially the Cheyenne. Bent’s Fort, located on the north side of the Arkansas River along the well-traveled Santa Fe Trail, was a bustling business by the time gold was discovered in the Rocky Mountains. Along with William Bent’s partner, Ceran St. Vrain, who operated another trading post not far from present-day Fort Collins along the Cache la Poudre River, Bent and his brothers had prospered well with their trade business. William had married into the Southern Cheyenne tribe, first to Owl Woman, the daughter of White

Thunder, who had the important role of being the keeper of the sacred arrows, “which symbolized the life of the tribe, embodying its soul.”¹ Owl Woman bore William four children, the oldest son named Robert, and the third child, George. Owl Woman died giving birth to her fourth child and William then married her sister, Yellow Woman, and had another son, Charles, born in 1847.² As young children, the boys and a sister had been sent to St. Louis to attend school. That was interrupted when the Civil War began, and in fact both George and his half-brother Charles served for a short time in the Confederacy. George was captured and brought to St. Louis. Recognized there as the son of William Bent, he was released and then returned to Bent’s Fort on the Arkansas, where he remained living with the Cheyenne for the remainder of his life. Charles soon finished his enlistment and also returned to the Cheyenne. They had not been back very long when everything changed and a five-year Indian war began along the roads to Denver.³

The causes of this war have never been agreed upon by historians, but what is not argued is that there were multiple reasons fanning the war embers. Among the prominent ones was the straining of the natural resources in the semi-arid land east of the Rocky Mountains. Earlier treaties resulted in a significant shrinkage of land severely incapacitating the Indians’ hunting



Wyoming State Archives, Dept. of State Parks & Cultural Resources

Amanda "Mary" Fletcher Cook

lifestyle. A diminishing of food sources were especially exacerbated with the growing and seemingly unending influx of freighters, miners, settlers and merchants, most entering from the northeast into Colorado Territory following the South Platte River to Denver. The South Platte corridor was essential to the Native American in the quest for buffalo. With the influx of white people came diseases and other hardships, such as shrinking timber sources for fuel. Clearly the Plains Indians could foresee the demise of their way of life. As this was building, territorial Governor John Evans had received information from multiple sources, as early as 1862, informing him that all the Plains Indians, which included Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, Brule and Oglala Lakota, had agreed together to act friendly with all white

people, but trade only for guns and ammunition. When a sufficient supply had been obtained, the warriors would then begin a campaign of violence, intended to remove all white people from present-day Colorado, Nebraska and large portions of Kansas.⁴

By the spring of 1864 the Indian war began, and it would not abate until the destruction of Tall Bull's Cheyenne Dog Soldier village at Summit Springs in 1869. But it was August 7-9, 1864 that marked the most violent events that ushered in the war, when a conglomerate band of warriors, consisting of Upper Brule (later of the Rosebud Reservation), Oglala Lakota called Cut Offs (later of the Pine Ridge Reservation, also called Kiyaska), Northern Arapaho (later of the Shoshone Agency), as well as a small mixed band of Lakota, Northern and about 100 Southern Cheyenne – led by a chief named Two Face, began a series of deadly raids on the Little Blue River and Plum Creek in Nebraska Territory.⁵ At the time it was the main road to Denver. When the raid was over, more than 50 freighters and settlers were dead and a number of women and children captured. Several weeks later four of the captives were released by Black Kettle and brought into Denver.

The rescue of the captives began on September 4, when two Indians, Lone Bear (also called One Eye) and Eagle Head (also called Minimic) approached some soldiers near Fort Lyon. It was a dangerous mission they were on, for a few weeks earlier, in response to the deadly attacks on the Little Blue and Plum Creek, Governor John Evans issued a proclamation, dated August 11, simultaneous to learning of the deadly attacks in Nebraska,

... authorizing all citizens of Colorado, either individually or in such parties as they may organize, to go in pursuit of all hostile Indians on the plains, scrupulously avoiding those who have responded to my said call to rendezvous at the points indicated; also, to kill and destroy, as enemies of the country, wherever they may be found, all such hostile Indians.⁶

The rendezvous Evans referred to was to a proclamation he made nearly seven weeks earlier, on June 27, when he sent messengers to all the chiefs under his superintendence, announcing that all friendly Indians were to report to various forts. Any Indians not reporting would be considered hostile and subject to punishment. Specifically, the friendly Cheyenne and Arapaho were to report to Indian agent Major Samuel G. Colby at Fort Lyon, on the Arkansas River near Bent's Fort.⁷ But in fact the well-known Cheyenne peace chiefs Black Kettle and White Antelope did not heed the June warning, not until after the deadly raids in Nebraska, and thus by the August 11 proclamation, all Indians not settled near a fort were to be shot on sight, including Black Kettle's Cheyenne. Such were the orders of Major Edward W. Wynkoop, who was commanding the post at Fort Lyon. He recalled making "stringent orders to kill all Indians that could be reached, when one day a sergeant made his appearance at my quarters with the information that with a squad of men he had captured two Indians," who were brought into the post. Wynkoop verbally reprimanded the sergeant for disobeying his orders to shoot all

Indians on discovery, to which the man replied that he was about to shoot them when they held up their hands, making signs of peace, and waving a piece of paper.⁸

One Eye and Minimic must have known how dangerous their journey was. They came from their village, camped with the raiding warriors' villages located about 140 miles northeast of Fort Lyon on Hackberry Creek, the southern branch of the Smoky Hill River.⁹ The two Indians had been sent by Black Kettle, and each one had a hand-written letter, one written by Edmund Guerrier and the other by George Bent, the letters bearing the identical message. Guerrier was married to Bent's half-sister, Julia.¹⁰ Both writers were half-blood Cheyenne and both letters were dictated by Black Kettle and written in crude English.¹¹

Black Kettle's letter, dated August 29, 1864:

Sir: We received a letter from [William] Bent, wishing us to make peace. We held a council in regard to it. All come to the conclusion to make peace with you, providing you make peace with the Kioways, Comanches, Arapahoes, Apaches, and Sioux.

We are going to send a messenger to the Kioways and to the other nations about our going to make peace with you.

We heard that you have some provisions [captives?] in Denver. We have seven prisoners of yours which we are willing to give up, providing you give up yours.

There are three war parties out yet, and two of Arapahoes. They have been out some time, and expected in soon. When we



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Amanda "Mary" Fletcher Cook

held this council, there were few Arapahoes and Sioux present. We want true news from you in return – that is, a letter.¹²

When Wynkoop interviewed the two Indians he later wrote that this was a conscience-shifting momentous event in his personal life. He recalled asking One Eye whether he knew he would likely be shot in trying to bring the peace proposal to the fort. One Eye replied, "I thought I would be killed, but I knew that paper would be found upon my dead body, that you would see it, and it might give peace to my people once more." Minimic "would not let One Eye come alone and was willing to go with him to the Happy Hunting Grounds satisfied if he could look down and see his people happy once more." Wynkoop described how this display of

bravery impacted his understanding:

I was bewildered with an exhibition of such patriotism on the part of two savages, and felt myself in the presence of superior beings; and these were the representatives of a race that I had heretofore looked upon without exception as being cruel treacherous, and blood-thirsty, without feeling or affection for friend or kindred.¹³

Within a year, Wynkoop resigned his military commission and was appointed Indian Agent for the Upper Arkansas Agency, which included the Cheyenne and Arapaho, as well as Kiowa and Plains Apache.¹⁴ He remained their agent until November 1868, when he resigned amid his inability to defer a military expedition that resulted in the death of Black Kettle, in an attack made November 27 by Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer's 7th Cavalry along the banks of the Washita River in present-day Oklahoma. But before that happened there was the infamous Sand Creek Massacre, November 29, 1864. The events leading to Sand Creek began with Wynkoop's interview with One Eye and Minimic. One Eye promised to bring Wynkoop to his village and where Black Kettle was keeping several captives taken during the violent raids August 7-8 in Nebraska.¹⁵

Once news of the deadly Nebraska raids reached Denver via telegraph on August 8 and shortly thereafter by eyewitnesses arriving at Denver on stagecoach, Governor Evans received permission to enlist a new regiment of Colorado Volunteers.¹⁶ He immediately ordered the formation of the Third Colorado Cavalry. More

than 700 Coloradans responded to Evan's call for a 100-day enlistment. Meanwhile Wynkoop, acting without orders and under his own digression, ignoring Black Kettle's instructions to send a letter in reply, took a column of soldiers, went to Black Kettle's village and secured the release of four of the seven captives and brought them into Denver in late September. Accompanying his journey to Denver were Black Kettle and several other Indians.

The Camp Weld conference resulted in no peace, and Black Kettle was advised to move his Indians near Fort Lyon and from there, pursue his peace proposal with military authorities. However, before any further negotiations could be accomplished, Black Kettle's village was attacked by the 3rd Colorado Cavalry, along with troopers of the 1st Colorado Regiment stationed at Ft. Lyon. The dawn attack on November 29 resulted in more than 20 dead soldiers as well as 50-plus wounded, making the battlefield a hotly contested event. However, it is what happened to as many as 100 innocent women, children and elderly, who were brutally murdered – many also mutilated - while unarmed and begging for their lives, that makes Sand Creek the most controversial event in the saga of the Central Plains Indian war. As far as history goes, following Sand Creek, the Cheyenne war had commenced and would continue for years to come. One incident in this war deserves exploration, viz., the capture of two females, daughters of Jasper Fletcher, as well as the killing of Jasper's wife, Mary Ann.¹⁷

After Sand Creek, Black Kettle's band joined with several other bands of

Cheyenne, Arapaho and Lakota tribes and soon attacked the wagon roads in northeast Colorado Territory and southwest Nebraska Territory. Julesburg was attacked two times in January and early February 1865. All buildings were burned in the February attack. The warriors continued their warring havoc on the stage stations and ranches for several miles to and from Julesburg. After destroying most stage stations and ranches for about 200 miles along the Denver road, the warriors soon ventured north into Dakota Territory in present-day Wyoming. For most of the summer 1865, several hostile Northern and Southern Cheyenne remained north in the Powder River country with their Lakota brethren, as George Bent noted, "to hold the usual summer medicine ceremonies."¹⁸ There were more than just "ceremonies" being attended to. War was also being carried out. On July 26 the Cheyenne were involved with their Lakota and Arapaho brethren in an attack upon Platte Bridge at present-day Casper, Wyoming, as well as the destruction of a supply train under the command of 11th Kansas Cavalry Sergeant Amos Custard. Five men were killed at Platte Bridge, including 2nd Lieutenant Caspar Collins of the 11th Ohio Cavalry. Custard and 21 soldiers were killed a few miles from the cavalry post at Platte Bridge, soon named Fort Caspar.¹⁹

In addition to George Bent, young Minimic, following the loss of his wife and two daughters at Sand Creek, had joined with the Dog Soldiers.²⁰ Following the fight at Platte Bridge, Minimic, and in all likelihood George Bent, ventured to the southern end of present-day Wyoming.²¹ While there on July 31, a band of Cheyenne and



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Amanda "Mary" Fletcher Cook

Arapaho Indians – led by Sand Creek survivor, Southern Cheyenne Sand Hill and his Aorta band,²² made an attack upon the family of Jasper Fletcher, about 35 miles east of Fort Halleck and just east of Rock Creek Station, 75 miles northwest of present-day Cheyenne. The Fletchers were with a larger train of 75 wagons – perhaps as many as 200-300 people, which had been delayed at Fort Laramie until the wagon party was large enough to protect itself from Indian attacks. A part of the wagons included a military escort, taking supplies for Camp Douglas, outside of Salt Lake City. Nearly all of the heavily loaded freight wagons were pulled by oxen, which meant the wagon train was slow moving, averaging a little more than half the miles each day that a similar

train could travel, if pulled by mules. By contrast, the Fletcher family's two wagons were pulled by horses, making their attachment to the slower moving caravan a daily challenge. In fact, each day of the journey, Jasper would move his two wagons several miles to the forefront, as far as he thought his family could travel, and the oxen-pulled wagons could catch up by camp-time.²³ In the tree-less barren prairie of the 1860s, one could see for miles, especially when distant wagons produced visual columns of road dust caused by the heavily laden freight.

The Fletcher family had come from Eastwood, Derbyshire, England in 1861, with the intentions of moving to the gold mines in California. Jasper and his two brothers, Henry and Samuel, had owned and operated a coal mine called Jessup Coal Pits. While in England, Jasper read numerous accounts of the gold fields in California, from which he began his quest to come over to America. As daughter Mary later recalled, "He became each day more convinced of the truth of the stories of fabulous wealth that only waited his coming..." Fletcher's wife Mary Ann was not as excited for the family upheaval from England and did not want to leave her Motherland, but by 1861 Jasper's wishes were consummated and the young family boarded a ship at Liverpool, and from there journeyed to New York.²⁴ However, Mary Ann became quite ill shortly after their arrival, and as a result the family stayed with English friends – old schoolmates of Mary Ann – they knew in Quincy, Illinois, until she was well enough to travel. Though she was finally able to continue in Jasper's quest for the West, her health

kept her frail and she was basically an invalid.²⁵ During this time, on August 6, 1863, Elizabeth – Lizzie - was born. The rest of the family included 37-year old Jasper and his 36-year old wife Mary Ann; 17-year old Amanda Mary – called by her family Mary; 11-year old William Henry; six-year old Jasper, Junior; and four-and-a-half year old Oscar D.²⁶

The Fletcher family finally left Illinois on May 10, 1865. They first went to Omaha, and from there joined a 100-wagon caravan and followed the Platte River west, and then, with about half the caravan, took the South Platte from Julesburg to Denver, the most-traveled route in 1865 that carried freight goods into the new settlement. There the family stayed a couple weeks, camping on Cherry Creek, and experiencing the frontier town. They then continued their journey to California. Leaving Denver with another large caravan, they went north to Fort Laramie. When they arrived at the post, Jasper's family was placed with a freight train numbering 75 wagons, whose destination was Camp Douglas just outside Salt Lake City. The caravan left the fort on the evening the Fletcher family had arrived there.

After traveling about 80 miles, the wagon train neared Rock Creek Station. The Fletcher family's two wagons – one carrying their possessions and the other a "convenience" wagon allowing the women to travel in leisure - were as usual several miles beyond the slower ox-driven wagons, when they stopped near the station to prepare their noon meal.²⁷ The family intended, after eating and the other wagons catching up, to cross the creek at the stage station, which was on the opposite side of the

water. The stage station operated a ferry to make the crossing. While Jasper was preparing camp, Mary Ann and her two daughters walked beyond their wagons about 400 yards in the direction of the station. As they approached the creek, suddenly Indians – 300 in number – shouting their war cries, sprang on the unsuspecting family, riding out from their concealment in the hills surrounding the creek valley. The warriors quickly killed Mary Ann with a well-thrown spear thrust into her head as she was holding Mary's hand. Mary was carrying little Lizzie in her other arm. The Indians quickly captured both sisters, apparently wounding Mary with several arrows which she quickly pulled out.²⁸

The victorious Cheyenne then charged at the two distant Fletcher wagons and wounded Jasper, hitting him in the wrist with an arrow. It was his first time he and his family had seen an Indian. Jasper, seeing the Indians attacking his wife and daughters hundreds of yards to his front, ordered his three small boys to run back in the direction of the slow moving caravan. The Indians did not chase the boys and instead focused their attention on the unknown trophies hiding inside the wagons. Somehow, when Jasper was wounded, he managed to hide in a small ravine, where the Indians ignored him. He remained suffering from his painful wound, and loss of blood, until another caravan discovered him two days later, treated him and brought him to Camp Douglass, four miles from Salt Lake City.²⁹ When he arrived in the desert town, unknown to him, his boys – picked up by the original caravan and thought to be orphans - had during the journey to Utah been placed with

another caravan travelling back east to Denver, where their prospects for adoption were more likely. It would be months before Jasper's three boys were sent back to Salt Lake City to be with their father.

Before ending their raid on the Fletcher family, the Indians took what they wanted from the two wagons and then destroyed the rest of the family possessions, by burning everything they didn't take. They also captured Jasper's three horses that had pulled the wagons.³⁰ Neither the military escort accompanying the government wagons, or the armed freighters with the train was able to come to the rescue of the Fletcher family. Jasper's apparent complacency in running miles in front of the slower moving train was a grievous mistake and the angry Cheyenne made him pay by capturing his two daughters and killing his wife. His grief when acknowledging his stupidity must have been nearly unbearable. Once Fletcher's wagons were set afire after being plundered, the Indians retreated at a leisurely pace back across Rock Creek. Mary Ann Fletcher's body was buried near the stage station the next day.³¹ The grave today, like thousands of others in the history of the Overland Trails, is lost.

Mary recalled that awful day:

We were just camped for dinner, and a party of the Indians just came right down on us, - about three hundred of them as I afterward learned, - Cheyennes and Arapahoes. There were three Sioux [Brule] with them, but as to whether they were adopted into the tribe or not, I do not know. They came on the train as we were in camp, and just went

into fighting. Of course they came on their ponies in regular fighting order. I had my mother by her hand and my sister under the other arm. My mother was killed by my side and my sister taken. Then I was taken, picked up and put on horseback and taken back to the wagons. Where I was picked up I could not tell just exactly, but it must have been 300 or 400 yards from the wagons.³²

In a newspaper account years later, Mary again revisited her moment of captivity:

There was a wild whoop. From behind every rock and bush, it seemed, sprang an Indian in full war regalia. I had never before seen an Indian and I stared in amazement at their war paint and feathers. Frightened, I seized my mother by the hand, at the same time snatching up my baby sister. The Indian ponies circled and wheeled, their riders hurling spears and wielding axes as they rode their horses over us.

We stood there, hand in hand, too terrified to move, and then, without a word, mother sank to the ground. A spear had pierced her head and she died with the whisper, "Mary" on her lips. As I knelt there a brave galloped by, leaned down from his pony and snatched the baby away from me. Except for a glimpse of the baby later that same night, I never saw her again.

I was picked off my feet, tied and thrown on the pony, then led off in the gathering darkness.³³



Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

Camp Weld Picture

We crossed a river and went up a mountain side, and from the top we watched the massacre. I can see it now when I close my eyes as vividly as I saw it 60 years ago – the wagons in flames, women and children scurrying around like frightened animals, only to be dragged back and scalped and killed – the Indians worked to a passion of blood lust by this time, beating, burning, killing, torturing everything in their path.

We rode all that night and for three days and nights before we stopped to rest. I rode tied most of the time. Another prisoner, a woman, whispered to me during the third night that the Indians were planning to kill her. Her husband and baby

had disappeared in the first night's horror. She slipped me a housewife (a flannel-covered sewing case) that women carried in those days, asking me to give it to her husband if he survived her. In it were her wedding ring and the baby's little gold ring. I carried it for months before the Indians discovered it and took it from me.

That night when we stopped for rest, half a dozen warriors crept behind the sleeping woman and shot her to death. I was now alone with a tribe of warring savages and it was a very frightened little girl who wrapped herself in a buffalo robe that night and tried to sleep.

When we reached the Indian village the squaws tried to kill



Author's Collection

Custer

me. Once before the braves had tried to get me, but Chief Neir-mir-vier, whom they all feared, sat all night in front of the shelter he had built for me. When the women tried to slash me with their knives they tore my tent to ribbons but Neir-mir-vier and his squaw pushed me into the middle of the tent and walked around and around it.³⁴

With the large war party were two Cheyenne women. Three days after Mary was captured, she recalled the Indians attacking another single family, unwisely travelling alone on the road. Mary said the entire family was killed, "with the exception of the white woman. She was captured, and killed shortly afterwards." That unfortunate family's name apparently was Cackle. As Mary later shared, the family was on their way to Colorado when captured by the Cheyenne:

The Indians took a small child from Mrs. Cackle's arms and seizing it by the feet, dashed its brains out against a wagon hub. Mr. Cackle, two children and the mother of Mrs. Cackle were killed on the spot, but Mrs. Cackle was carried away. Three nights after the capture, however, the woman was placed against a tree in a sitting position and was made a target of, her body being pierced by more than a dozen poison-pointed arrows before her prayers were answered for the ending of her terrible existence.³⁵

The Fletchers' unfortunate experience had more bad luck accompanying their fate. The girl's capture happened just before the government had succeeded in placing troopers throughout the trail. They were brought out west at the conclusion of the Civil War, to provide protection to travelers. Had the Fletchers been just two days later in making their journey, the likelihood of escaping an Indian attack was quite probable. An anonymous letter, likely posted by an officer, written August 5 and published later that month in the *Detroit Advertiser and Tribune*, said that the 7th Michigan Cavalry, who served so gallantly with Brevet Major General George A. Custer at the close of the Civil War, had reported to Fort Halleck on August 2, one day's march from where the Fletcher family had been attacked. On their march to Fort Halleck they apparently observed the devastation of the recent Indian raid. The officer wrote additional details of the attack, saying that there were two parties in front of the larger Camp

Douglas-bound caravan that were attacked, one belonging to a man named Mr. Strong, who was killed, as well as two other men with him. Mrs. Strong, "riding in one of the advance wagons of the train, was taken, her person violated by 12 of 'the noble red men,' when she was entirely denuded of her clothing, and in that condition sent back to the train, among about 90 men." The officer went on to name Fletcher as the other victim, who was wounded, and whose wife was killed. But he mistakenly reported Mary Ann was pregnant, "ripped open, and the fetus cut from her by piece meal, her hands and legs cut off, and her body shot full of arrows. His two daughters, one 15, the other two or three years old, were taken, the former carried off captive, to a fate worse than 20 deaths, and the brains of the latter were dashed out."³⁶

The officer's details regarding Mary Fletcher's mutilation and Lizzie's brains being dashed out likely confused what happened to the Fletcher family with what happened to the Cackle family. In a later account Mary wrote:

I have never seen my dear little sister since about 10 o'clock on the night of the same day of our capture, when she was crying first for her mother and then for me to take her, till finally she was carried out of my sight. The next morning I inquired of a half breed, one who could understand and speak a little English, where my sister was and he told me she cried so much they had killed her, and I have every reason to believe he told me the truth for I was with them for nearly one year [she was in captivity seven months] before being rescued,

*and I never saw her afterwards.*³⁷

Thirty-five years after the attack a man named Thomas Harford wrote to Mary, from Pueblo, Colorado, and recalled some details of her capture that might help to sort out the mystery between what Mary wrote of her captivity and what the unnamed officer wrote. From Harford's recollections, there was probably a second attack near the Fetters, possibly a day or two after the Fletcher attack. Harford wrote to Mary after he read an inquiry for assistance with her depredation claim, which had appeared in the *Rocky Mountain News*. The undated letter stated:

I was engaged with a number of others delivering freight for the government to the different forts on the plains thirty-five years ago. We had a scrap with the Indians at Rock Creek, Wyoming. Three of our party were killed and buried where we piled a mound of rocks over their graves. There was a man with a family a little ahead of us who had his wagon & outfit destroyed. The man's name was Fletcher. He came to us wounded with arrows. His wife was killed and the children I think was all captured. One or two I think were girls. This man Fletcher traveled with us afterwards to Fort Douglas Utah (Salt Lake City).³⁸

He identified his train as the train that found and brought Jasper to Camp Douglass, probably at least a day after the original attack, which would mean his train was a different outfit than with whom the Fetters

were traveling with. He also said three men were killed, which confirms what the unnamed officer found when his command came upon the scene, probably just after the train Harford was with was attacked. This also makes sense of Mary's recollections of seeing the Indians attack other persons at the same sight from where she was taken.

In another interview Mary gave regarding her captivity, published December 2, 1887, in the *Clinton Register* (Illinois), she added more details about another train attacked nearby. In it, she said the warriors discovered "a ten gallon cask of brandy, and the band captured this and entered upon the scalp dance. Nearly every brave in the tribe became wildly drunk."³⁹

According to the government claim later filed seeking compensation from the Department of Interior for the Indians destroying and stealing the family property, one of the items the Indians stole from the Fletcher wagons was a metal box—12 by 18 inches—containing all of the money Jasper owned, which apparently was substantial, all in British notes or gold coin. Mary claimed the paper notes amounted to "17,000 pounds in Bank of England notes and 3,000 in gold sovereigns." This seems like a large amount of money, and probably both the paper notes and sovereigns are exaggerated. The sovereigns were each a pound (English money roughly equivalent at that time to an American dollar). If the family had as many as 3,000 sovereigns, they would have weighed a little more than nine pounds, which could fit into a box with the dimensions of 12 by 18 inches. The Fletcher family came from an upper-

class English family, and Jasper had sold his claim in a coal mining business before coming to America. They were hoping to bring that money to California and begin a new life.

Minimic kept much of the money in Fletcher's box, and throughout Mary's captivity—which lasted seven months—she recalled he had her count it and note its value, which he then spent with traders. But Minimic wasn't the only warrior who got some of the money. Several other Indians had substantial amounts. Before Mary was rescued, she said Minimic brought her to William Bent, George Bent's father.⁴⁰ Bent had brought several wagons down to the Indian village to trade with them. Mary said inside William's tent were "the Bent Brothers," probably meaning George and Robert.⁴¹ He knew the value of the money, and traded with Minimic for much of it. As Mary recalled Indians and money:

They didn't know the value of the bills, but they knew it was money. They knew they could buy something with it. Repeatedly several Indians came into the tent where I was, and would have the money in handkerchiefs, and in the handkerchiefs there would be bills laid in different shapes. They wanted me to count them. I would count the number. There was one that had 1700 bills. One Indian in particular had 2400 pounds of English money.... There was one that had 700 bills. I knew this money. It was a different kind from the American. I knew it was the same. The gold was divided among them. The squaws had the coins, after making holes in them, strung in



Smithsonian Institution

Cheyenne warrior Minimic, also called Eagle Head

their ears. Something grand and something that was very nice in their idea.⁴²

No historical record has been found which shows William Bent reported his knowledge that young Mary was a captive in a Cheyenne village. If this is because he made no report, one can only assume his desire for trade trumped his desire for seeking her rescue from captivity. But also, perhaps William was remembering Sand Creek and what a few of the soldiers there did to the women and children unable to escape. One son, George, was wounded. Another son, Robert, was forced to escort the soldiers from Fort Lyon to the village, and a third son, Charles, escaped from the village after the

attack. While Mary prior to her capture probably did not know anything about Sand Creek, she certainly knew about it during her capture. She recalled her captors making her write a note saying they were on the warpath because of Sand Creek, "and they so made me write a notice to the public which they nailed to a telegraph pole as a public notice."⁴³ Clearly, she understood she was collateral damage in this tit-for-tat war.

As winter approached Mary was brought by her captors to southern Kansas, and across the border into present-day Oklahoma. In the harsh winter her sufferings continued. She was finally trusted with a hatchet and made to cut bark from trees in order to give food to the starving village horses. Mary:

... when the snow was on the ground I was put in charge of a herd of ponies, for which I had to climb the trees and cut limbs that the ponies could get the bark to eat. That I continued all winter. Snow, rain or sleet, I had to go and do that work from early morning till late in the evening, with nothing scarcely to protect my body from the bitter cold and storms. When I returned to the lodge in the evening it mattered not how cold and wet I was, I had no change of wearing apparel and would try to sleep with the few clothes I had on, as I had nothing to cover myself, neither would they give me anything. Oh, those awful days and nights will live in my memory as long as life lasts. Not only that, but I had nothing to eat when I came in. One unacquainted with the

Indians would very naturally think that if I was out attending a herd of ponies, I would attempt an escape, but the people who know and are familiar with the ways of the Indians will know there were always squaws to accompany me to do the same work for their herds, and also to guard me. There was no possible chance to escape.⁴⁴

Mary's ordeal seemed to have no end in sight, her daily suffering nearly unbearable. By the end of February, however, things quickly changed. The Indians under the care of Ned Wynkoop had gathered together about 45 miles southeast of Fort Dodge, where they were told their annual annuities would be distributed. Wynkoop also hoped to get the signatures of the missing chiefs on the papers formalizing the Treaty of the Little Arkansas, which had been signed near present-day Hutchinson, Kansas at about the time the Dog Soldiers holding Mary in captivity proceeded to leave the Powder River country in anticipation of the approaching winter. Shortly after the village camp had been set, a young Indian trader, Charles Hanger, came into the camp in late February 1866. There he discovered Mary. He was able to purchase her for \$1,665 in trade goods. Once ransomed, she was brought into Fort Dodge. From there she was escorted to Fort Larned, and then turned over to Cheyenne agent Wynkoop. Charles Hanger was partners with a man named Morris and together they had a license to trade with the Indians under Agent Wynkoop's care. He stated he "bought her from the Indian who captured her ... that it was a party of

Cheyennes who attacked the train, and that no other Indians were with them at the time."⁴⁵

When he was trading with Minimic and the other Indians, Hanger stayed in the Cheyenne Dog Soldier camp. There were about 1,000 Cheyenne camped together. About 1,200-1,500 Arapahos under Little Raven were camped, one or two day's ride from the Cheyenne village. Also camped nearby were between 600-800 Apaches. After purchasing Mary, Hanger sent her down to the Arapaho village, fearing the Cheyenne would reclaim her. His interpreter—a half-breed named Poysell—was there with his wife, and they took Mary into their tent. When Wynkoop was informed of Hanger's actions he requested Captain George Gordon to send a military escort to Little Raven's village and bring Mary to him, where she was then brought under escort to Fort Larned. Gordon sent Lieutenant Alfred Bates, who accomplished the mission.⁴⁶

Mary recalled her rescue and transfer:

Mr. Hanger came into the village about 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the same day they asked him [to come trade with them]. You know, as all Western men know, that upon arrival in the village the first thing for the trader to do is to give the Indians a feast. I was forbidden to leave the lodge. They did not want the trader to know they had a girl prisoner. I thought to myself that I would go at all hazards, for I could not make my condition worse than it was. I did go and when the trader had seen me it was too late to drive



Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

George Bent

me back, for the Indians thought the trader would report it to the agent when the annuities arrived, which he would have done – and would cause trouble before they could get the annuities unless I was surrendered and in the meantime I would have been sold to another tribe and be far away before the arrival of the annuities.⁴⁷

Trader Hanger confirmed Mary's claim regarding William Bent that he earlier got money belonging to the Fletcher family, and told Hanger he got it.⁴⁸ But this Fletcher money apparently led to a white man's death. Captain Gordon was with Wynkoop when he was down in the Cheyenne village, just about when Hanger had traded for Mary. Gordon concluded his report of his excursion, by noting

that on February 21, a son of Mr. Boggs was killed and scalped by four Cheyenne, six miles east of Fort Dodge. The reason? He had gone to trade with them and traded with one Indian 10, one-dollar bills for 10, ten-dollar bills. The Indians knew money had value but did not know the specifics, and once the Cheyenne learned they had been cheated, they returned and killed the young Boggs. Gordon: "I think this case needs no further comment."⁴⁹

When Hanger first saw Mary in the village, he failed to recognize the Indian maiden was a white woman until she spoke to him, asking in her British accent if he had any soap. Her desire for soap was connected with the anticipated feast to welcome the trader into camp. The Indians knew he had with him the supplies to make flapjacks and Mary was assigned to make the desired pancakes, a rare delicacy the Indians loved. But she had been forbidden to leave her tepee while the Indians were preparing to receive the groceries. That was when Mary decided to make her own entry into his tent, asking for soap. In doing such, an Indian beat her and chased her from Hanger's tent.⁵⁰

It wasn't until Mary spoke that Charles realized she was a white woman. The reason he first failed to recognize her as white was due to how the Indians dressed her and made her appear Indian. It was a painful ceremony, repeated throughout her captivity. Mary later reported what the Indians did: "Every morning her face was painted red and striped with soot water, every few days they would burn her eye lashes and eye brows with hot ashes, holding her head to the ground for the purpose."⁵¹

After Mary appeared to Hanger and

was beaten for speaking to him, the Cheyenne didn't continue to hide her. She was soon brought to the lodge to prepare the feast. Mary recalled that moment:

As soon as I went into the lodge, Mr. Hanger asked me how I came to be with them, as he could talk to me and they could not understand what was said. I told him about the massacre, supposing father was killed and none had escaped. It was then Mr. Hanger asked me if there was no way to get me out of there. I told him I had tried running away but was always brought back and punished, or I would better say, tortured, every time I attempted to escape, but they had talked of selling me to the Kiowa Indians. Mr. Hanger told me he would buy me if it took his whole outfit to do so. Oh, how rejoiced I was to hear him say he would buy me. It was late that night when we started for our lodge but before starting he told the Indians who claimed me to bring me with them in the morning and he would buy me....⁵²

Years later George Bent recalled Mary, after her rescue, was turned over to Wynkoop, while he was trying to negotiate with the Dog Soldiers to sign the 1865 Treaty on the Little Arkansas that Black Kettle had earlier signed. But, according to Bent, Big Head and Rock Forehead refused to put their signatures on the treaty.⁵³ In Captain Gordon's report, dated March 5, 1866, he noted that Big Head rejected the treaty, and "said that he and his tribe objected strongly to the Smoky

Hill route, and to living south of the Arkansas: that the road lay through their best hunting grounds, and the country south of the Arkansas was not his, but belonged to the Apaches and Arrapahoes, and he and his tribe preferred to live in the country north of the Arkansas, where they were born and bred." Gordon wrote that Wynkoop told the Dog Soldiers to just stay friendly to the whites, and all warriors then professed peace.⁵⁴ When Wynkoop returned from his council with the Dog Soldiers, he stated—contrary to what Bent and Gordon both wrote—that all the chiefs signed the treaty, and naively concluded "I have now got all the hostile bands in, and can safely declare the Indians to be at peace, and consequently the different routes of travel across the plains perfectly safe."⁵⁵

Of course, Wynkoop was quite wrong in his thoughts that peace was finally assured, for this war with the Cheyenne continued through 1869, until the demise of Dog Soldier Chief Tall Bull at Summit Springs, July 11.⁵⁶

Mary's captivity had lasted a grueling seven months. Once rescued, she had no idea what happened to the rest of her family. She assumed her father had been killed and perhaps her brothers too. She had only one option — to return to Illinois where she and her family had spent time with friends of her mother before Jasper began his fatal journey out west. It wasn't until July, nearly a year after her terrible captivity began, before she finally arrived in Illinois. She remained with those friends until December 1866, when she moved into the residence of Judge William Cook. A year later, on New Year's Eve, she married his eldest son, also named William. She later had

four children, and remained living in Davenport, Iowa.

It was after Mary had married when her father read a newspaper account in Salt Lake City, reporting Mary's rescue. At long last, Jasper finally learned his eldest daughter was yet alive! He wrote her in Davenport, and when the letter arrived Mary had the same joy in learning that her father and brothers were also alive and living in Utah. Jasper made arrangements for Mary to travel to Utah and be reunited with her family, but she replied, saying she was happily married and "after what I passed through, was in mortal fear to again attempt to cross the plains."⁵⁷ She did not travel to Salt Lake City until January 1871, when the dangers of travel had passed and she could travel by rail and not wagon.⁵⁸

Though they didn't physically see each other for another three years, both she and Jasper did their best via letters to various government agencies and people to find out what happened to little Lizzie, and if yet alive, to rescue her too. Hope finally came when both wrote to Brevet Major General George Armstrong Custer, while he was involved in actively organizing the newly formed 7th Cavalry at Fort Riley, Kansas. Custer replied to Mary on January 27, 1867, and said Lizzie was spotted in the village of a Cheyenne chief called "Cutnose." Lieutenant Owen Hale and scout William Comstock had seen her just south of Fort Wallace, near Big Creek.⁵⁹ Custer's letter:

*Fort Riley, Kansas, January
27th 1867*

*Miss Amanda Fletcher
Yours of the 4th inst. came
duly to hand. Your sister of whom*

you make inquiries is not at this post nor has she been here. There are two persons here however who saw her within the past two months in the hands of the Cheyenne Indians. The Indian who claims her is a chief called Cutnose. One of the persons who saw her is Lieut. [Owen] Hale of the 7th U.S. Cavalry, the other is a guide and ranchman named [William] Comstock who lives near Camp Collins on the Utah road. At the time your sister was seen the party of Indians having her in charge were about two hundred and fifty miles west of this point [Fort Riley] on the Smoky Hill route to Denver City near Big Creek a short distance this side of Fort Wallace. This party of Indians has moved northward since, but I suppose could still be found if desired. The guide Comstock to whom I referred was in the fight in which your sister was taken prisoner near Fort Halleck. He saw your father after the fight was over and states that your father was slightly wounded in one of his arms. He has had a great deal of experience with Indians and is of the opinion that the only and surest way to obtain the release of your sister is to ransom her which would be probably by giving for her one or two horses. I would be glad to assist you in any way in my power. Please communicate with me. Your sister was in good health and was kindly cared for by the Indians being considered a great favorite by them. Very truly yours, G. A. Custer.⁶⁰



American Heritage Center, Univ. of Wyoming

Lizzie Brokenhom at schoolhouse, standing in door entrance

Custer later wrote about this in his 1874 book, *My Life on the Plains*:

The child [Lizzie] now held by the Indians was kept captive. An elder daughter [Mary] made her escape and now resides in Iowa. The father resides in Salt Lake City. I have received several letters from the father and eldest daughter and from friends of both, requesting me to obtain the release of the little girl, if possible ... all trace of the little white girl was lost, and to this day nothing is known of her fate.... "Cut Nose" with his band was located along the Smoky Hill route in the vicinity of Monument Station. He frequently visited the stage stations for purposes of trade, and was

invariably accompanied by his little captive. I never saw her, but those who did represented her as strikingly beautiful; her complexion being fair, her eyes blue, and her hair of a bright golden hue, she presented a marked contrast to the Indian children who accompanied her. "Cut Nose," from the delicate light color of her hair, gave her an Indian name signifying "Little Silver Hair." He appeared to treat her with great affection, and always kept her clothed in the handsomest of Indian garments. All offers from individuals to ransom her proved unavailing. Although she has been with the Indians but a year, she spoke the Cheyenne language fluently, and

seemed to have no knowledge of her mother tongue.⁶¹

Mary recalled finally reuniting with her father. Mary:

I was for some years after my captivity separated from my father. I met him again in Colorado and Utah [1871]. He had saved the boys and with them resided in Utah and I went there to him and found him. I found him mentally not the man he was before the attack on our train in 1865. The worry over us girl's captivity, and the murder of my mother had had their affect. He was not the business man that he had been before these depredations. I found that the depredations had impoverished him and that his earnings, much of same he had expended in looking for us captive girls, that his constant thoughts were on his sore affliction and losses.⁶²

Four years after being physically reunited with his eldest daughter Mary, Jasper died suddenly in Salt Lake City, October 15, 1875. *And Mary never forgot about little Lizzie.* In 1880, when Buffalo Bill Cody was beginning his career running his famous Wild West show, Cody used the Fletcher name in presenting a white female captive living among the Indians, even naming the captive Lizzie. Mary's local paper in Davenport reported this, and when Mary read it, she thought Cody might know something about Lizzie's captivity. Cody was contacted, and responded with a letter to the editor of the *Davenport Gazette*, written September 30, which was published in

the Davenport paper. Cody:

I am very sorry to say that the Miss Lizzie Fletcher of my company who is playing the part of Onita is not Mrs. Cook's sister although the circumstances connected with her capture are very similar to the story of my drama "The Prairie Waif" and I will have "John A. Stevens" the author write Mrs. Cook where he obtained the incidents connected with the plot and story of the play. I knew of the massacre of the Fletchers and the capture of the two girls but had forgotten it until it was brought to my mind through the columns of your paper [the Gazette].⁶³

Cody went on to state that he would write Mrs. Cook with any further information, assuring her that he believed Lizzie was still living among the Indians. He also informed her that the half-breed men in the Indian village associated with her captivity might have been George or Charles Bent, and said George Bent was still alive. Ten years later Mary received a letter from a person who was the brother of Thomas Boggs, who settled the town called Boggsville just east of Pueblo along the Arkansas River. In a response to Mary's inquiries, the unnamed letter writer replied back and said that George Bent might know information regarding what happened to Lizzie. Mary was advised "to open a correspondence with Ed Garry [sic: Edmund Guerrier] and George Bent, Indian interpreters at Fort Sill Indian Territory and perhaps through them you will get on the right track for your lost sister."⁶⁴

Mary wrote to George Bent, and he

later recalled his correspondence with her, saying she was captured by Sand Hill's band of Cheyenne. Bent wrote that in her letter to him she said she was well treated while a captive, that Sand Hill's wife was very kind to her during her captivity.⁶⁵ He erroneously stated that John Smith, working for Morris and Hanger, traded for her. Mary might have told Bent that when she wrote to him, by way of introduction, but in her own accounts of her captivity she penned a very different account from what Bent said:

As for telling my experiences with the Indians, I cannot command the language that would convey the remotest idea to one not experiencing it, of the freezing cold, sleet and rain, and the torture I would receive from these Indians, or I ought to say fiends, yes they were far worse than any name I could give them. If I could have my way about it there would not be one left alive. I have been almost starved [to death] days at a time, without one morsel to eat. Oh, how I prayed for death to come to my relief. I have begged of them time and again to kill me. I have often thought since my rescue, that it was my anxiety for them to kill me caused them not to do so. Certainly with me their tenderest [sic] mercies would have been instant death. They did not for the first few months permit me to have a knife in my hand, or anything with which I could take my own life. Than remain with them death would be far more preferable.⁶⁶

Mary later added in her captivity account that that she was not referring to all Cheyenne as the fiends she wished dead, "and to distinguish them from the peaceable Cheyennes, they were known at that time as the Cheyenne Dog Soldiers."

As far as being treated kindly by Sand Hill's wife, Mary had nothing kind to say about any Cheyenne women during her captivity, saying that the women "would often abuse her and beat her shamefully when angry." If a female was angry at her husband she would appease her anger by beating Mary. Once she described crossing an ice-swollen river in the dead of winter. Suddenly the ice she was on broke free and went down river in the strong current. She jumped off and swam to the shore. The warriors thought it a brave act, but the women thought she was stupid for not letting the ice carry her away from her captors. But Mary knew that not far downriver were deep falls, which would have drowned her.⁶⁷

It was shortly after Jasper's wife was killed and daughters taken captive that he filed for a "depreddation claim" against the Cheyenne Indians, making formal application January 6, 1865, while his daughters were still missing in captivity. Congress had a complicated set of laws in place which allowed citizens who were attacked by Indians under treaty with the United States and receiving annuities to file a claim against the guilty tribe for lost and destroyed property.⁶⁸ In his claim he stated a total loss of \$6,295.50, for the loss of all his possessions in his two wagons. He said he lost \$250 in gold coin. After Mary was rescued, married and living in Davenport, he made a second claim, dated March 9, 1867, and



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William Bent

lowered his total loss from \$6,295.50 to \$2356. In this second claim he stated his loss of gold coin was just \$150. But after Jasper suddenly died in 1875, Mary and her brother Jasper, Junior, together filed a third claim, dated January 24, 1876. The new claim grew the property loss to \$7,915, the children stating the loss of money was \$2000 in gold coin, in addition to \$1,000 in English bank notes, paper money. In addition to the large amount of money now claimed, there were other changes too. For instance, in the first claim Jasper said he lost three horses and four mules, but the mules were not claimed in the second or third claim. But many more personal items, including expensive clothing and bedding, were added to the last claim. In 1892, while giving testimony about the depredation claim, Mary revised the amount of money lost to 17,000 pounds in bank of

England notes and an additional 3,000 pounds in gold sovereigns. She said her father preferred not to convert his English pounds into American currency due to the fluctuating value of American paper money at the time.

The first claim was disqualified because Jasper was not an American citizen, a government requirement in 1865 in order to qualify for filing a claim.⁶⁹ In refileing, papers were submitted showing that he had in fact filed for citizenship prior to the raid, thus making him eligible for compensation. As the claim was being investigated, Congress tweaked the depredation claims laws and allowed for all persons, citizens or not, to file new claims. With that new opportunity, and with Jasper deceased, Mary and her younger brother together filed the third claim. When the government evaluated the new claim, they expressed concern over the apparent inflation of monetary value of the goods lost, and especially questioned the gold and paper money said to have been taken.

In response to queries, Mary did her best to explain the problem with the large amount of money first not being reported. She said her father had been told the government would not compensate for lost money, so he merely noted a token amount, not expecting any reimbursement for that. Mary's claim corrected the incorrect amount. She also noted that when her father made his first claim he was still suffering from his arrow wound and was not articulate regarding his losses. The same argument was presented in his reduced second claim, noting that his extreme poverty as a result of the loss of his entire possessions had left him depressed and destitute, and thus

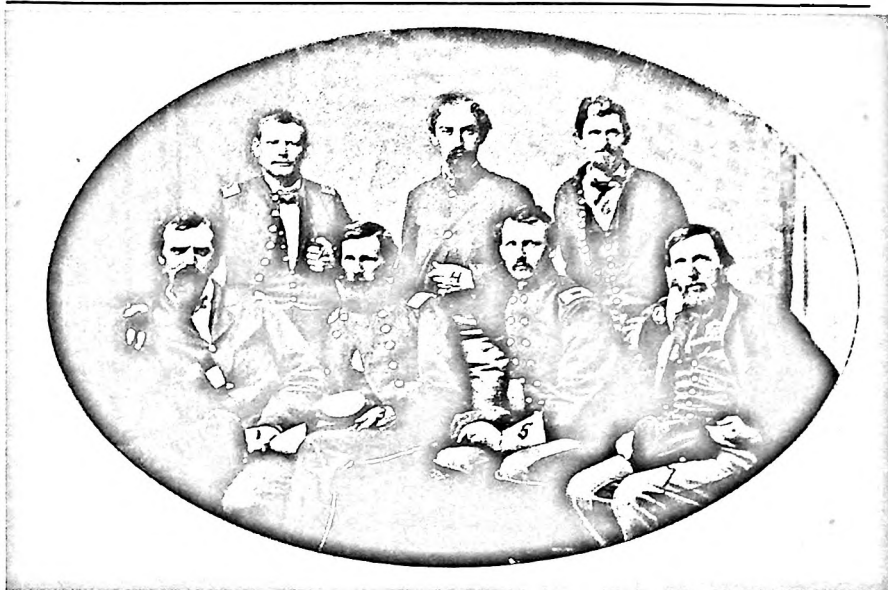
he was not thinking clearly when he made his claims. Again she asserted that her amended third claim was the accurate one, and that, together with her brother's recollections, they had noted the true losses and value of the family possessions. It was clear to the government investigators, however, that the children were overinflating the value of the property lost, including exaggerating the amount of money taken. A recommendation was made to pay the entire amount of the second claim, for a reimbursement of \$2,356. At about that same time Congress authorized a special payment to Mary, for \$2,000, for her sufferings in captivity. That was approved by Congress June 16, 1880, and she was issued a check by the treasury department September 24.⁷⁰ The recommendation to compensate the family for the amount filed in the second claim, however, was never approved, which was part of the reason for filing the third claim.

One might think it was a simple slam dunk that Mary and her younger brother Jasper were intentionally overinflating their losses, an act typical in many depredation claim filings.⁷¹ But to Mary's credit, 10 years after Charles Hanger secured her release, the two became reacquainted, and Charles testified under oath in Mary's behalf. Charles vouched for the larger amount of money. He said he had traded with the Arapaho and Apache Indians and all he received in remuneration was buffalo robes, but when he traded with the Cheyenne he reported that they had "over \$10,000 in Bank of England notes and about \$800 in English gold coin, and about \$1,000 in 7-30 greenbacks,

and the remainder was straight greenbacks." By sign language the Cheyenne informed him that they got the money from "Mrs. Cook's father's wagons." When asked how he learned that, since he could not speak the Indian dialect and did not have an interpreter with him, he said it was by signs: "By showing me what they had, and pointing to the child [Mary] and making the sign of her parent's wagons."⁷²

Charles also testified that he offered one Indian \$200 in trade goods for the wedding ring he took from Mary Ann Fletcher's finger when she was killed, but the Indian did not want to depart with his prized possession. He also gave testimony showing that William Bent had traded for about three times the amount of money that he had traded with the Cheyenne. Hanger received about \$14,000 in England notes in his trade with the Cheyenne, which he was able to convert at a 42% value. He used \$1,600 of that amount received to purchase Mary and end her captivity.⁷³

The government still did not pay anything for the property loss suffered during the July 31, 1865 attack, and by the early 1890s Mary enlisted yet another attorney to assist her in the recovery of her family's lost property. But by then the attorney filed an amended claim stating the preposterous amount of \$106,295.50. As a result of this claim, Mary was informed that the government was going to dismiss the claim because of "alleged frauds." The attorney apparently saw the futility of successfully adjudicating the claim, writing to Mary, "I do not understand why it was that your father in making his application claimed that the loss of money was so slight, if in fact he lost the amount claimed at the present



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Wynkoop, seated third from left, and 1st Colorado Cavalry

time.”⁷⁴ In the end the government made no payment to the Fletcher descendants for their losses in the 1865 raid, other than the special act Congress made in giving Mary \$2,000 for her personal sufferings during captivity.

There is more to Mary’s story than her struggle for compensation. As she was doggedly pursuing this, she never forgot her younger sister. But by the mid-1880s she seemed to have finally given up hope that her sister Lizzie was still alive. In the letter she received from Thomas Harford around 1900 he said that he seemed to recall that a stage driver told him that a little girl was found dead the day after the attack on the Fletcher family. That seemed to confirm Mary’s beliefs in 1887 when she wrote to the agent handling her depredation claim she had “no doubt in

my own mind my little sister was killed soon after – as I never saw her after the first day of my capture.”⁷⁵ Still, she must have often wondered what really happened to Lizzie.

Mary continued her futile fight for compensation throughout her life. Indeed, just three months before she died in 1928, she received a letter from her son, an eye, ear, nose and throat doctor residing in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, telling her that his lawyer advised Mary to turn the claim over to her son for final dispensation. Whether she followed his advice, so shortly before she died is not clear in the records.⁷⁶

One might think this is the end of the story: Lizzie lived her life out as an Indian, and Mary always wondered what happened to her little sister.

However, there was more to come and it was extraordinarily significant. A final dispensation occurred more than 35 years after Mary's rescue. In August, 1900, a caravan of Arapaho Indians had ventured 125 miles from the Wind River Reservation and an Arapaho sub-agency, down into Casper, Wyoming, to procure supplies as a part of their annual annuities. About 40 male Indians and half that amount of tribal women accompanied the band, where the women sought to sell trinkets and other hand-made items as their male compatriots transferred the annuities from the railroad cars into wagons for the journey back to the reservation. While purchasing Indian goods from the women, Casper citizens recognized one of the females as clearly a white woman, but knowing only the Indian dialect and fully dressed and acting as an Indian. She could not speak any English. A newspaper recalled,

She seemed almost as dirty and sunburned as the other squaws, but beneath the darkened skin were traces of a different race. Her hair was light in color, finer than that of the other women of her tribe, and her eyes were a clear blue. At the same time, she appeared to be a favorite in the band, and received more consideration than is usually given to a full-blooded squaw. Her clothes, blankets and even souvenirs, were of a better quality than those of her associates.⁷⁷

The curious citizens questioned one of the older Indian men who could speak English about the white Indian woman. He informed them

that the woman in question had been captured by the Cheyenne when about two years old. She—Kellsto Time or Killing Horn—was married to an Arapaho Indian by the name of John Brokenhorn. The story was reported in the *Natrona County Tribune*, and was soon published in several other papers around the country.⁷⁸ The story eventually appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, and one of her brothers sent a copy to Mary in Davenport.

Mary thought this might be her long lost, but never forgotten sister Lizzie. She wrote Wind River Indian agent, Captain H. G. Nickerson. Nickerson confirmed to Mary that Mrs. Brokenhorn was likely a white captive and indeed could be the long lost Lizzie. Nickerson told Mary

Of course I have seen the squaw, and I have tried to learn her true story. But that is rather a hard thing to do. She herself speaks only the Indian tongue, and says she has no recollection of any white parents. Moreover the Broken Horn, her husband, is not altogether anxious that she should be made the subject of an investigation. He prefers not to have any white people around, and should someone attempt to visit with his wife, he might move further back into the country... he is afraid the whites might take away his squaw.⁷⁹

Nickerson's warnings did not deter Mary's efforts to find her long lost sister. In late summer, 1901, Nickerson wrote Mary and told her that the rumors of smallpox on the reservation, as well as a rumored Indian uprising were both a hoax,

and she could visit the reservation if she desired. He offered his assistance to set up an interview with the white Indian woman. Further, Nickerson now felt that the Brokenhorns would not object to a visit.⁸⁰ That was all Mary needed to hear. In the summer of 1902 she travelled by rail to Casper, and from there took a stage to the Arapaho sub-agency. She had found her sister, apparently verified by a birth mark Mary never forgot. Now 39, Lizzie had been living with the Indians for 37 years. Through an interpreter, Mary explained to Lizzie how she was captured, and who her white family was. Mary desired that her long lost sister return with her to Iowa and begin to live her life as her sister, a white woman.

But Mrs. Brokenhorn would not go; she declared that she was an Indian, that she was satisfied to live as she had always lived; to call a tepee her home, to wear a blanket, to do the drudgery as all the squaws were doing, and to claim a full-blooded Indian as her husband, and that she could not remember anything about being captured, as her white sister had explained to her.⁸¹

Hearing long-lost Lizzie declare her commitment to her Indian life was devastating to Mary. She left her visit broken-hearted. She claimed that the rejection of her sister “was the hardest blow she had endured since she saw her mother killed by being thrust through the body with a spear by a blood-thirsty Indian.”⁸²

Thus ends the story of Amanda Mary Fletcher - Mary Cook. The fact that Lizzie disappeared after the first



Denver Public Library, Western History Collection

Wynkoop

day of capture was not because she had been killed—a thought Mary struggled with over the years—rather, it was probably because the raiding Indians had split apart, the majority wandering one way with Mary and the smaller band leaving in a different direction with Lizzie. If Lizzie was the little white child seen in the village of a Cheyenne named Cutnose, she remained with that faction until sometime later, mingling with Northern Arapaho and meeting John Brokenhorn, her future husband. Even at Mary’s death, she still struggled with her fate of losing her little sister. Her obituary said:

In later years Mrs. Cook kept up a constant search for her little sister. At one time she thought she had located the missing woman who was supposed to

be living among the Indians and refused to leave them to return to civilization. However, no absolute proof was ever established that it was the sister of Mrs. Cook.⁸³

Lizzie's story continued. After learning her white heritage, Mrs. Brokenhorn continued to live at the Arapaho Agency. She changed her first name to Lizzie and let her fellow Indian women know that "she was of superior birth and was of considerable more importance than the common Indians." Her husband John, 13 years senior in age, felt his status elevated too. After learning of his wife's English heritage, John set himself up as an Indian doctor, horse trader, and maker of Indian artifacts. Along with his white wife, they made a modest income, and when last noted in a publication in 1923, they had a comfortable existence together as husband and wife, and as one record reported, raised five children. John was 73-years-old and Lizzie - Kellsto Time or Killing Horn - was 62-years-old.⁸⁴ Ancestry.com confirms the story and notes that Mrs. Brokenhorn died May 31, 1928, at the Wind River Indian Reservation in western Wyoming. John Brokenhorn - Tutankaham - died February 2, 1930, at the Shoshone Agency.⁸⁵

How coincidental that the two sisters' journey on earth ended the same month of the same year. Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook died May 9, 1928, just 22 days before Lizzie Fletcher Brokenhorn's journey ended. Perhaps they finally joined together into an afterlife excursion.⁸⁶

Endnotes

1. Louis Kraft, *Ned Wynkoop and the Lonely Road to Sand Creek* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011), 161; David Fridtjof & Andrew E. Masich, *Halfbreed The Remarkable True Story of George Bent* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2004), 23. For more on the sacred arrows and their meaning to Cheyenne culture, see Father Peter John Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, Volume 1 (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), 3-15.
2. Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, Vol. 1, 631.
3. Dan L. Thrapp, *Encyclopedia of Frontier Biography, Volume I* (The Arthur H. Clark Company (Glendale, CA: 1988), 96-100. See also Jeff Broome, *Cheyenne War: Indian Raids on the Roads to Denver, 1864-1869* (Sheridan and Sterling, CO: Aberdeen Books/Logan County Historical Society, 2013).
4. Broome, *Cheyenne War*, 39-41.
5. Statement of V. T. McGillicuddy, Pine Ride Indian Agent, in Joseph Eubanks Indian Depredation Claim, Record Group 123, Claim #2733, Indian Depredations Claims Division, National Archives Building, Washington, DC. The raids along these two water sources were nearly 100 miles apart. The Little Blue raids included all of the above named Indians, whereas the Plum Creek raid consisted mostly of Southern Cheyenne. See Broome, *Cheyenne War*, 89, 131.
6. "Massacre of the Cheyenne Indians," *Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, at the Second Session Thirty-Eighth Congress* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1865), 47.
7. "Massacre of the Cheyenne Indians," 61.
8. Christopher B. Gerboth, edited, *The Tall Chief The Unfinished Autobiography of Edward W. Wynkoop, 1856-1866* (Denver, CO, Monograph 9, Colorado Historical Society, 1993), 86.
9. Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, Vol. 1, 283.
10. H. L. Lubers, "William Bent's Family

and the Indians of the Plains" (*The Colorado Magazine*, Volume XIII, January, 1936, Number 1), 19.

11. Kraft, *Ned Wynkoop*, 106.

12. *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the Year 1864* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), 233.

13. Gerboth, *The Tall Chief*, 89.

14. Kraft, *Ned Wynkoop*, 174.

15. For an account of these raids, see Broome, *Cheyenne War*, 67-111. See also Ronald Becher, *Massacre Along the Medicine Road: A Social History of the Indian War of 1864 in Nebraska Territory* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Press, 1999).

16. David A. Chever, Affidavit, August 21, 1865, "Reply of Governor Evans of the Territory of Colorado to ... "Massacre of Cheyenne Indians." Records of the Department of State, Territorial Papers, Colorado, Volume 1, 12. National Archives Building, Washington, DC. See also John M. Carroll, compiled, *The Sand Creek Massacre: A Documentary History* (New York, NY: Sol Lewis, 1973), xvii-xviii.

17. For an account of the causes of this war, covering the years 1864-1869, see Broome, *Cheyenne War*, 40-42. For information relating to Sand Creek, the following is recommended: For an overview emphasizing the Cheyenne perspective, Gary Leland Roberts, *Sand Creek: Tragedy and Symbol* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertation Services, 1984); for an overview emphasizing the civilian and military view, Gregory F. Michno, *Battle at Sand Creek: The Military Perspective* (El Segundo, CA: Upton and Sons, Publishers, 2004); for a contemporary analysis emphasizing modern issues in understanding Sand Creek, Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling Over the Memory of Sand Creek* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

18. George E. Hyde, *Life of George Bent Written From his Letters* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), 225.

19. Broome, *Cheyenne War*, 181-183.

Eric S. Johnson, compiled, *No Greater Calling A Chronological Record of Sacrifice and Heroism During the Western Indian*

Wars, 1865-1898 (Atglen, PA: Schiff Military History, 2012), 20-21. For a comprehensive account of this affair, see John D. McDermott, *Frontier Crossroads The History of Fort Caspar and the Upper Platte Crossing* (Casper, WY: the City of Casper, Wyoming, 1997).

20. Ida Ellen Rath, *The Rath Trail* (Wichita, KS: McCormick-Armstrong CO., Inc., 1961), 27.

21. Bent writes of his involvement at Platte Bridge, but ignores saying anything regarding further attacks upon whites immediately following Platte Bridge. The band that made the attack on the Fletcher family on July 31 could have included George Bent, as Bent writes that he remained with the Cheyenne in the Powder River country until October. Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 243.

22. Mary Fletcher in 1887 stated that Minimic was chief of the band that attacked her family, while Black Kettle was chief of the tribe. See "Year in Savagery Mary Fletcher's Life Among the Indians," November 2, 1887. The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers. Accession No. H73-35, Folder 1. Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, WY. In that manuscript she also stated that a leading brave took charge of her and she remained his slave throughout her captivity. In another account she named him as Neei-Mia-Reah. See Deposition, Folder 2. A newspaper article names him as Chief Neir-mir-vier. Long Beach newspaper, undated, 1924. Folder 1. It should be noted that in later accounts given of the raid, the date was changed to August 1. See The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 6. However, in another account Mary says the attack happened on a Monday, which would be July 31. Indian Depredation Claim, Folder 13. It is quite possible Minimic and Neei-Mia-Reah are one and the same person. Powell, in *People of the Sacred Mountain*, never gives the Indian name for Minimic, other than Eagle Head. When the Wyoming State Archives acquired the papers from Mary Cook's granddaughter, Mary Elizabeth Farr, Virginia Cole Trenholm studied the files

and summarized Mary's story in "Amanda Mary Cook and the Dog Soldiers," *Annals of Wyoming* (Volume 46, Springs, 1974, Number 1), 5-46.

23. *Davenport Republican*, October 22, 1901.

24. "Story of Mary Fletcher," Folder 1.

25. "Year in Savagery Mary Fletcher's Life Among the Indians," November 2, 1887, Folder 1. See also "Story of Mary Fletcher, from her handwritten account," 2, Folder 1. "Captured by Indians," *Proceedings and Collections of the Wyoming State Historical Department, 1921-1923*. Second Biennial Report of the State Historian with Recommendations and Remarks (Sheridan, WY: The Mills Company, 1923), 102. Folder 3. Mary also names her mother as Mary Limb Fletcher.

26. Jasper Fletcher filed his depredation claim January 2, 1866, while both his daughters' captivity fates were unknown, and in his claim he said Mary was 17 when captured. Mary's obituary in *The Davenport Democrat*, May 10, 1928, said she was born August 19, 1847, confirming her age as 17 when she was captured. See The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, folder 16. However, in all of Mary's writings, including her depredation claim, she states she was born in 1851 and was only 13 when captured, turning 14 nearly three weeks into her captivity. This discrepancy in age is easily understood, however, when one considers the social stigma of being in captivity and subject of the lust of the warriors. Mary was trying to protect her innocence during her ordeal. That she was the subject of sexual exploitation is beyond question, and explains why she misrepresented her age. She should not be blamed for that. What she did not understand, however, was that the Plains Indians sexually abused girls 13 and younger. For a similar instance of age misrepresentation in a depredation claim, see the claim of Peter Ulbrich, described in Broome, *Dog Soldier Justice*, 139-140. Veronica Ulbrich, 13 at her 1867 capture, was the subject of daily and nightly rapes from countless Cheyenne

warriors. In captivity about a month, she was nearly dead when ransomed. Her father explained in the depredation claim the necessity to misrepresent her age as being seven when captured, in an effort to protect her innocence. At the time they filed for reparations, Veronica was married and her husband did not know her true age. A similar story emerges in the 1874 Cheyenne captivity of the German sisters. See Arlene Jauken, great granddaughter of Sophia German, who was 12 when captured September 11, 1874, *The Moccasin Speaks: Living as Captives of the Dog Soldier Warriors* (Lincoln, NE: Dageforde Publishing, Inc., 1998), 97.

27. In "Captured by Indians," 102, Mary says the family was several hundred yards in front of the oxen-driven train. In other accounts she admits that each day the family was far in front of the slower train.

28. Alfred James Mokler, *History of Natrona County Wyoming* (Chicago, IL: R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company The Lakeside Press, 1923), 417. Reprinted, Mountain States Lithographing, Casper, WY, 1989. See also The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, folder No 1, "Year in Savagery," Folder 1.

29. "Year in Savagery," Folder 1.

30. Jasper Fletcher Indian Depredation Claim #5072. Record Group 123. National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

31. Jasper Fletcher Indian Depredation Claim #5072.

32. Jasper Fletcher Indian Depredation Claim #5072.

33. The way Plains Indians tied captives on horses was to stretch their hands and feet on each side and as far down the horse as possible, with the captive's head pressed against the horse at the top, and then using rope to tie the hands and feet together under the horse's belly. An Indian would then use a tethered rope to control the captive's horse while he raced away on his mount, pulling the captive's horse alongside him. Captives would remain in that position for the duration of the ride, which often lasted most of the daylight hours. It was a very painful method of securing a captive to a horse so

that they could not escape. See Broome, *Cheyenne War*, 74.

34. Long Beach newspaper, dated in the year 1924, The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 1. It was common among the Cheyenne that before a war party would return to a village, riders first came into the village announcing their return, and if there were captives, the villagers would line up in two lines and make the captives run a gauntlet where the villagers would inflict as much pain upon the captives as was possible. Oftentimes the torture was so severe that a frail female captive could die, unless a caring Indian intervened. See a summary of this in Jeff Broome, *Dog Soldier Justice: The Ordeal of Susanna Alderdice in the Kansas Indian War* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 132-133.

35. Mokler, *History of Natrona County*, 418. See also "Year in Savagery," folder 1.

36. Eldon Davis, complied, *They Thought It Was Over. The Michigan Cavalry On The Plains 1865-1866* (Howell, MI: Powder River Press, no date [2013]), 19.

37. "Captured by Indians," 102. Folder 3.

38. Thomas Harford letter, The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, folder 4.

39. *Clinton Register*, December 2, 1887. The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, folder 15.

40. "Amanda M. Fletcher Cook Deposition," undated, The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, folder 2.

41. "Amanda M. Fletcher Cook Deposition," The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, folder 2.

42. Jasper Fletcher Indian Depredation Claim #5062.

43. "Amanda M. Fletcher Cook Deposition," The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, folder 2.

44. "Captured by Indians," 103.

45. Hanger testimony comes from Jasper Fletcher Indian Depredation Claim #5062. Hanger is mistaken when he said it was only Cheyenne that captured Mary and Lizzie, as Mary made it clear in her recollections that there were some Arapaho and fewer Sioux in the war party. He noted

in his testimony that he remained friends with Mary for the next several years, and that about 10 years after her rescue she received a substantial inheritance from family in England. See also Kraft, *Ned Wynkoop*, 164-165.

46. Jasper Fletcher Indian Depredation Claim #5062. Kraft, *Ned Wynkoop*, 164-165. Captain G. A. Gordon, 2nd Cavalry, "Headquarters, Fort Dodge, Kansas, March 5, 1866." *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1866* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1866), 277-278.

47. "Captured by Indians," 104. Folder 3.

48. Charles Hanger testimony, Jasper Fletcher Indian Depredation Claim #5062.

49. Gordon, "Headquarters, Fort Dodge, Kansas, March 5, 1866," 277-278.

50. "Year in Savagery," Folder 1.

51. "Year in Savagery," Folder 1.

52. "Captured by Indians, 104. Folder 3.

53. Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 251.

54. Gordon, "Headquarters, Fort Dodge, Kansas, March 5, 1866," 277.

55. Major E. W. Wynkoop, "Fort Larned, Kansas, April 8, 1866." *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1866*, 278.

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

57. "Captured by Indians," 106. Folder 3.

58. Jasper Fletcher Indian Depredation Claim #5072, 40. Folder 13.

59. Jasper Fletcher Indian Depredation Claim #5072.

60. The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 5.

61. Gen. G. A. Custer, *My Life on the Plains, or, Personal Experiences With Indians* (New York, NY: Sheldon and Company, 1874), 45-46. Custer's letter to Mary was acquired by G. M. Brady in the 1970s. The letter was transcribed and published by Brady in "The Story of Little Silver Hair," *Manuscripts* (Fall, 1976, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4), 292-299.

62. Jasper Fletcher Indian Depredation Claim #5062.

63. The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers. Folder 1. Cody's letter is found in Folder 5.

64. Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 6.
65. Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, 251.
66. Undated manuscript, The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, folder 5. Mary's hand-written account was published in 1923 as the *Second Biennial Report of the State Historian of the State of Wyoming For the Period Ending September 30, 1922 with Wyoming Historical Collections*, by Eunice G. Anderson, State Historian. See Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 3.
67. "Year in Savagery," Folder 1. It is clear that Bent had a very different idea of Mary's captivity than was real. Powell used Bent's statement to declare, "Years later, Mary Fletcher still recalled how kindly Sand Hill and his woman treated her." Such claims do not have a grain of truth. Powell, *People of the Sacred Mountain*, Vol. 1, 407.
68. For a study explaining this complicated set of laws, see Larry Skogen, *Indian Depredation Claims, 1796-1920* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996).
69. Skogen, *Indian Depredation Claims*, 104.
70. Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 5. See Folder 13 for a summary of the depredation claims. See too Jasper Fletcher Indian Depredation Claim #5062 and 5072.
71. Larry Skogen, "The Bittersweet Reality of Indian Depredation Claims," *Prologue, the Journal of the National Archives*, Vol. 24 (Fall, 1992), 293.
72. Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 13. See also Charles Hanger Testimony, Folder 8.
73. Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 8, 13.
74. Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 10.
75. Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 5.
76. Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 12.
77. *Davenport Republican*, October 22, 1901.
78. Mokler, *History of Natrona County*, 417.
79. *Davenport Republican*
80. The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, folder 11.
81. Mokler, *History of Natrona County*, 420.
82. Mokler, *History of Natrona County*, 420.
83. *The Davenport Democrat*, May 10, 1928. Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, Folder 16.
84. Mokler, *History of Natrona County*, 420-421. See also Beverley Elaine Brink, *Wyoming Land of Echoing Canyons* (Hettinger, ND: Flying Diamond Books, 1986), 99. Mary Cook's grandson said in 1935 that Lizzie had four or five children, all with blue eyes, believing that their white blood made them feel "far superior to the rest of the Indians." One of her children became a preacher, living in western South Dakota. See F. S. Cook letter, April 26, 1935, The Amanda Mary Fletcher Cook Papers, folder 3.
85. <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/24796863/person/1305288696> (accessed May 28, 2013)
86. The 1900 US Census shows her name as Kellsto Time (Sometime Kills To Time or Killing Horn), living with her husband at the Shoshone Indian Reservation in Fremont, Wyoming. http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?rank=1&new=1&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=angs-g&gsm=Kells*&gsln=time&msrpnftp=wyoming&cpxt=0&catBucket=rstp&uidh=uh1&cp=0&pcat=ROOT_CATEGORY&h=74467689&db=1900usfedcen (Accessed April 6, 2013). The records also indicate Lizzie was born in Rock Island, Illinois on August 6, 1863. <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/24796863/person/1305288696> (accessed May 28, 2013).

Over the Corral Rail

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

Great Presentations to the Westerners Corrals kick off the Fall Season

In September the Boulder County Corral viewed "Photographs of the building of Hoover Dam," by member Jim Hester. These photos were taken by Jim's father-in-law between 1930 and 1934, and not only illustrated the great construction project but also the hard life in the 1930s. The October program is "Changes in Medicine during three Generations of Boulder Doctors," by John Farrington, M. D. This history of Boulder includes first-hand material of John, his father, and grandfather, all doctors practicing in the Boulder area.

In September the Colorado Corral enjoyed Member John Monnett's ever-popular program, "Buffalo Wallows," a presentation to which John continues to add fascinating new material. The October program is by Amy Zimmer.

"An Evening with Theodore Roosevelt," an outstanding reenactment by Don Moon, was enjoyed by the Pikes Peak Posse in September. Moon has been researching Roosevelt for fifteen years, capturing the exuberance of Teddy, with his achievements as a triumphant war hero, crusading politician and founder of the national park system. For October, John Stansfield's program is "An Evening with Enos Mills." Storyteller and award-winning author Stansfield presents one-man performances reenacting notable Coloradoans, including Enos Mills and frontier physician Dr. Charles Fox Gardiner.

Prestigious Denver Public Library Award to Posse Member Sandra Dallas

Sandra is the 2014 winner of the Eleanor Gehres Award given by the Western History Dept. of the Denver Public Library. The Eleanor Gehres Award recognizes Sandra's contributions to the West and to the library's Western collection. She has donated her photographs, manuscripts and much of her Western memorabilia to DPL and is a member of the library's acquisitions committee. Sandra Dallas and Eleanor Gehres, who headed the Western History Dept. until shortly before her death in 2000, were long-time friends. They were two of the four editors of *The Colorado Book*, an anthology of writings about the state, published in 1993.



Westerners Bookshelf



New Mexico's Spanish Livestock Heritage: Four Centuries of Animals, Land, and People, by William W. Dunmire. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2013, 233 + xii pages. Illustrated with photographs, drawings, maps, and charts; endnotes, bibliography ("literature cited"), index. Cloth with jacket, \$34.95.

First of all - and this is a good thing - the title of this book is misleading. The volume is by no means limited to the Spanish or Hispanic contributions to the livestock of New Mexico - nor is it limited to the stock side of agriculture. This book is an historical and natural survey of the contributions various agricultural cultures made to what would become the State of New Mexico. While the majority of the discussion might be about the Spanish-speaking contributors, there also is plenty about the continuous cultivations and husbandry of the native Indians and the significant later additions made by the "Anglo" ranching community.

Although it should be noted that authors usually do not have final say on titles, the author, in his preface, also tries to shoehorn this volume solely into Hispanic Studies. He says, in observing that Columbus (an Italian in Spanish service) introduced the complete range of barnyard critters to the New World, "[A]ll livestock in the United States has a Spanish heritage." Later, of course, there is mention of the eventual introduction of such diverse cattle breeds as Holstein, Hereford, and Angus.

Having said that, this is an excellent history of the natural landscape of New Mexico, the growth of its farming and ranching, and the shortcomings of invasive species and overwhelming human practices (including the almost-inevitable destructiveness of sheep grazing). While the author acknowledges he is not an historian but a "professional naturalist," this fact probably results in the volume being so factual, informative, and not laden with neo-historical jargon. In addition, the author, a retired NPS naturalist, proves himself a qualified wordsmith, for he has made what could be a dry subject (especially in New Mexico) a fascinating and well-written story.

This book is highly recommended. It is chock full of facts for historians seeking to learn about the movement of the Spanish into New Mexico and it also will appeal to anyone interested in our New Mexico neighbor.

—John M. Hutchins, P.M.

Montana Vigilantes, 1863-1870, Gold, Guns & Gallows. by Mark C. Dillon. University of Colorado and Utah State University Press, Logan, 2013. 416 pages. Photos, map, footnotes, appendixes, bibliography, index. Hardcover, \$34.95.

The 1862 discovery of gold on Grasshopper Creek at Big Hole Basin marked the beginning of the Montana gold rush. An even bigger discovery followed in 1863 at Alder Gulch. These discoveries resulted in the establishment of several cities, notable of which were Bannack and Virginia City. They also gave rise to an era of lawlessness and vigilante justice.

Originally Idaho, Montana and most of Wyoming were part of Idaho Territory. When the Idaho Territorial Legislature started to create counties and appoint sheriffs and judges, they did not include outlying areas like Bannack and Virginia City. According to the author, the absence of police, as well as prosecutorial and judicial authority, was one of the reasons for the rise of the Vigilance Committees. The other two reasons were: 1) the value of gold and silver; leading to a rash of robberies and killings; and 2) the insecure means of transporting wealth.

When Bannack and Virginia City finally did get a sheriff, it was none other than Henry Plummer, who was reputed to be the leader of one of the most notorious robber bands in the area. So, when the law is the problem rather than the solution, something has to be done. Thus the rise of the vigilantes.

The book is a well-researched documentation of the activities of the Montana vigilance committees during the 1863-1864 period in the Bannack and Virginia City areas, as well as the migration of vigilantism north to Helena in the 1865-1870 period. There was also vigilante activity in the early 1880s in the Musselshell region, but by then it was mostly dealing with livestock rustling.

The first part of the book details the activities of the vigilantes and the attempts to set up courts of law to deal with matters legally. The second part of the book deals with the legal issues involved and takes a look at how some of the cases may have fared in our modern-day legal system. The author even goes so far as to speculate that there would be a good chance that Sheriff Plummer would have been acquitted had he gone to trial.

The author is a legal historian and an associate justice in the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court; and has a special interest in the making and enforcement of laws and extra-legal justice meted out in the Montana Territory in the mid-1800s.

I enjoyed the book, and would recommend it to anyone interested in this facet of Western history. If I had any negatives about the book, it would be the voluminous footnotes at the end of each chapter, which often run five to ten pages and at times become chapters unto themselves.

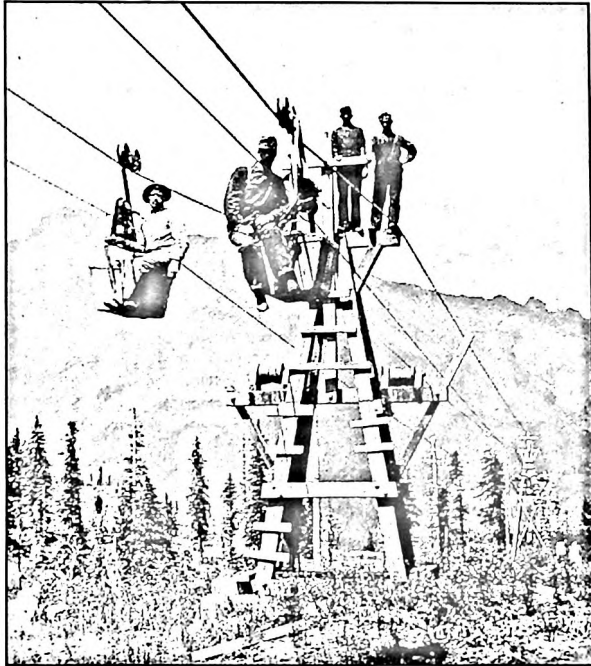
Another very good book as a companion to this one would be the 1866, *The Vigilantes of Montana*, by Thomas J. Dimsdale. It, like a few others, was written by a man who actually lived this chapter of history and was acquainted with many members of the Vigilance Committees, if not a member himself. Unfortunately his history was cut short by his death from tuberculosis in 1866.

--Carl Sandberg, P.M.



The DENVER WESTERNERS
ROUNDUP

November - December 2014



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Camp Bird Mine arial tramway

A Short History of Colorado Mining
by John Stewart, P.M.
(Presented November 23, 2011)



Our Author

A native of Lincoln, Illinois, John Stewart received his Bachelor's Degree in History and his Law Degree from the University of Illinois. John started his legal career in Chicago, but after only a few years heard Colorado calling and has now called Denver home for 34 years. His first job in Denver was with a mining company, and John developed a deep interest in mining history. While still practicing law, John decided to add a Master's Degree in History from the University of Colorado at Denver. His thesis topic became the subject of his first book, a biography of mining millionaire Thomas F. Walsh.

When not engaged in either the law or writing, John spends as much time as possible with his family (wife Carol, daughter Emilie, son-in-law Paul, granddaughter Madeleine), and volunteers at his church and with various groups who promote the understanding of history and historic preservation.

THE DENVER WESTERNERS

ROUNDUP

VOL. LXX NO. 6



November - December 2014

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The *ROUNDUP* (ISSN #2078-7970) is published bi-monthly by the Denver Posse of Westerners, Inc., founded Jan. 25, 1945. Subscription is included with a paid-up membership. (Corresponding membership is \$25 yearly, due Jan. 1) Submission of manuscripts is encouraged, but publication cannot be guaranteed. Illustrations are the responsibility of the author. Manuscripts must be submitted electronically, PC format. All copy is subject to revision and/or correction at the editor's discretion. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy of content, but such accuracy is the ultimate responsibility of the author. Periodical postage is paid at Denver, CO. *ROUNDUP* layout and pre-press by Jim Krebs, 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220. Printed by Oran V. Siler Printing Company, Denver, CO

POSTMASTER: Send address changes for *ROUNDUP* to 1925 Xanthia St., Denver, CO 80220

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A Short History of Colorado Mining by John Stewart, P.M. (Presented November 23, 2011)



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The Sheep Mtn. Tunnel mine powerhouse on the Crystal River

Early Colorado mining history is usually associated with the search for one mineral, gold. A Spanish expedition, led by Don Juan Maria de Rivera from Mexico, located the first gold in what is now Colorado sometime in 1784 in the San Juan Mountains. Others followed, but Colorado witnessed no serious gold exploration until 1858. The timing was right. Easterners already knew about the wealth found in California a decade earlier, but now the East was embroiled in a major and lasting financial panic. Lacking money and jobs, those who had stayed put during the earlier rush now

headed west. Promoters were waiting for them. Brochures described in glossy detail the golden riches awaiting anyone who came to Colorado and thrust a pick or gold pan into the earth. Gross exaggerations even included the promise that riverboats could carry the early prospectors (often called "Argonauts") all the way up the Platte and South Platte to the new boom town of Denver. Nonetheless, many came and many stayed, though few found great wealth.

The so-called Pikes Peak Gold Rush was initially centered on the new settlement of Denver. Here placer, or streambed, gold had been found in just enough quantities to whet the appetite of the Argonauts. This type of gold deposit was created by the streams flowing down from the mountains, and soon gold seekers were flocking into the nearby heights to seek richer ores found in lode deposits. Central City had its boom, along with such famed mountain mining towns as Idaho Springs, Georgetown, Fairplay and Oro City (later called Leadville). Early booms waned in many areas, usually because the richest ores located closest to the surface were soon exhausted. Then, after the Civil War had drained away many miners, the pursuit of riches from the earth was rejuvenated. Not only did many miners-turned-soldiers return, but technology improved to assist them. New smelting processes meant lower-grade ores could be turned



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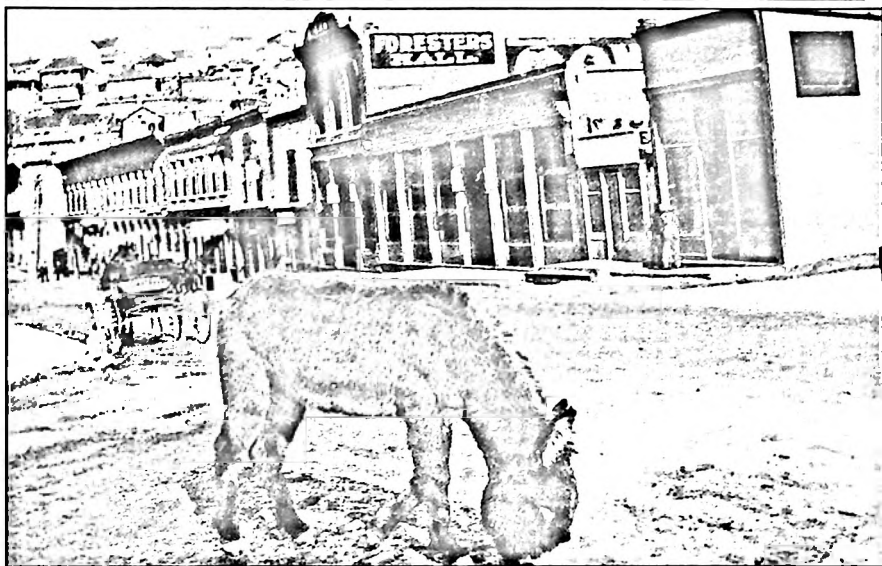
Argonaut (early gold seeker)

to the refined product, and they could be processed locally. By 1875 the entire mining process, exploration to smelting, could be performed within the state.¹

All of this meant Colorado's transportation system needed to improve. Denver was frantic to get a railroad. Former territorial governor John Evans, joined by such early business leaders as Jerome Chaffee and David Moffat, resolved to build Denver's own line after being bypassed by the transcontinental routes. Their Denver Pacific pushed its first locomotive into the city from Cheyenne in June 1870. By August, Denver had a second line when the Kansas Pacific arrived from the East.²

No transportation issues could now stand in the way of the Colorado boom. Rail lines soon threaded their way to the mountain mines.

The former Oro City, now christened Leadville, witnessed the greatest boom of the 1870s. This time the boom was in silver not gold. Early prospectors in the area had encountered a frustrating experience not unlike their brothers in Nevada's Comstock, and elsewhere. When trying to extract gold, a thick bluish substance always seemed to get in the way. By the late 1870s it was becoming well-known that the "damned blue stuff", or "black cement," was actually a lead carbonate which was rich in silver. It brought Leadville, one of the highest camps at more than ten thousand feet, a second boom, for gold fever had long since diminished here and elsewhere in the state along with all the high grade ores.³ The remarkable tales of the silver camp's overnight millionaires, some of them benefitting from nothing more than blind luck, are legendary. Their mines, carrying names like Matchless, Robert E. Lee, Little Pittsburg, Maid of Erin, Wolfstone, and Little Jonny, survive in the lore of famous bonanzas to this day. Leadville developed several distinct levels of social strata. The legendary Horace Tabor stood at the top. His mines such as the Little Pittsburg, Chrysolite, and Matchless were bringing the former stonemason from Vermont untold riches. On a lower stratum of Leadville society was a carpenter named Winfield Scott Stratton, who is said to have first



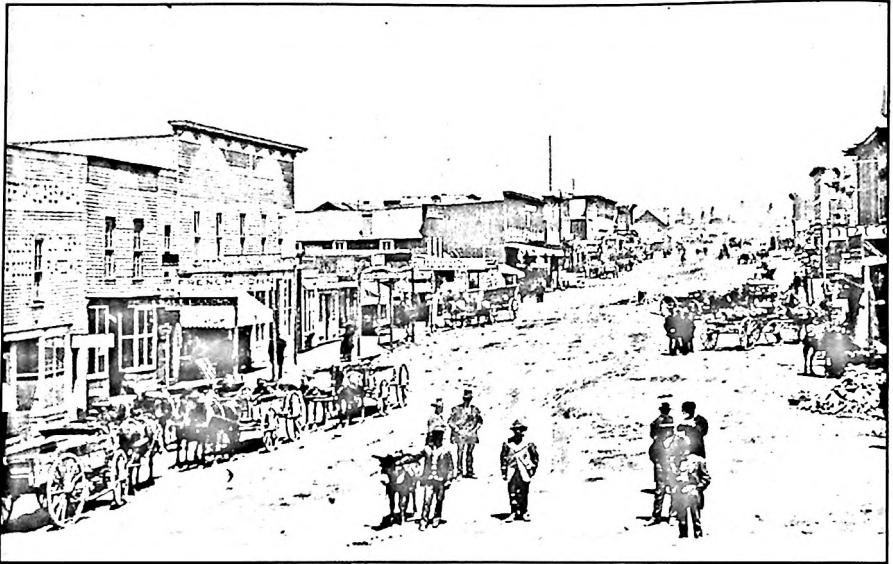
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Central City with burro in street

encountered Tabor while helping build a bank for the silver magnate. In the middle of the social spectrum stood a hotel keeper who also saw modest returns from his silver mine in St. Kevin's Gulch. His name was Tom Walsh. These three men are considered by many to be the three premier figures of early Colorado mining wealth.

Prospectors entered western Colorado's San Juan Mountains not long after the early discoveries in the eastern part of the state, searching for both gold and silver. The Ute Indians, long-time residents of the Colorado mountains, had little use for the precious metals and were happy to let the whites dig for them.⁴ However, too many prospectors sought too many minerals, and whether peaceful or hostile, the Utes were in the way.

The whites sought treaties. The Utes were never a united tribe, but rather a loose collection of bands. Ouray (the "Arrow") impressed the whites although he led only one band, the Tabeguache. He was a peace chief, and always felt the sacrifice of some of their land was much preferable to warfare for his vastly outnumbered people. After early treaties failed to stop white expansion, Ouray negotiated the 1873 Brunot Treaty, which gave the whites the entire mining region of the San Juans. In return, the Utes received annual gifts of clothing, food and supplies, and some small reservations. Nearly all the Colorado reservation land was lost following the 1879 Meeker Massacre, in which White River Utes rebelled against their inept agent, Nathan Meeker. White troops soon put down the rebellion and expelled the



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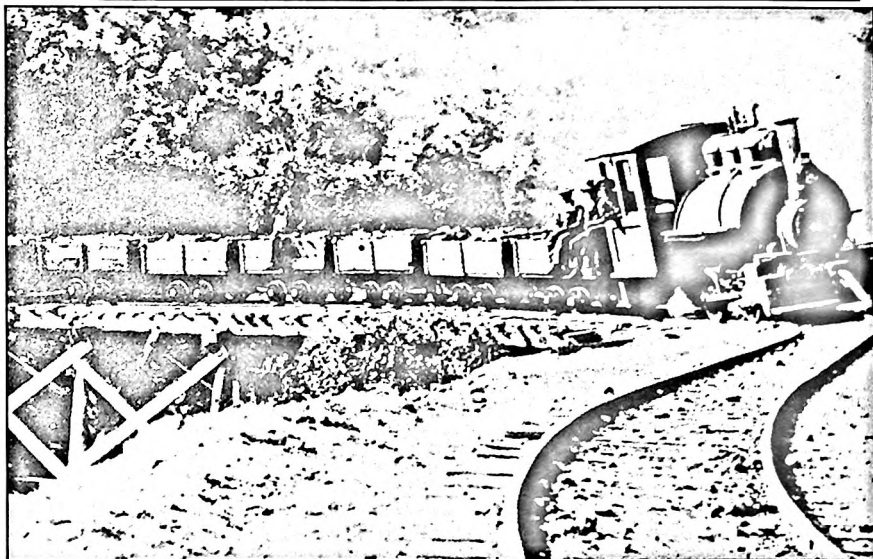
Leadville Street

tes. The San Juans were now free for all exploitation of resources the white man could want.⁵

Colorado miners sought both gold and silver, but silver became the signature mineral of Colorado in the 1870s and 1880s, largely due to its use as currency in the U.S. and other parts of the world. Eastern gold advocates fought this trend. The U.S. Congress passed the Sherman Silver Purchase Act in 1890, offering a break for silver advocates by setting minimum levels for silver purchases by the U.S. government. Success was short-lived, however. Silver prices began to fall in 1891, and then silver was demonetized in the U.S. and other nations, culminating in the 1893 silver crash. It brought economic devastation to much of silver-dependent Colorado at the

same time the rest of the country also suffered a major financial panic. Great fortunes were lost, including that of the idolized Horace Tabor and his beautiful second wife, Baby Doe. Both would die in poverty. Silver mining towns such as Leadville, Georgetown, Creede and Aspen also suffered greatly, some not to fully recover until the arrival of Twentieth Century tourism.⁶

Enter gold once again as Colorado's savior. Prospectors discovered the yellow metal in two new camps located west of Colorado Springs, named Hayden Placer and Fremont. The surrounding area soon adopted the name of Cripple Creek and in due time would become one of the world's greatest gold camps. In its initial years it was the one shining light in the dark night that was Colorado



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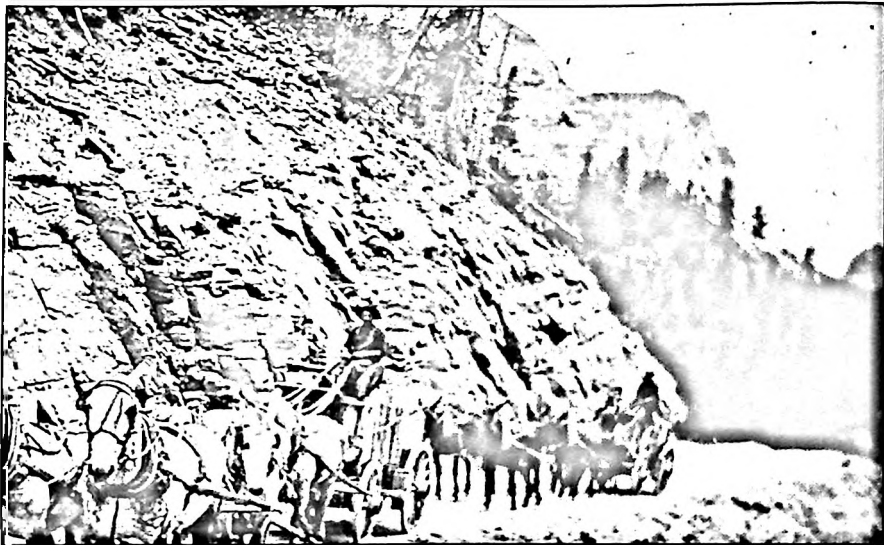
Train hauling ore from the mountains

mining. Its first millionaire, Winfield Scott Stratton, would never again need to build a bank for someone else. Many others shared in Cripple Creek's wealth. The public was amazed at the volumes of gold ore pouring forth from an area which had been inhabited for a number of years but was thought to be valuable only for ranching.⁷

The 1890s also witnessed the development of a very wealthy gold mine in the San Juan mountains. Like the Cripple Creek discoveries, the Camp Bird mine in Ouray County featured a rich deposit long overlooked. Tom Walsh, a seasoned veteran of Leadville and many other districts, found a vein of free-milling gold in a tunnel named the Gertrude, where it had been exposed for nearly twenty years but never properly assayed. Walsh

amassed a major fortune before selling to a syndicate of Easterners and Britons in 1902. The Walsh family used Camp Bird wealth to live in style in their Washington, DC mansion, but they also engaged in philanthropy.⁸

Sadly, Colorado was no stranger to mining labor unrest. Cripple Creek and Leadville witnessed some of the earliest labor-related violence. An 1894 strike in Cripple Creek was an early effort by the newly-formed Western Federation of Miners. The union succeeded for a time, largely due to support from Colorado's Populist governor, Davis "Bloody Briddles" Waite. Waite received his nickname from an inflammatory speech in which he proclaimed that against the strong hand of money power, "we shall meet the issue when it is forced upon



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Wagons loaded with ore

s, for it is better, infinitely better, that blood should flow to the horses' bridles rather than our national liberties should be destroyed." The main target of the strike was the nine-hour day. Negotiations led labor and owners to agree on the eight-hour day.⁹ In 1896, the newly-formed Cloud City Mining Union, an affiliate of the W.F.M., struck Leadville's mines. Here the workers sought wages of \$3.00 a day, a figure already paid by some mines. Among the staunchest holdouts for keeping the \$2.50 day was John Campion, lord of the booming Little Jonny Mine. Violence flared not long after the strike began and the state militia soon arrived, called in this time by pro-mine owner governor Albert McIntyre. After a prolonged strike lasting well into 1897, the owners prevailed. Campion and his allies simply had more money, time and staying power. They commissioned

spies to infiltrate labor ranks, and also exploited differences among the miners, many of them ethnic-related. The return to the status quo meant many miners lost their jobs. The entire community suffered, for many mines which had closed during the strike had flooded, and now remained closed.¹⁰

Labor problems continued to flare around the state, culminating in the Cripple Creek violence of 1903-04 which included an anarchist bombing leaving thirteen men dead. In 1901-02, Telluride was the scene of violence. On July 3, 1901, a band of some 250 armed union men attacked the big Smuggler-Union Mine, killing three non-union men. The following year a mine manager was assassinated in his living room. The wages complained of fell into the \$3.00 - \$3.50 range.¹¹



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Bear Creek Falls near Ouray

Throughout the period, Tom Walsh's Camp Bird Mine sat like an island in a stormy sea. It suffered no strikes during Walsh's tenure, nor did its workers see a reason to unionize. Walsh held steadfast to his beliefs about good treatment of his workers, remembering that he had been one not long before. His miners worked only

eight-hour shifts, found excellent housing and equipment, and received pay well in excess of the norm. Few other Colorado miners were so fortunate.¹²

Coal miners faced the same daunting conditions, low pay, and long hours as their brothers digging for precious meta Coal, however, presents one additional challenge, its explosive nature. Three of the nation's worst coal mining disasters took place in southern Colorado in the span of only a few years, all in the vicinity of Trinidad.

seventy-five miners died at Primero in January 1910, while November of the same year witnessed the death of seventy-nine more at nearby Delagua. Colorado's worst mine disaster killed 121 coal miners at Hastings on April 27, 1917. Just over the border, 263 miners perished in October 1913 in Dawson, New Mexico, marking the



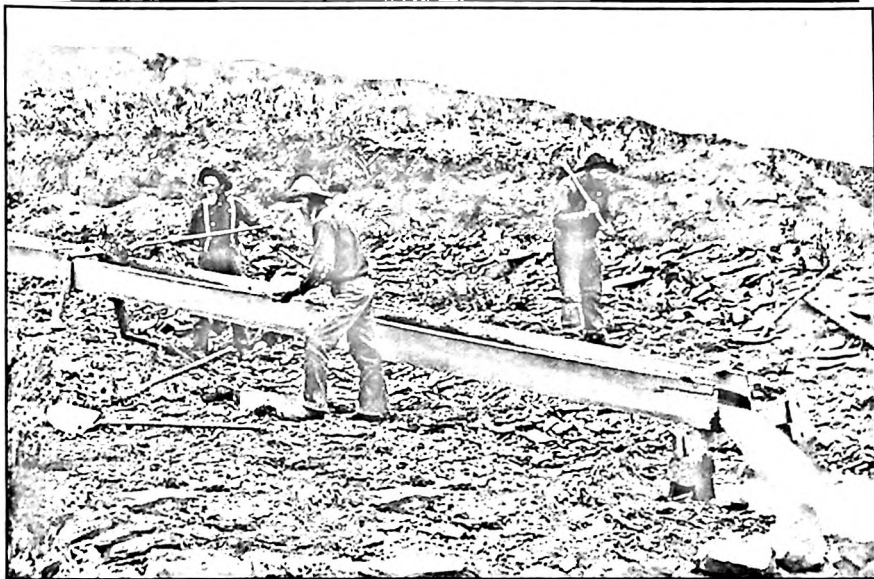
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Miners with drills

nation's second worst-mine disaster. In 1914, a strike turned violent in the Las Animas County coal camp of Ludlow. Strikers and their families formed a tent camp housing 900 persons. To protect women and children, they dug pits below the tents, where they believed their loved ones would be safe should bullets fly. Accounts vary as to whether striking miners or militiamen fired the initial shots on April 20, 1914. When it was over, the death toll was nineteen. Five striking miners died, along with one militiaman. The greatest count of the dead, however, fell to the non-combatants. Two women and eleven children perished because the gunfire

ignited the tents, suffocating or burning those below. Ludlow became a rallying point for labor advocates nationwide, including the famed Mother Jones.¹³

While the early twentieth century produced no new Colorado booms, it did see a revolution in mining technology: the gold dredge. Weighing up to 500 tons, with a length of nearly 100 feet, dredge boats began operating profitably in the Breckenridge area in 1905. The huge floating contraption combined all the processes of placer gold mining, digging up streambed gravel, crushing it, separating out the gold, and dumping out the waste rock,

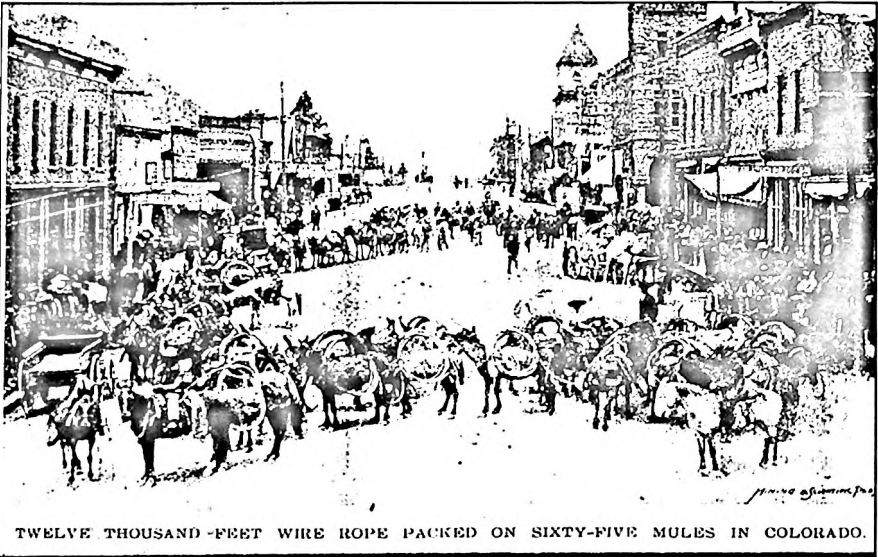


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Sluicing

leaving only the final smelting to be performed elsewhere. Dredges were an environmental disaster, but no one noticed at the time because they were breathing new life into declining gold districts such as Breckenridge and Fairplay. In time they worked in many of Colorado's mining regions, even along Clear Creek in what is now the western Denver suburbs. Few dredges operated after World War II. Today some of the original dredges exist only as ruins poking out of streams and ponds, usually close to the mounds of waste rock they left behind. Only one remains intact in the state, the Snowstorm Dredge located near Alma, which actually operated as late as 1976. It is a gold-washing-plant type dredge, and is the subject of historic preservation efforts.¹⁴

In other respects, Colorado mining produced diminishing returns and little excitement until the 1940s brought a different kind of boom. Spurred by the atomic age and the Cold War, thousands of Geiger counter-toting prospectors converged on the Colorado plateau in the western part of the state. Grand Junction soon hosted more than 100 uranium mining companies. From 1948 to 1960 Colorado produced uranium ore valued at more than \$130 million. Then a decline set in due to increased operating costs at a time when the government cut back its support and earlier rich ores were depleted. This last boom left behind abandoned buildings and roads, desolation, and worse yet – radioactive waste.¹⁵



TWELVE THOUSAND-FOOT WIRE ROPE PACKED ON SIXTY-FIVE MULES IN COLORADO.

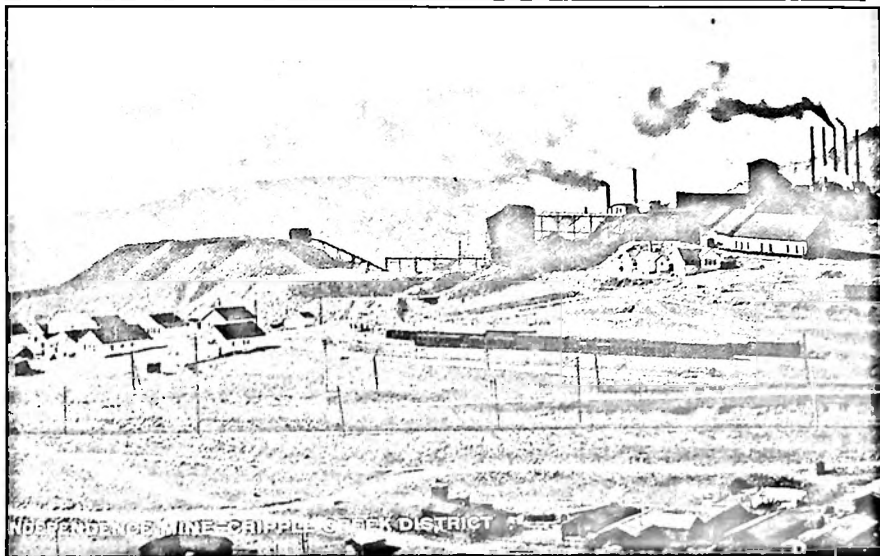
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Burros hauling cable for mine tramway

Colorado mines have produced far more than gold, silver, uranium and coal. In fact, two of the state's mines are renowned for their beautiful and very unique products. Marble is found around the world, in deposits formed by the hardening of the limestone left behind by ancient seas. However, a special kind of very white marble known as "statuary" is found in only a few locales. One of these is located in western Colorado along Yule Creek in northern Gunnison County, where it was discovered in 1873. Yule marble graces Washington's Lincoln Memorial and the Tomb of the Unknowns, as well as many other public buildings, including the U.S. Custom House in Denver. The famous quarry was shuttered in the mid-Twentieth Century due to flooding and landslides followed by the World War II declaration that

marble was non-essential to the war effort. However, it was rejuvenated in the 1990s, and efforts continue to return it to its days of glory. To quote from one of the quarry's users, noted sculptor Eric Johnson, "Yule marble is simply the best".¹⁶

One other Colorado mining product can also claim the title "best", and therefore the Colorado legislature declared it the state mineral in a 2002 proclamation. Rhodochrosites are red gems which, like marble, occur worldwide, but not necessarily with eye-catching brilliance. The Sweet Home mine near Alma in Park County turns out rosy red "rhodos" not found elsewhere. They form two of the premier attractions in the mineral exhibit of the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. One, the Alma



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Stratton's Independence Mine near Cripple Creek

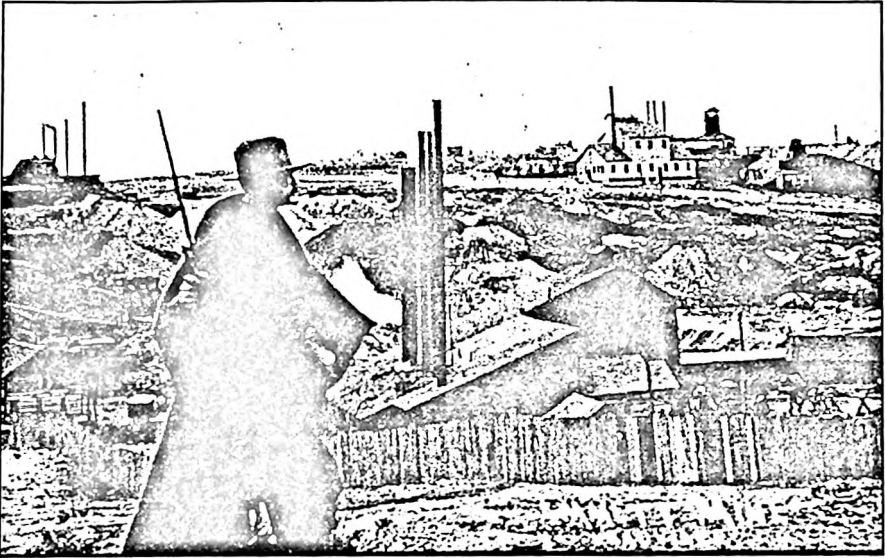
King, is huge compared to other gems. Down the exhibit hall lies the Rhodochrosite Wall. Sweet Home miners, used to finding gems of unusual quality, were nonetheless astounded when their carefully-prepared dynamite blast exposed a brilliant floor-to-ceiling display of many bright specimens. The miners carefully removed the wall piece by piece, recording precise locations. Shipped to Denver, museum personnel re-created the wall almost exactly the way nature had sculpted it millions of years before in the Mosquito Range.¹⁷

While Colorado in the twenty-first century possesses more ghost towns and abandoned shafts than operating mines, mining is still an important industry in the state. Statistics for 2009 show coal as its leading mineral commodity, employing 2,392

Coloradans at an average salary of \$96,000 per year. The state produced 28 million tons of coal, ranking eleventh nationally. Colorado also mines molybdenum (first in national production), uranium and gold (fourth nationally, most of it from a large open pit mine at Cripple Creek). Through the end of 2009, Colorado had seen no mining fatalities for more than four years.¹⁸

Endnotes

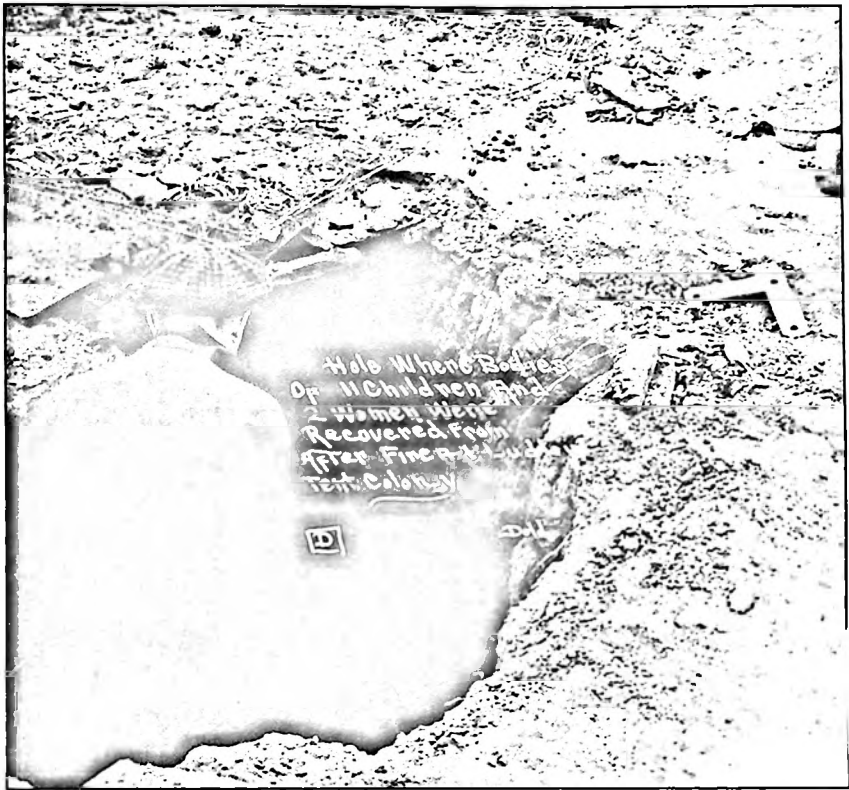
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"Death Pit" from Ludlow massacre

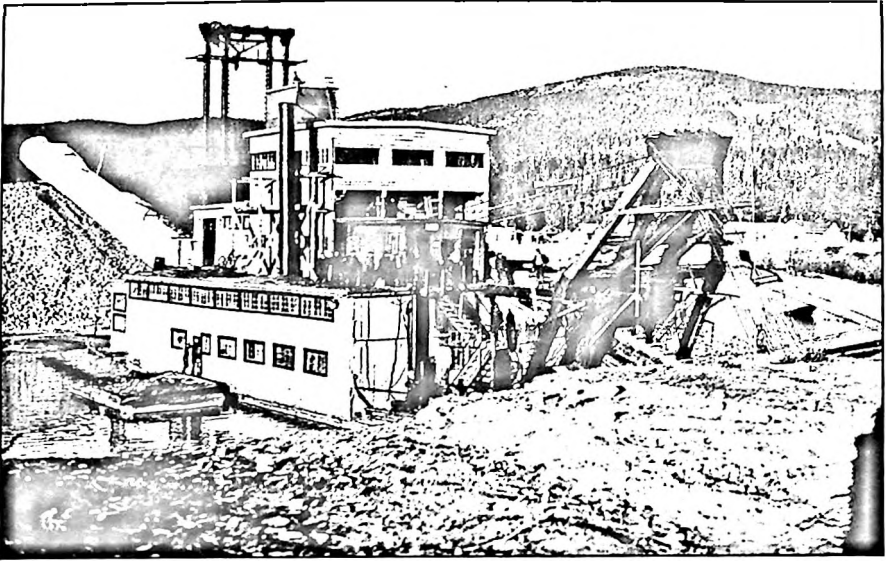
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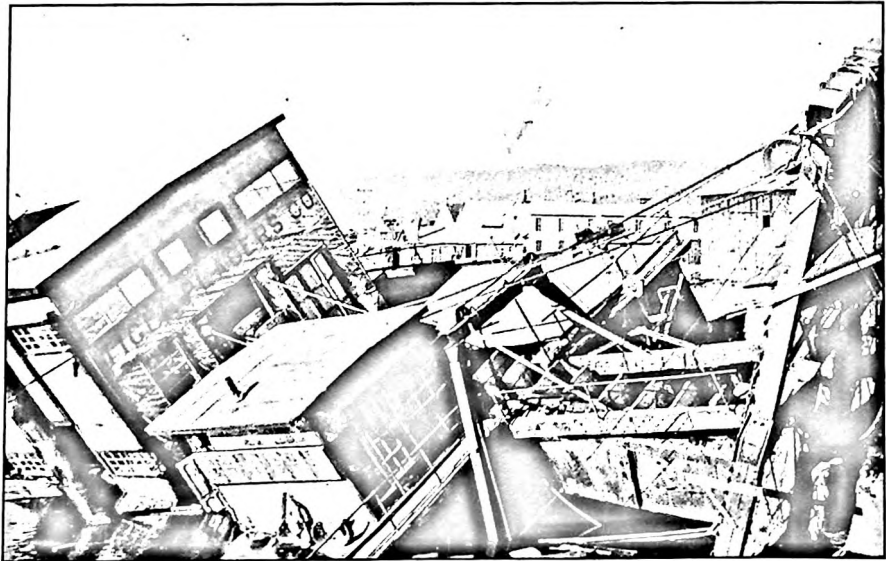
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Gold dredge near Breckenridge



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Capsized Breckenridge dredge, circa 1940, symbolic of the end of an era

Over the Corral Rail

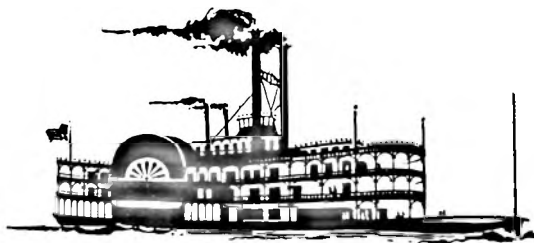
Compiled by Ed Bathke, P.M. Please submit your items of news, etc. to Ed. Deadline is the 10th of the first month in the date of publication.

A Fall Cornucopia of Westerners Programs

The Boulder County Corral's November program was presented by member (and also a Denver Posse member and former sheriff) John M. Hutchins, "The Coronado Expedition: Where he went, why, and did he make it to Colorado?" The presentation was based on John's just-published book, *Coronado's Well-equipped Army, the Spanish Invasion of the American Southwest*.

The Colorado Corral was treated to a presentation "Buffalo Bill, Murderer' and other little-known Facts about the West's most colorful Character," by Director of the Buffalo Bill Museum (and Denver Posse member) Steve Freisen. The life of Buffalo Bill in itself is an exciting tale, but Buffalo Bill Cody was also the victim of what we readily recognize today, identity theft. The Colorado Corral's December program is "The American Hobo," by Lauren Giebler, Curator of the Colorado Railroad Museum. The hobo experience spans more than 140 years of American railroad history.

Award-winning historian, author and musician Mark Gardner performed a saddlebag of famous and less-known outlaw ballads in November for the Pikes Peak Posse. At the December meeting, Michael Hannigan, Executive Director of the Pikes Peak Foundation, is speaking on the "Venetucci Land and Legacy," telling of the fascinating history of the Venetucci family and farm, and the farm's importance in the Pikes Peak Community Foundation. The historic 190-acre urban Venetucci farm, known as the "pumpkin farm," has been providing pumpkins to Pikes Peak region families since 1936.



Loss of a true Westerner, Norm Meyer

Norman Franklin Meyer was born Jan. 15, 1917, in Trinidad. He passed away on Nov. 21, 2014.

Norm's grandfather, Johann, emigrated from Germany in the 1860s, coming to Central City to work in its meat shops. He left the butcher shop to grow his own beef, filing a homestead in Gardner, Colo.



Norm's father, Gustavus, took over managing the JM Ranch of 6,000 acres with a herd of 1,000 Herefords and a small herd of sheep. This is where Norm spent most of his childhood. Norm remembered driving their cattle herd over Pass Creek Pass to the Trinchera Grant for summer grazing in the San Luis Valley. Norm had photos of the fall roundup with about thirty cowboys from ten ranches, sorting their cows by their individual brands. He later published some of these photos in the *Denver Post* rotogravure section.

Norm attended a one-room adobe-brick school, riding with his brothers and some Mexican-American neighbors in a springboard wagon, but sometimes they rode their horses the three miles to school. He attended Gardner High School for three years, then paid room and board in Walsenburg to finish his fourth year. He was accepted to the University of Colorado, where he chose to study journalism, having a natural knack with words. Taking \$1 plane ride at the Boulder airport, a 1930s dirt strip, Norm changed his career from writing to flying professionally. Norm financed his own flying by giving flying lessons at the Park Hill airport in east Denver and later trained U.S. Army Air Corps cadets in Oklahoma. He flew cargo domestically during World War II. He was among the first pilots hired by Continental Airlines, based out of Denver. He took Robert Six on a private plane ride in the DC-3 to southern Colorado to go elk hunting in those early days.

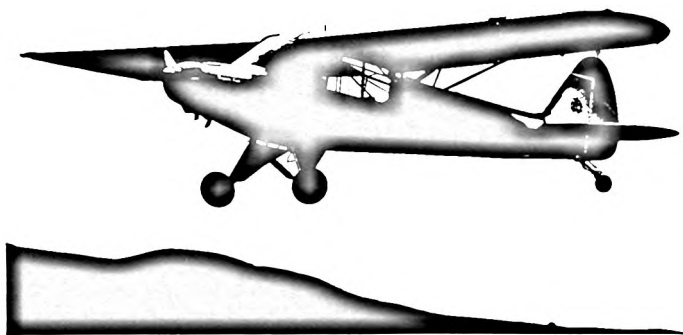
In 1941, he married Ethel Peterson, and in 1950 they moved to Conifer on Highway 285 in 1950 to a ranch of 350 acres. Norm wanted land to run cows and horses as he had in his childhood and to have his own airstrip. His flying career spanned thirty-five years, with the early routes between Denver and El Paso in a Lockheed Loadstar, and retiring in 1976 flying the Boeing 747 in the South Pacific.

In the 1960s he bought a Piper Super Cub to fly out of his hay meadow at Conifer and then a Cessna 180 in 1970. He flew these planes out of the meadow until he was 92 years old.

Norm and “Blondie” upgraded their home, the historic Midway House, named for its position on the stagecoach route to Fairplay on the old Bradford Toll Road from Denver. The post-and-beam barn remains original from 1883. Many travelers on Hy. 285 readily recognized the striking Victorian yellow-and-white home as they passed by, as well as his plane in the hanger.

In 2010 Norm was inducted into the Colorado Aviation Historical Society Hall of Fame. He was active in the Aviation OX5 Pioneers, the Continental Airlines Retired Pilots, the Conifer Historical Society, the Mountain Area Land Trust, the Westerners, and Silver Wings.

Norm epitomized the West, ranging from pioneer ranching, early to modern aviation, renovation and preservation of his historic Midway House, and the establishment of Jefferson County Open Space with his ranch land. Norm was a Regular Posse member of the Denver Westerners, and as we met at the Park Hill Golf Course, he delighted in telling us that the course had been a small airport, and he had flown out of it. Norman Meyer, representing the history and color of Colorado from pioneer days transitioning to the very modern, will be greatly missed by all of us.





Westerners Bookshelf



Montana Vigilantes, 1863-1870, Gold, Guns & Gallows. by Mark C. Dillon. University of Colorado and Utah State University Press, Logan. 2013. 416 pages. Photos, map, footnotes, appendixes, bibliography, index. Hardcover, \$34.95.

The 1862 discovery of gold on Grasshopper Creek at Big Hole Basin marked the beginning of the Montana gold rush. An even bigger discovery followed in 1863 at Alder Gulch. These discoveries resulted in the establishment of several cities, notable of which were Bannack and Virginia City. They also gave rise to an era of lawlessness and vigilante justice.

Originally Idaho, Montana and most of Wyoming were part of Idaho Territory. When the Idaho Territorial Legislature started to create counties and appoint sheriffs and judges, they did not include outlying areas like Bannack and Virginia City. According to the author, the absence of police, as well as prosecutorial and judicial authority, was one of the reasons for the rise of the Vigilance Committees. Two other reasons were: 1) the value of gold and silver; leading to a rash of robberies and killings; and 2) the insecure means of transporting wealth.

When Bannack and Virginia City finally did get a sheriff, it was none other than Henry Plummer, who was reputed to be the leader of one of the most notorious robber bands in the area. So, when the law is the problem rather than the solution, something has to be done. This accounted for the rise of the vigilantes.

The book is a well-researched documentation of the activities of the Montana vigilance committees during the 1863-1864 period in the Bannack and Virginia City areas, as well as the migration of vigilantism north to Helena in the 1865-1870 period. There was also vigilante activity in the early 1880s in the Musselshell region, but by then it was mostly dealing with livestock rustling.

The first part of the book details the activities of the vigilantes and the attempts to set up courts of law to deal with matters legally. The second part of the book deals with the legal issues involved and takes a look at how some of the cases may have fared in our modern-day legal system. The author even goes so far as to speculate that there would be a good chance that Sheriff Plummer would have been acquitted had he gone to trial.

The author is a legal historian and an associate justice in the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court; and has a special interest in the making and enforcement of laws and extra-legal justice meted out in the Montana Territory in the mid-1800s.

I enjoyed the book, and would recommend it to anyone interested in this facet of Western history. If I had any negatives about the book, it would be the voluminous footnotes at the end of each chapter; which often run five-to-ten pages and at times become chapters unto themselves.

Another very good book as a companion to this one would be the 1866, *The Vigilantes of Montana*, by Thomas J. Dimsdale. It, like a few others, was written by a man who actually lived this chapter of history and was acquainted with many members of the Vigilance Committees, if not a member himself. Unfortunately his history was cut short by his death from tuberculosis in 1866.

--Carl Sandberg, P.M.

Shooting Arrows & Slinging Mud: Custer, the Press, and the Little Bighorn by James E. Mueller. University of Oklahoma Press, 2013. 260pp. Photographs, footnotes, bibliography, index. Hardcover, \$29.95

Michael O'Keefe recently published a bibliography of Custer literature comprising nearly 1,000 pages and listing substantially more than 10,000 items. So, do we really need another Custer book? In this case, the answer is resoundingly, "Yes."

James Mueller has, as the title implies, conducted exhaustive research into newspaper coverage of the Little Bighorn battle and its aftermath. His well-documented conclusions challenge many myths regarding media coverage journalism during that centennial year.

Mueller, a journalism professor at the University of North Texas, begins with a brief, but very credible summary of what actually happened. He then explores how the press assessed blame, finding that Democrat media principally blamed the Grant Administration, while Republican media blamed Custer himself, who was a rather outspoken Democrat.

Mueller shows that the impact of the Little Bighorn disaster on the presidential election of 1876 was, contrary to popular belief, quite minimal. Reconstruction, corruption and the economy quickly pushed the battle off the front page. Mueller found that for most Americans a battle in far-off Montana held little more lasting interest than a battle in Europe.

Perhaps most interesting is Mueller's section on the so-called "Hamburg Massacre," which overshadowed coverage of the Custer debacle. Briefly, Black prisoners were murdered by White Southerners in Hamburg, South Carolina, provoking extremely bitter reactions throughout the nation.

This intensely-researched work looks at newspapers from all sections of the nation and considers all coverage from the humorous to the intensely partisan. This is not only a solid addition to the vast literature of the Little Bighorn, but also a very solid bit of scholarship about the culture that existed during our centennial year.

--Dennis Hagen, P.M.

South Pass: Gateway to a Continent by Will Bagley. University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. 325pp. Photographs, footnotes, bibliography, index, maps. Hardcover, \$29.95

Will Bagley, one of Western history's most accomplished authors, scores again. As usual, he provides a depth of research that is really astounding, while presenting an engaging, very readable text in a book that I highly recommend.

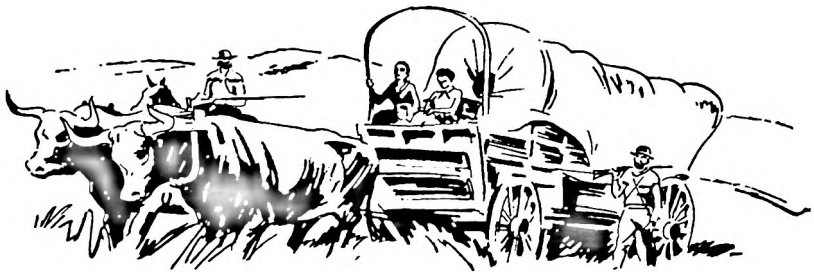
Bagley argues that the importance of the discovery of South Pass cannot be overstated. Absent this "gateway" for wagon travel, American settlement of the West could have been delayed for decades or even generations. Yet despite its critical significance, few if any, good, book-length monographs have told the whole story until now.

Bagley describes in great detail virtually every movement through the pass from ancient Native Americans to fur traders to immigrants to major routes of commerce including the Overland Stage, Pony Express, and the transcontinental telegraph. They are all here: the missionaries, the gold seekers, the Mormons and even various government-sponsored explorers. The history of South Pass, after all, is almost synonymous with the history of America's western expansion.

Despite my strong endorsement of the book, though, I found at least one minor irritation that should be noted. Bagley's research is impeccable, almost overwhelming. However, occasionally I felt that this got in the way of his story telling. Often for emphasis, he seemed to pad the text with statements like, this author says . . . and that author says . . . and, as so and so has noted. . . I often felt that Bagley should have let his extensive footnotes stand on their own merit rather than making the text read like a bibliographic essay.

It is possible that serious students of Western history may not find very much that is new in this book. Still, I do not see this as a serious flaw. The book's principal value lies in the fact that it consolidates almost everything ever written about South Pass into one very impressive volume that is well worth the time spent in reading.

--Dennis Hagen, P.M.



New Mexico's Spanish Livestock Heritage: Four Centuries of Animals, Land, and People, by William W. Dunmire. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2013, 233 + xii pages. Illustrated with photographs, drawings, maps, and charts; endnotes, bibliography ("literature cited"), index. Hardcover, \$34.95.

First of all - and this is a good thing - the title of this book is misleading. The volume is by no means limited to the Spanish or Hispanic contributions to the livestock of New Mexico - nor is it limited to the stock side of agriculture. This book is an historical and natural survey of the contributions various agricultural cultures made to what would become the State of New Mexico. While the majority of the discussion might be about the Spanish-speaking contributors, there also is plenty about the continuous cultivations and husbandry of the native Indians and the significant later additions made by the "Anglo" ranching community.

Although it should be noted that authors usually do not have final say on titles, the author, in his preface, also tries to shoehorn this volume solely into Hispanic Studies. He says, in observing that Columbus (an Italian in Spanish service) introduced the complete range of barnyard critters to the New World, "[A]ll livestock in the United States has a Spanish heritage." Later, of course, there is mention of the eventual introduction of such diverse cattle breeds as Holstein, Hereford, and Angus.

Having said that, this is an excellent history of the natural landscape of New Mexico, the growth of its farming and ranching, and the shortcomings of invasive species and overwhelming human practices (including the almost-inevitable destructiveness of sheep grazing). While the author acknowledges he is not an historian but a "professional naturalist," this fact probably results in the volume being so factual, informative, and not laden with neo-historical jargon. In addition, the author, a retired NPS naturalist, proves himself a qualified wordsmith, for he has made what could be a dry subject (especially in New Mexico) a fascinating and well-written story.

This book is highly recommended. It is chock full of facts for historians seeking to learn about the movement of the Spanish into New Mexico and it also will appeal to anyone interested in our New Mexico neighbor.

--John M. Hutchins, P.M.

San Francisco Lithographer. African American Artist Grafton Tyler Brown by Robert J. Chandler. University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. 246 pp. Illustrated in color and with checklist of works by G.T. Brown, bibliography and index. Foreward by Ron Tyler. Hardcover, \$36.95.

Lithography, first appearing in America in the second decade of the nineteenth century, soon spread across the country, arriving in California in the 1850s. Lithography came to dominate the business of printmaking, being used for ephemeral material like letterheads, invoices, tickets, advertisements, business cards, as well as more substantial views and maps intended for the decorative market. Grafton Tyler Brown (1841-1918) was an early Californian lithographer who finally gets some just attention in this handsome reference book.

Brown started his printmaking career in 1861, working for pioneer California lithographer Charles Conrad Kuchel. In 1865 he went on to run his own business, carrying on a successful career for a decade and a half before moving to the Pacific Northwest to become a landscape painter. This is quite impressive, both because printmaking was not an easy business in California during this period, but even more so when one considers that Brown was an African-American—though he passed as white—living in a racially conscious society and working in a profession which included very few others of his race.

Chandler writes interestingly about Brown's race, the place of African-Americans in California society at the time and Brown's decision to pass for white to achieve advancement. The heart of his scholarly work, though, is Brown's lithographic output, which Chandler nicely puts into an extensive historical context of nineteenth-century American printmaking. Most of Brown's lithographic output included invoices, checks, stock certificates, music sheets and other ephemera, but he also produced over twenty views of the American West and a number of fine maps.

This book is handsomely illustrated, contains a complete listing of Brown's output, and provides thoughtful commentary on California, printmaking, racial relations, and the impressive career of a hitherto obscure American artist and printmaker.

--Christopher W. Lane, P.M.