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## Governor Waite and His Silver Panacea

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At present, when depression prices are again raising the issue of the rehabilitation of silver as a metal of coinage, it is timely to recall a crisis of an earlier generation when silver was of vastly greater importance in Colorado's economic life than now. Long before the "battle of the standards" of 1896, Colorado, as the premier mining commonwealth of the mountain region, was beginning to experience the effects of mounting production costs and declining prices. Even the Silver Purchase Act of 1890 had failed to give relief, and demand for free and unlimited coinage was becoming universal in the West.

The importance of silver in the economy of the state at that time can scarcely be exaggerated. The bonanza fields at Aspen, Leadville and Creede had attained a record output by 1892, the total for the state representing double the amount for 1887 and one-half the total production of the United States.<sup>1</sup> Denver and other industrial centers, the railroads, and farmers, merchants and laborers alike were all to a degree dependent upon silver for their prosperity. A crisis was imminent, as world over-production had diminished the value of silver reckoned in gold. Production in Colorado had been excessively stimulated by the speculative mania of the eighties and a flood of eastern capital seeking quick and fabulous returns. The rapid expansion of the railway network had opened and over-developed new mineral districts. But the point of diminishing returns was being reached as high labor, reduction and transportation costs cut deeply into profits. A fall in price below a dollar per ounce would endanger profitable operation in many fields. A drop below eighty cents would be a catastrophe.

The crusade for free coinage of silver to restore the mint price of \$1.29 had been carried on with unabated zeal for a decade. Coloradans were convinced that the precious metals had played a major role in the evolution of civilization; the principal catastrophes of history were attributed to periodic shortages of specie.<sup>2</sup>

\*Prof. Fuller contributed to the *Colorado Magazine* of May, 1932, an article on "A Populist Newspaper of the Nineties."—Ed.

<sup>1</sup>*Report of the Director of the Mint* (1893), 55-56. *Report of Colo. Bureau of Labor Statistics* (1891-92), 38.

<sup>2</sup>Contemporary arguments may be found set forth in great detail in the pamphlet volumes of the "Teller Collection" in the State Library at Denver.



Divine sanction for silver was invoked by reference to scripture, and the Bible was quoted: "Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defense and thou shalt have plenty of silver"; "And Abraham weighed to Ephra \* \* \* 400 shekels of silver, current money with the merchant."<sup>3</sup> It was generally believed that the demonetization of the metal in 1873 was the outcome of a conspiracy to contract the currency in behalf of creditors and demand was insistent that Congress restore the "money of the Bible and the Constitution."

Westerners resented the accusation so often levelled at the "silver barons" of the West that they were willing to debase the national currency to advance selfish and sectional interests. Free coinage was desirable, it was argued, "not because Colorado had silver to sell \* \* \* but because the nation needs more money."<sup>4</sup> Thus the abuses of the "dishonest" gold dollar with its unfair burden upon western debtors would be ended. Silver coinage would produce a needed expansion of the currency and restore the just value of money. Only then, declared the Colorado Silver Convention of 1889, will prosperity return "to every farm and workshop in the land."<sup>5</sup>

The early nineties was a period of increasing economic stress for Colorado. The grievances of farmers and laborers, in particular, combined with the general resentment at the apathy of the old parties in the matter of silver paved the way for new political alignments. An Independent party (a coalition of dissident groups) had polled 5,000 votes in 1890. A year later, the People's Party was in the field, with silver occupying an important place in its program. By 1892, non-partisan silver clubs were being organized in every section of the state, pledged to support only silver men for office. Their activities were coordinated by the Colorado Silver League, whose membership by July numbered over 40,000.<sup>6</sup> It denounced the "unscrupulous money-changers" of the East and besought national assistance in a crusade for the restoration of silver.<sup>7</sup>

By summer the political pot was boiling, and when Harrison and Cleveland were again declared the nominees of the major parties there were wholesale desertions from the ranks in Colorado. The People's Party profited by the existing chaos and attracted the support of many old-party adherents who were aggrieved be-

<sup>3</sup>From a contemporary pamphlet, *Sterling Silver*, written by John D. Vaughan for the Denver Trades Assembly.

<sup>4</sup>*Rocky Mountain News*, Sept. 14, 1891.

<sup>5</sup>*Report of Proceedings*, 57.

<sup>6</sup>*Denver Republican*, July 28, 1892.

<sup>7</sup>*Rocky Mountain News*, Mar. 29. In "Address to the Nation."

cause of the injustice done to silver.<sup>8</sup> Davis H. Waite of Aspen was nominated for governor, and his choice was ratified by the state Silver League. Moreover, the silver Democrats obtained control of their party organization and threw its support to the Populist ticket, both state and national.

And while Waite emphasized the silver issue in his campaign, it was for him a symbol of revolt against corporate power and the oppressions of a financial oligarchy entrenched in the old parties. If elected, he proposed "to change the present system of government by which there was class discrimination so that the principles, 'equal rights to all and special privileges to none' \* \* \* would be established and maintained."<sup>9</sup> Populists were fully convinced that the general stagnation of all productive processes was due to "a system of finance which is sweating the blood, contracting the energies and dampening the joys of life among our people everywhere."<sup>10</sup>

Republicans resented the implication that they were hostile to silver or in alliance with eastern and foreign monopolists. Populism represented, not silver, but fiat money. Paper mills, not silver mines, would be stimulated to activity by a Populist victory. Moreover, it would injure the credit of the state and drive out capital. Populism, declared a Republican jurist, "means the paralysis of trade \* \* \* the destruction of social order."<sup>11</sup> The silver issue was only a screen under cover of which the People's Party intended to foist upon the state its untried program of socialistic panaceas.

Waite and his associates were swept into office by the rising tide of dissent. He attributed his victory to silver: "That was the issue upon which the battle was fought and won."<sup>12</sup> But he was also irrevocably committed to a program of social reform and a philosophy of government which were anathema to the ruling interests of the state. As chief executive in a time of exceptional difficulty and unsettlement, he was faced with almost insurmountable obstacles to the realization of his pledges.

As the panic of 1893 swept over the nation, Colorado witnessed the complete collapse of her prosperity. As a debtor commonwealth, developed on the almost exclusive basis of credit, she felt the situation keenly. Failures and foreclosures multiplied alarmingly and virtually all silver mines and smelters closed in June as the price of the metal fell to 62 cents. Business was at a

<sup>8</sup>The "average Colorado Populist is simply a Republican or Democrat with a grievance," asserted the *Denver Times*, Nov. 10, 1892.

<sup>9</sup>Address at Colorado Springs. *Gazette*, Aug. 9, 1892.

<sup>10</sup>Resolutions of El Paso County Populist convention. *Gazette*, Sept. 8, 1892.

<sup>11</sup>Judge Belford, in *Denver Republican*, Oct. 24 and 27, 1892.

<sup>12</sup>Quoted in *Gunnison Tribune*, Dec. 10, 1892.



standstill. "The movement of \* \* \* commodities from the western sections has completely stopped," declared a Union Pacific official at Omaha.<sup>13</sup> Unemployment rose to 45,000 by the end of the summer, a startling total for a state of half a million population.<sup>14</sup> A relief camp was set up in Denver and by the end of the year more than 20,000 men, it was estimated, had left the state.

The collapse of silver united all classes momentarily in the common interest. Although silver had been struck down by the operation of economic law, to the inflamed minds of Coloradans the deed appeared to have been the willful act of the moneyed interests of the East, another step in their program for the economic enslavement of the West. The financiers of Wall Street seemed to have joined hands with the money lords of Europe in a war of extermination against the popular metal and an attempt to universalize the gold standard. Waite was convinced that the whole affair was a "bankers' panic" intentionally created in order to contract the currency and achieve a more complete subjugation of the exploited classes.<sup>15</sup>

Meetings were held in all parts of the state and fiery addresses and resolutions denounced the "conspiracy" against silver and insisted upon Colorado's right of self-preservation. Threats of secession were even voiced.<sup>16</sup> E. R. Holden, a prominent mining magnate, sent a telegram to a New York paper declaring that half a million people were on the verge of starvation. "We will repudiate all our bonds and obligations," he warned, and predicted "a new Declaration of Independence and the establishment of a Western empire."<sup>17</sup>

The climax of protest was a great mass meeting held at the Denver Coliseum on July 11, representing thirty-nine counties of the state. Rash sentiments were expressed in the hysteria of resentment then sweeping the commonwealth. "The pioneers of Colorado have had their contract violated," declared President Merrick of the Silver League.<sup>18</sup> A powerful *Appeal to the Country*, drafted by T. M. Patterson of the *Rocky Mountain News*, hinted at a union of West and South against the common aggressor.

The high point of the occasion was the famous speech of Governor Waite. Wrought up to a high pitch of indignation by the crisis which seemed to have confirmed his most direful predictions, his mood was keyed to the exigencies of the hour. If America, in

<sup>13</sup>*Leadville Herald Democrat*, Aug. 4, 1893.

<sup>14</sup>According to special bulletins published in 1893 by the Colorado Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>15</sup>In biennial message, *House Journal* (1895), 59-60.

<sup>16</sup>A mass meeting at Creede advocated the creation of a separate and autonomous "Department of the West" within the federal union. *Creede Candle*, July 7, 1893.

<sup>17</sup>*Rocky Mountain News*, June 29.

<sup>18</sup>*Pueblo Chieftain* (weekly ed.), July 13.

its economic and governmental policy, had become "only a province of European monarchies," he asserted, "then we need another revolution—another appeal to arms and to the God of hosts." The war had begun, the "eternal warfare of monarchy and monopoly against the right of the people to self-government. \* \* \* Our weapons are argument and the ballot—'a free ballot and a fair count.' And if the money power shall attempt to sustain its usurpations by 'the strong hand,' we shall meet that issue when it is forced upon us, for it is better, infinitely better, that blood should flow to the horses' bridles than our national liberties should be destroyed."<sup>19</sup>

Waite's address was endorsed by the convention by a vote of 324 to 63, amid a frenzy of enthusiasm. Populists hailed it as a bold and uncompromising challenge to the eastern money power. But Senator Teller criticized the "rabid frothings" of the Governor as pernicious and unrepresentative of sober opinion in the state.<sup>20</sup> The Republican press condemned the "criminal folly" of this and similar utterances. Eastern opinion ridiculed the "rabid utterances of the silverites at Denver"; they will "cost the cause they are championing many friends," warned an editor.<sup>21</sup> "Bloody Bridles" Waite became a national celebrity and a symbol of western Populism.

When Congress, convened in special session, repealed the purchase clause of the Sherman Silver Act, Colorado's cup of woe seemed overflowing. "I see no hope for us. \* \* \* It means the utter ruin of Colorado," commented Waite. Even Senator Teller declared that repeal would make the people "serfs of the men who hold the pursestrings of the world."<sup>22</sup> And the conservative *Denver Republican* insisted: "At present the country is governed by the East. \* \* \* The South and West are subject to the East and, as in the case of all provinces, their interests are sacrificed for those of the governing section."<sup>23</sup>

It had been suggested that a special session of the state legislature be called for enacting a program of relief. Waite was at first opposed to the idea, but when it became evident that Congress was about to repeal the Sherman law, he gave the proposal serious consideration. "If repeal carries," he declared in August, "I think I shall summon the legislature together and see if there is not some way to save part of the state from going to utter ruin, if the nation will not save it all."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup>*Rocky Mountain News*, July 12. This famous expression was a paraphrase of *Revelation* 14:20. Waite was fond of biblical metaphors.

<sup>20</sup>*Denver Republican*, July 18.

<sup>21</sup>*New York Herald*, July 13. *Cleveland Plaindealer*, July 13.

<sup>22</sup>Address in Senate, Oct. 13, 1893.

<sup>23</sup>Aug. 21, 1893. This well expressed the general sentiment.

<sup>24</sup>*Denver Republican*, Aug. 9, 1893.



Numerous projects were being discussed, including modification of the trust deed and attachment laws and other relief for debtors. Of particular interest was a plan for a state silver bullion depository, certificates of deposit to be accepted as currency throughout the state. Thus, declared the Attorney General, silver could "be made a rampart behind which we may be safe from the money changers."<sup>25</sup> A more daring proposal, made notorious through its espousal by Governor Waite, was the scheme to ship Colorado silver to Mexico, there to be coined into Mexican dollars which would then be made legal tender by the state of Colorado.<sup>26</sup> Waite was favorably impressed with the plan. "I am anxious to know," he wrote to President Diaz, "upon what terms the mints of Mexico would receive and coin for us our bullion silver," and asserted his intention to secure "a legal status to the Mexican dollar in the \* \* \* states of the American Union."<sup>27</sup> Diaz responded sympathetically and Waite proceeded with his plans for legislative action. Although bitterly opposed by the business interests of the state, he convoked the assembly in extraordinary session in January, 1894.

Governor Waite's message delivered on this occasion represents the climax of radical Populist theory in Colorado.<sup>28</sup> He excoriated the "corrupt money power that has wrested the public laws from their proper purposes to grant special privileges to monopoly." War had been made upon the state's chief industry; legislation was the one remaining recourse for the suffering people. An elaborate program of remedial proposals was outlined but emphasis was placed upon his plan for the restoration of silver.<sup>29</sup> He boldly advocated that the state of Colorado declare foreign gold and silver coins (of requisite fineness) a legal tender within the state. Such a power, he insisted, had never been delegated to Congress and hence was reserved to the states. The latter might declare gold *and silver* coins legal tender. Since the Federal Government refused to coin silver, as contemplated in the Constitution, Colorado might make good the deficiency by ruling that foreign silver coins (Mexican dollars coined from Colorado silver) were legal tender within her boundaries.<sup>30</sup> Other states, he hoped, would

<sup>25</sup>Report of Attorney General (1893-94), 196-208. He upheld the constitutionality of such a measure.

<sup>26</sup>The origin of this idea seems uncertain. It was being suggested as early as July and was approved by A. C. Fisk, President of the Pan-American Bi-metallic League. Fisk was a Coloradan.

<sup>27</sup>Executive Record, Vol. 8, 348-49.

<sup>28</sup>In House Journal (1894), p. 36 *et seq.*

<sup>29</sup>Waite later defended his radical program: "For thirty years," he stated, "the laws of the land had been in favor of the creditor class, and I propose to turn them in favor of the debtors."

<sup>30</sup>It has been stated that Waite proposed state coinage of silver. This impression is erroneous, as he fully realized the constitutional obstacles to such a plan.

follow her example, silver would be restored to its old coinage value and an abundance of money would soon be in circulation.

Waite's "fandango dollar" scheme was promptly repudiated by the legislature as of dubious constitutionality and calculated to bring discredit upon the state. It was widely ridiculed throughout the nation and regarded as further evidence of the aberrations of western Populism. However resentful Coloradans might be at what they deemed the injustice done to silver, sober opinion was inclined to discountenance extremist panaceas or threats of sectional revolt. The best results could be achieved, it was believed, by "keeping step to the music of the union."<sup>31</sup>

Although it came to nothing, Colorado's silver revolt deserves a niche in the record of American sectionalism. The nation grew as a federation of sections, each one an economic empire in its own right.<sup>32</sup> National policy has generally been a compromise, the resultant of conflicting interests and forces. Aggrieved groups or localities have almost invariably resorted to the doctrine of states' rights in self-defense. We have only to recall the protest of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, the action of New England at the Hartford Convention, or the tariff nullificationists of South Carolina. Waite and his associates were acting in accordance with an established American tradition in reverting to states' rights in defense of sectional interest. As in the case of most of their predecessors, such action proved futile. Colorado's salvation lay not in revolt or secession, but in a wise and patient adjustment to the necessities imposed by cooperative living in that broader American community of which she formed a part.



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## The Founding of Fort Collins, United States Military Post

AGNES WRIGHT SPRING\*

Fort Collins owes its present location to a flood which occurred on the upper Cache la Poudre River in the spring of 1864. During the night of June 9, without warning, a great wall of water from the snows melting in the mountains, supplemented by a torrential rain, swept through the military camp near Laporte, destroying and carrying away tents, clothing, buildings and equipment.

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<sup>21</sup>*Colorado Springs Gazette*, Nov. 14, 1894.

<sup>22</sup>This interpretation of American development has been elaborated upon by F. J. Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, and A. B. Hulbert, *Frontiers, the Genius of American Nationality*.

\*Mrs. Spring of Fort Collins is the author of *Caspar Collins: the Life and Exploits of an Indian Fighter of the Sixties* (1927). She has interested herself in local history and here presents important data on the origin of the military post that preceded present Fort Collins, Colorado.—Ed.



Laporte at that time was an important station on the Overland stage route and was a strategic trading point north of Denver. Due to impending Indian troubles, in the fall of 1863, Company B of the First Colorado Volunteer Cavalry had been sent to that place to patrol and guard the Overland stage line and to protect emigrant trains and settlers from Indian depredations. The soldiers of Company B established their camp west of the main part of Laporte, along the river, on the claim of Antoine Janis, an interpreter and guide and one of the earliest settlers in northern Colorado. There they built log cabins and stables for winter quarters.

The following spring, when Company B was ordered by Colonel Chivington to proceed west to the aid of General Connor, two companies of the 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry were sent by Lieut. Col. W. O. Collins from Fort Laramie to replace the Colorado Cavalry at Laporte. Under the command of Capt. William H. Evans, Companies B and F of the 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry arrived at Laporte the latter part of May, 1864. Since the military camp there had not previously been designated, the new arrivals christened it Camp Collins in honor of Lieut. Col. W. O. Collins, then in command at Fort Laramie.

Colonel Collins, a lawyer and leading citizen of Hillsboro, Ohio, had raised a regiment of volunteer cavalry and offered them to the Government at the beginning of the Civil War. Instead of getting into the thick of the fight in the South, however, the colonel received orders to take his volunteer cavalymen to the western border to fight Indians.

The Eleventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, under command of Col. Collins, reached Fort Laramie in June, 1862, and for the next three years was on active duty patrolling the telegraph and Overland mail lines, escorting emigrant trains, building camps and stations, fighting Indians and doing the innumerable things that fell to the lot of the soldier on the western border in the sixties.

Caspar Collins, the young son of the colonel, who came with the regiment, became the hero of the Platte Bridge Fight, where he lost his life on July 26, 1865, while leading a party of soldiers in a gallant attempt to rescue a wagon train that had been surrounded by Indians. A mountain, a stream and a city in Wyoming now bear the name of "Caspar"<sup>1</sup> in honor of young Collins.

Colonel Collins quickly adapted himself to the West and became one of the most outstanding military leaders of his time. He was so well liked by his men that they unhesitatingly gave his name to their camp at the first opportunity—hence we have the name Camp Collins.

<sup>1</sup>Mistake in spelling made by a government clerk years ago.

Shortly after the Ohio troops were established in their lowland cabins and tents on the edge of Laporte, the spring flood arrived and completely submerged their quarters. There were numerous very narrow escapes on that hectic night, but fortunately no lives were lost.

As soon as word of the disaster reached Col. Collins, he ordered Capt. Evans to locate a new camp, one that would be secure from the danger of floods. Accordingly, Lieut. James W. Hanna, with a detail of soldiers, was sent out at once in search of a suitable location. While reconnoitering, the soldiers met a settler, Joseph Mason, living on the Cache la Poudre River some six miles east of Laporte. Mason urged them to consider the site now occupied by the city of Fort Collins for their new camp. The piece of ground which he indicated was close to the river, yet situated on high dry land with good drainage and commanded an excellent view of the surrounding country, which was a much desired asset as compared to the hemmed in location of Laporte.

Upon receiving a favorable report from Capt. Evans on the proposed site, Col. Collins, with an escort of soldiers, made the trip from Fort Laramie to Camp Collins for the purpose of inspecting the place recommended. Soon afterwards, in a report to General R. B. Mitchell, Colonel Collins wrote:

"Hd. Qrs. 11th O. V. C. in the Field at Camp Collins, Colo.,  
Ter., Aug. 21st, 1864.

"To Gen. R. B. Mitchell,

"Comdg. Dist. of Nebraska.

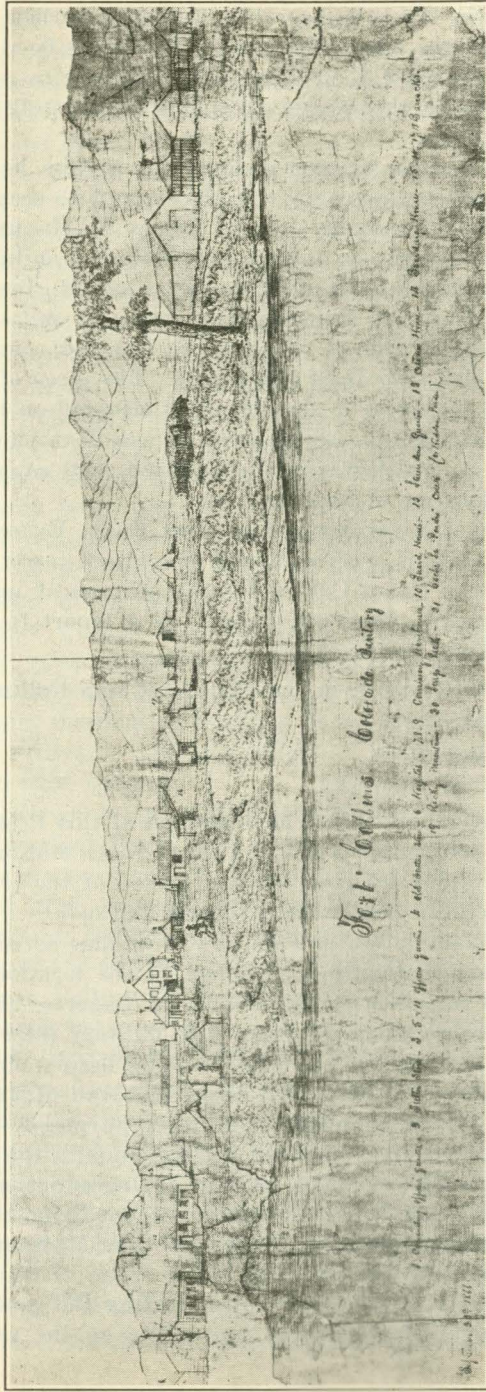
"I respectfully report that I have arrived at this Post, on the 14th inst. Found companies B and F 11th O. V. C. stationed here partly in quarters upon detached service, health of the troops excellent and the discipline creditable to officers and men.

"On careful examination and inquiry, I became satisfied that the good of the service required a change in the location of the post. The present site is within the town of Laporte, where the claims of lot holders seriously interfere with military interests, the ground is subject to overflow, the whole having been under water and much public property destroyed about the 10th of June last, and the space being too contracted for military purposes.

"I therefore determined to select new grounds in the vicinity and fortunately was able to find a locality having superior advantages in the way of wood, water and grass without danger of overflow and where sufficient territory could be obtained without interfering with the claims of any citizens.

"I enclose a copy of an order appropriating the ground and directing the removal of the troops and stores to the same and





SKETCH OF FORT COLLINS IN SEPTEMBER, 1866

1. Commanding Officers' Quarters. 2. Sutler Store. 3, 5, 11. Officers' Quarters. 4. Old Sutler Store. 5. Hospital. 7, 8, 9.
- Commissary Warehouses. 10. Guard House. 12. Laundry Quarters. 13. Citizen House. 14. Boarding House. 15, 16, 17,
18. Barracks. 19. Rocky Mountains. 20. Longs Peak. 21. Cache la Poudre Creek.

respectfully ask its approval. This post is likely to be an important one and I find a contract for the delivery of 2,000 tons of hay by the order of the Quartermaster of the Department which indicates an intention to winter a large number of troops and stock in the vicinity. The great alarm existing from attacks made and threatened by the Indians seemed to make it proper that I should visit Denver to consult with the authorities, and I made a hasty trip to that place, being absent from this post but three days. I found martial law proclaimed, business suspended and a regiment of volunteers rapidly raising which is to take the field in a few days. Its destination is the valley of the South Platte and the country south towards the waters of the Republican and Arkansas, where the Cheyennes, Kiowas, Apaches and other Indians have recently been committing serious outrages and depredations. No part of these volunteer forces will probably go north of the valley of the South Platte. There is a considerable number of Arapahoes in the neighborhood of this post, but they profess friendship and as yet have committed no acts of hostility. Several parties of Utes have recently crossed the Overland stage road west of this post, going north to 'look for Sioux' as they say, but who protest they will harm no white men. Gov. Evans and Maj. Whiting (Indian Agent) assure me they have full confidence in their professions, and suggest that they be permitted to make war upon the Cheyennes and Arapahoes and Sioux, who are their hereditary enemies. At this time all the Indians need watching and I shall take care that they are carefully observed. Capt. Evans, Company F, commanding the two companies stationed at this post, is ordered to hold them in readiness to pursue Indians at any moment and detachments are constantly out scouting, escorting and garrisoning points supposed to be liable to attack. Most of the settlers on Cache la Poudre river, Thompson and other streams are abandoning their ranches and gathering into this post for protection. I think much of the alarm unnecessary and hope the panic will soon subside. I am about starting for Fort Halleck from which post I will communicate with you.

"Very respectfully your obdt. sevt.,

"WILLIAM O. COLLINS, Lt-Col.

"Comd'g 11th O. V. C."

The following is a copy of the original order referred to in the colonel's letter to General Mitchell:



“Hd. Qrs. 11th O. V. C. in the Field at Camp Collins, Col. Ter.,  
Aug. 20th, 1864.

“Special Order No. 1:

“The importance of a permanent Post on the Cache la Poudre River near its outlet from the mountains in the vicinity of the junction of the mail line from Denver and the Overland Mail Route, and about the line between the Utes, Arrappahoes and Cheyennes makes it proper and necessary to change the location of Camp Collins to some point near, which will afford more space for improvement, be free from overflow by high waters, and the interference and injury to discipline from lot-holders in the town of La Porte and the settlers and claimants of land in the immediate neighborhood.

“The following ground now unoccupied, uninclosed and unimproved and with no known claimants thereto is therefore taken and appropriated for military purpose. And no citizen will be permitted to settle upon, occupy or in any manner encroach on the same, for any purpose whatever, without lease from proper military authorities, to wit: Beginning in the center of the main channel of the Cache la Poudre River, where the east line of the claim of Joseph Mason, on which he now lives, crosses the same, thence south four miles, thence east four miles, thence north about four miles to the centre of the main channel of the Cache la Poudre River, thence with the centre of said river up the main channel thereof, following its meanderings to the place of beginning.

“Captain Evans, Co. F, now commanding Camp Collins, or whoever may succeed him in command of that Post, will proceed immediately to construct Company Quarters for two companies, and for officers of the same, and for a temporary Hospital. And also, corells or stables and other necessary buildings and conveniences for two companies, upon the plan and according to the plat hereto attached—leaving the ground on the Parade, and in the vicinity of the Post, so that it can be built upon and improved for the accommodation of more troops or stock, if necessary, and so soon as is consistent with the good of the Service, he will remove Camp Collins to the site herein designated, with all troops, stock, stores and Government property, including the buildings erected by the U. S. troops or at Government expense if the same can be properly employed for constructing the buildings at said new camp.”

“WM. O. COLLINS, Lt. Col. Comdg.  
11th Reg., O. V. C., and troops on  
Overland Mail and Telegraph line  
in the District of Nebraska west of  
Julesburg.”

A floor plan of the new camp shows: two company quarters 20x40 each, orderly room 10x20, kitchen 18x60, guardhouse 20x20, two company stables 150x24 each, two officers' quarters 18x18 each, kitchen 15x36, yard 17x36, sink, flagstaff, parade ground 300x300; on the west side of the parade, kitchen 60x18, two commissaries' and quartermaster's rooms 10x18 each, two company quarters 40x20 each, orderly's room 10x20, quartermaster's rooms 40x20 and 20x20, two officers' quarters 18x18 each, kitchen 15x36 and yard 17x36, sink, hospital 40x20 consisting of kitchen, ward, surgery and yard, four laundresses' quarters 18x15 each, sutler's room.

On October 1, 1864, Colonel Collins issued a special order making certain changes in the arrangement of the camp.

The guard house was to be placed upon the east instead of the west side of the parade grounds and the quartermaster's buildings upon the west side; the hospital to be placed upon the knoll southwest of the parade grounds; the stables to be built upon the east side of the post, running north and south; the laundry quarters to be northwest of the post; the sutler building to be on or near the road north of the post, etc.

In the due course of time the order made by Col. Collins directing that a military reservation be set aside for the new camp reached the War Department at Washington for approval.

On November 12 the following recommendation was sent by the Acting Secretary of the Department of the Interior to President Lincoln:

“Sir:—

“I have the honor to recommend that a reservation for military purposes be made of a tract of land situated in township number 7, north range 69 west, in the territory of Colorado, and described as follows: [Here follows the same description as given in Col. Collins' order of Aug. 20, 1864.]

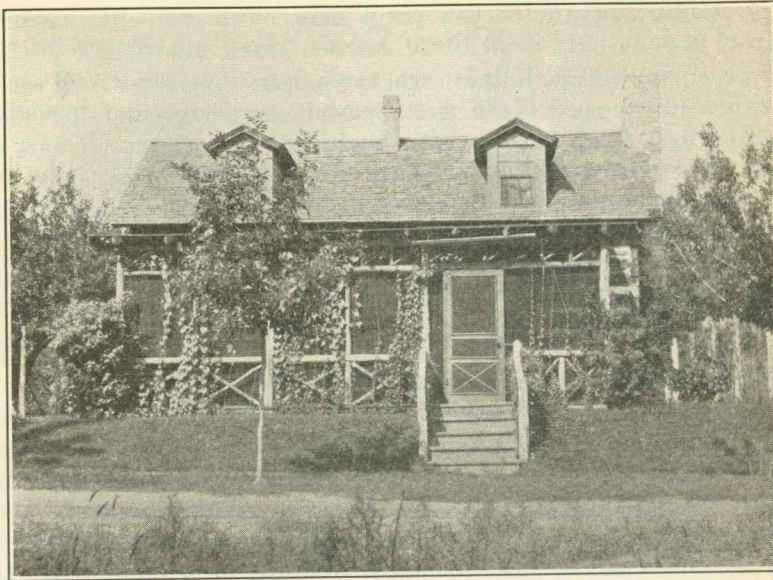
“The letter of the Secretary of War of the 3rd and the report of the Commissioners of the General Land Office of the 12th inst. relative to this subject I respectfully submit herewith.

“I am, Sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

“W. T. OTTO,  
“Acting Secretary.”

Two days later the following endorsement was placed on the letter:





PIONEER CABIN, FORT COLLINS

The "Aunty" Stone Cabin, moved to a new location and now used as a Museum and a Meeting Place for the Pioneer Association of Fort Collins.

"Executive Mansion.

"November 14, 1864.

"Let the tract of land within described be set apart as a military reservation pursuant to the recommendation of the acting Secretary of the Interior.  
A. LINCOLN."

On October 8, 1864, permission was granted to Judge Lewis Stone, a recent comer from Minnesota, "to build and keep a mess house at the post for the accommodation of the military officers stationed there." A log building for this purpose was erected that fall. There, after the death of her husband, Mrs. Elizabeth Stone, affectionately called "Aunty" Stone, boarded the officers while they remained at the post. This was the first dwelling house, and also the first hotel built in Fort Collins. In 1909 it was purchased by the Association of Pioneer Women of the Cache la Poudre Valley and was moved to a site on Mason Street, between Oak and Olive streets. There it is today as a museum in which are preserved historical relics of pioneer days. The building also serves as a meeting place for the pioneer association.

The old camp at Laporte was abandoned about the middle of October and on October 23, 1864, all orders issued by the com-

mandant of the post were dated at "Fort Collins" instead of at "Camp Collins."

Capt. Evans remained in command of Fort Collins until May 2, 1865, when he was relieved from command by an order issued by General Connor, and Lieut. Ewell P. Drake was appointed in his stead. Three days later Capt. Luther Wilson of Company D, First Veteran Battalion Colorado Cavalry, took command and remained in charge until June, when some of the Ohio troops were sent home and mustered out of the service.

In August, 1865, Colonel Fitzsimmons of the Twenty-first New York Cavalry and a battalion of his regiment relieved Captain Wilson and his company at Fort Collins, and remained at the post until June, 1866, when they were ordered to Denver to be mustered out. A battalion of a Missouri regiment was sent here then to take the place of the New York soldiers. These Missouri troops were principally men who had either deserted from the Confederate army or had been taken prisoners by Union troops and had enlisted to fight Indians on the Plains. They were known as "Galvanized" Yankees. They remained at Fort Collins until the spring of 1867, when the post was abandoned.

On February 24, 1868, a resolution was passed by the Legislative Assembly of Colorado Territory in favor of opening the Fort Collins military reservation, subject to the preemption and homestead laws. This resolution, sent as a Joint Memorial to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States Congress read as follows:

"Your memorialists, the Council and House of Representatives of the Colorado Territory, most respectfully represent, that whereas the military post known as Camp Collins, located on the Cache La Poudre River in Laramie County, Colo. Terr., has been abandoned for military purposes, and the government buildings sold; and whereas the Secretary of War has notified the Commissioner of the General Land office that the military reservation known as Camp Collins, comprising a tract of land 4 miles square, is no longer needed for military purposes, and whereas military reserves can only be disposed of by order of the President, we request that it not be opened to public auction but open to preemption and homestead.

"Approved by

"FRANK HALL, Acting Governor.

"Dec. 23, 1867."

The reservation was relinquished by the government and thrown open to homestead and preemption entries in 1872, under the provision of an act of Congress, approved May 15th of that year.



## Mountain Men\*—John D. Albert

LEROY R. HAFEN

A familiar figure for many years in Walsenburg, Colorado, was "Uncle John" Albert. For nearly thirty years preceding his death in 1899, he had lived in the Cucharas Valley. On summer evenings he often sat for hours on the bench in front of the old Sporleder Hotel and while smoking his corn husk cigarettes would entertain the guests of the inn with tales of his adventures.

Even after he was seventy years old he continued to follow, in a limited way, the trapping and hunting pursuits that had brought him to the West some fifty years before. He caught beaver on the Cucharas River just below Main Street, Walsenburg, after the town was started, and every fall he brought in a supply of venison. He was a Mountain Man of the early nineteenth century trying to adjust himself to the changed conditions that had come to the West in the latter years of that century.

The ancestors of "Uncle John" Albert came to America near the close of the seventeenth century with Francis D. Pastorius, founder of Germantown, Pennsylvania. The family later moved to Maryland, where at Hagerstown, John David Albert was born in 1806.<sup>1</sup> His father enlisted for military service during the War of 1812 and was killed at the Battle of New Orleans. His mother died soon thereafter. The orphan then found a home with a married sister at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

As a young man Albert began his westward wanderings by going first to Zanesville, Ohio; next to Cincinnati; and then to Louisville, Kentucky. Here he found employment on one of the keelboats which plied the Ohio and Mississippi. In 1833 he went by keelboat from New Orleans to St. Louis, a trip which he later characterized as "the most laborious journey of his life."<sup>2</sup>

After spending the winter of 1833-34 in St. Louis, Albert enlisted for service with the American Fur Company. In the spring the fur party set out for the mountains. It consisted of sixty men

\*This article is the second in our series on the lesser known Mountain Men. In our last sketch (January number) the picture of Louis Vasquez was from the original in possession of the Missouri Historical Society. For persons especially interested in the early fur trade in the Rocky Mountains we might call attention to the following articles that have appeared in the *Colorado Magazine*: Fort Jackson and the Early Fur Trade on the South Platte (Feb., 1928); The Last Years of James P. Beckwourth (Aug., 1928); Old Fort Lupton and Its Founder (Nov., 1929); The W. M. Boggs Manuscript about Bent's Fort, etc. (Mar., 1930); Fraeb's Last Fight, etc. (May, 1930); Antoine Robidoux, Kingpin in the Colorado River Fur Trade (July, 1930). Most back numbers of the *Colorado Magazine* are still procurable from the State Historical Society of Colorado.—Ed.

<sup>1</sup>Data from Louis B. Sporleder, who for some twenty-five years was a fellow townsman in Walsenburg, Colorado. Mr. Sporleder has written a biographical sketch of Mr. Albert, from which the data in this article are drawn, except where otherwise indicated.

<sup>2</sup>Frank Hall, *History of Colorado* (1891), III, 496. Apparently, Mr. Hall interviewed Mr. Albert before writing the sketch of the latter's life.

led by "Col. John A. Turpin [possibly Sarpy], Clerk and General Manager of the Western Fur Company [Western Department of the American Fur Company]. The men wintered on the North Platte River in 1834."<sup>3</sup>

"Although the first advance of this great company had all the elements of a party of explorers, it was intended as a permanent establishment of the company with a view of reducing to a system the traffic with the wild tribes of this vast region."<sup>4</sup>

Albert was a trapper in the mountains during the three succeeding years. At times he bartered his furs at Fort Hall and at others sold them to the American Fur Company. While in the region about the Great Salt Lake, his party lost track of the day of the week and of the month. Upon returning to the plains east of the mountains they were surprised to find wagon tracks. On investigation they located a party of emigrants from Arkansas bound for Oregon.<sup>5</sup>

Mid-winter of 1836-37 was spent with a band of Indians near the mouth of the Cache la Poudre River. "On the first day of December," says Albert, "snow began to fall and did not let up until the earth was covered to the depth of seven feet on the level, and it remained until spring. Not much antelope in that kind of snow. No, sir. We lived on horse flesh. Our horses froze to death, and the meat kept all winter."<sup>6</sup> When spring came the Mountain Men went south to Bent's Fort, where they obtained horses. Most of Albert's companions returned to the Salt Lake Valley, but he went to New Mexico instead.

Trapping was becoming unprofitable, so Albert decided to forsake this pursuit for farming. He settled down in the Taos Valley and married a "half breed Mexican, the daughter of William Pope, who came to the mountains at a very early date."<sup>7</sup> Life during most of the succeeding decade was not spectacular. In 1847, however, he had the most thrilling experience of his life. It came as a result of the famous "Taos uprising."

The American conquest of New Mexico under General Kearny had been effected without serious opposition in August, 1846. American control was set up with Charles Bent, long a resident merchant of New Mexico, as governor. A smouldering of distrust existing in the minds of many of the natives was stirred to flame

<sup>3</sup>Sporleder's biographical sketch of Albert (Ms.).

<sup>4</sup>Quoted by Mr. Sporleder from an old undated newspaper clipping. This party may have founded Fort John, near the mouth of the Laramie River, Wyoming.

<sup>5</sup>Dawson Scrapbooks, I, 369 (State Historical Society of Colorado). This clipping, dated Oct. 31, 1885, is from a Rico, Colorado, newspaper and is copied from Walsenburg correspondence to the *Denver News*. A search through the *Rocky Mountain News* for Oct., 1885, failed to reveal the original article.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*



by certain Mexican leaders. A wholesale uprising against the invaders was carried into effect in January, 1847. At several places in the territory attacks were made almost simultaneously. Governor Bent and other officials were killed at Taos. An attack was made on Turley's mill, located on the Arroyo Hondo, some seven miles north of Taos. Here a number of Americans, including Albert, were employed at the time. Mr. Albert's account of his experience is as follows:<sup>8</sup>



JOHN D. ALBERT AND DAUGHTER EMILIE  
(From the daughters of Mr. Albert, through courtesy of Louis B. Sporleder)

“They commenced the attack upon Arroyo Hondo by sending in to us a flag of truce, demanding our arms and ammunition and an unconditional surrender of ourselves. I told the boys they could do as they pleased, but I knew their treachery would lead us to certain death in the end, and I was going to die with my gun in my hands, and not be murdered like a common dog.

“This was the turning point in the matter, and they all concluded to fight it out as best they could. The men who came to

<sup>8</sup>Sporleder Ms.

make a treaty with us went back. Their forms were secreted behind the brow of the hill near us, and one of them, after the manner of the wild Indians, in opening a battle, came to the top of the ridge and danced a jig and sang a song of defiance. I knew the time had come, and the sooner the bloody work commenced the sooner we would know our fate.

“We of the mountains had collected in the distillery belonging to Mr. Turley, a building of considerable size, and the only one in the place that was two stories in height. The dancing Indian was within gunshot and I killed him. Billy Austin stood close behind me, and when another man came to drag the body back, Austin shot him. By this time my gun was loaded and I killed the third man. Then the hurrah commenced and the air was filled with bullets from the guns in the hands of the men who had lain behind the top of the hill. The bullets rattled against the house like hail. There was not a window left in it. Although we saw we were in a trap, we fought on all day.

“When the sun was setting the Mexicans made a curious charge and set fire to the house we were in, and got under the walls of other buildings. Soon everything was ablaze; the uproar of the yelling devils on the outside and the excitement of the men on the inner side was deafening. We tried to escape by digging through the floor down into the granary. The house was filling with Mexicans and everything was confusion.

“Fortunately for me, in the confusion, I escaped from the house. I don't know how many shots were fired at me, but none took effect. I had a bullet in my clothes, one cut off the brim of my hat, and another cut the band and I lost it from my head. In the excitement I forgot my coat and was out in the world alone without coat, hat or friends, and with 140 miles of mountain roads between me and safety, in the winter time.

“My comrades behind me were all killed. I was alone in a world of snow, with not a human soul on whom I could depend, and with no provisions and no hope of getting any unless I could kill some animal while I was traveling. I never look back to the dark hours of that day and to my sufferings in the days following, but the devil gets in me bigger than a wolf.

“In making my escape from the house that we were in, I depended upon my hunting knife to carry me safely through the surging crowd. It had been with me for many years, and now it and my gun were my only friends. As soon as I was well away from the burning house, I made my way to the pinon hills and thence to the trail that led to the settlements on the little Red River that empties its waters into the Rio Grande del Norte.



"I met Antonio Sotelo Pino and tried to stop him and a man that was with him. They skulked around me through the woods. From this I knew the Mexican settlements that were on my route were in possession of the secret of the revolution and that it was dangerous to attempt to find a refuge in any of the settlements nearby.

"I traveled the entire night and reached little Red River just as the rays of the morning light were creeping over the Sierra Madre Mountains. I thought I would freeze, it was so cold in the last hours of the night. I arrived at Costilla about midday and at Indian Creek at the setting of the sun. Here I took my first rest.

"There was now about ninety miles between me and the scene of yesterday. There I rested an hour or two and then started for the summit of the Sangre de Cristo Pass. The snow increased in depth as I ascended. The work was severe and with my last two days of fasting I was growing weak. I managed to pass the snow drifts at the summit without injury, and the descent upon the opposite side was a relief from the tiresome uphill pull that I had been making.

"At the old Spanish Fort (where later, Colonel Francisco erected his fort), at a distance of seven miles down the mountain trail, I found a dry spot of ground beneath the limbs of a cedar tree, and there I rested until morning. The small fire and the warm, dry ground were a great comfort. I was exhausted and dared not go to sleep in my famished condition, but dozed a little as I sat by the fire.

"When the light of morning came I went to the trail and had not gone far when I saw two large deer standing near the trail. I shot and broke the back of the largest. As soon as I could I opened it and cut out a piece of liver and began to eat. I had eaten raw liver and raw meat many times before without any inconvenience, but this made me sick. I laid down upon the ground and snow with my head upon the dead animal, and for an hour or more suffered all the pangs of death. When that passed away I was as anxious to resume my march as ever.

"Fifty miles remained between me and the trading post at Pueblo, my nearest source of relief. My appetite for venison broil was gone for the time. I took the skin of the deer and wrapped it around my head and shoulders as a substitute for a coat, the hair next to my body. It served a very good purpose. Then, taking a small cut of venison, I started on my journey in fairly good spirits. At last I heard the bark of a dog. Night was coming on and I was nearing the Mormon camping ground that was two miles above where the city of Pueblo now is. Two men hailed me and

asked who was there. As soon as I had made myself known they picked me up and carried me to the trading post.

"They said I acted like a drunken man when they first saw me. One of these men was 'Blackhawk,' for whom the mining region that is near Central City is named. The men worked with me and as soon as I was able I told them that I was the only white man left of all that lived in Taos Valley; the Mexicans had murdered them all.

"Excitement, for the time, raged among the fifty mountaineers who were wintering there. There were also fifteen Mexicans employed by the traders as teamsters and cattle guards for stock that was on the range. They were called in and confined in one of the rooms of the fort. A council was held at once; a messenger was dispatched at once upon a fleet horse to William Bent at Bent's Fort, situated on the Arkansas River farther below. He was a brother of the dead Governor and was in charge of his business on the plains. \* \* \* When Mr. Bent arrived the mountaineers called out the Mexican prisoners and placed them in line with the intention of killing them on general principles. I interfered, with the argument that they were not the guilty ones, and that it would be murder to kill them. After considerable wrangling they let them go. I was furnished with two horses and Blackhawk and I returned to New Mexico."<sup>9</sup>

The insurrection was quickly put down by the troops under Col. Price; its leaders were caught, tried, convicted and hanged.

We shall not attempt here to follow Albert's subsequent career. His remaining years were spent in New Mexico and Colorado. In the early seventies he settled at Walsenburg and there built his home and the "fort."<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Albert was married three times. "A custom he followed was to divide his property among the children when a wife died and start life anew with any subsequent alliance."<sup>11</sup> Two of his twenty-one children and many grandchildren live today in southern Colorado.

Mr. Louis B. Sporleder, who knew Albert well and as a young man accompanied Albert on one of the old man's last hunting trips, says of him: "The old patriarch smoked corn husk cigarettes incessantly, sometimes twenty at one sitting—without batting an eye. Fond of a little good liquor, he yet never drank a drop more than he could stand. Cock fights interested him greatly and he himself bred game birds for a number of years.

<sup>9</sup>Another account of the fight at Turley's mill and of the escape of Albert is given in G. F. Ruxton, *Wild Life in the Rockies*, 135-145.

<sup>10</sup>A sketch map indicating the location of this fort is given in the *Colorado Magazine*, X, 30.

<sup>11</sup>Sporleder Ms.



“He was quiet and unostentatious, preferring his own fireside to the glammers of gambling and the deviations from moral rectitude, differing in that respect from most of the old mountaineers. Although himself not a member of any denomination, and not a church-going man, he revered, above all other things, an old German Bible, which his mother had left him. This book he carried with him constantly, considering it, perhaps, as a talisman to protect him from harm.”<sup>12</sup>

On April 24, 1899, John D. Albert, one of the last of the Mountain Men, passed away. He lies in the Catholic cemetery just south of Walsenburg, Colorado.



farm and small town, I was horrified and could see that dreadful knife all night long.

In our ignorance, we had not engaged horses for the trip over the Divide and, as the town was booming, we could get none. But we were young and had the day before us and imagined we could walk. I did walk about a mile and then collapsed. It was the 7th of June and was quite warm, although there was considerable snow. We knew nothing of altitude, and did not know what the trouble was, for I could neither go up nor down. Finally, a man came along, riding a horse and driving a train of burros, loaded with freight for the camp. As he rode up, his greeting was, "Aha, it got you," and then he explained that it was the altitude and said I might be all right in a few minutes, or it might be a long time. He offered me his horse to ride, but assured me I would have to ride like a man. In those days that was quite an ordeal, especially the way my dress was made, a narrow, long trimmed skirt and an over-dress we called a Redingote. I had one advantage, my coat was made circular style, so it reached down on both sides to my high-topped shoes. That made me quite respectable.

Well, with my baby in front of me and my husband leading the horse, I did very well until we got to the top. But going down on the other side, the trail was so narrow and steep that I felt sure I would go over the horse's head. Riding on the train began to look very safe, after my stage experience and this ride. I got to know the owner of the horse real well, but cannot remember his name. We finally reached the camp site.

My husband had work in the office of the stamp mill. As the camp was booming, the only house we could get was one named the "Last Dollar Cabin." There was a mine of the same name. It was said the owners had spent their last dollar on this prospect. I think it was a paying one but am not sure. I was disappointed and afraid and then in three days' time my husband was subpoenaed as a witness to the stabbing of our driver, and had to leave for Leadville the next morning. I was afraid to stay alone but could not bear to go over that pass again so soon. Our cabin had no floor and only a fireplace to cook on, although later we had a floor and a stove. That morning I had put on the fire a five-gallon can filled with water. The can was the kind that powder comes in for the mines. Just as the water got hot, the can tumbled over, and just imagine what it did to my perfectly good dirt floor. That was the straw too much, so I used the woman's prerogative and cried until my baby cried with me. I left the muddy cabin and went outside, where I met a woman with a fifteen-year-old daughter, who was there for her health. I liked them and afterwards went out

## Experiences in Leadville and Independence, 1881-82

MRS. M. B. HALL\*

Owing to failing health, my husband, O. V. Hall, myself and baby daughter left our home at Abilene, Kansas, and came to Denver, Colorado, May 19, 1881, and put up at the old "Red Lion Inn," at 16th and Wazee streets.

After a few days of sightseeing, we went by the D. & R. G. to Leadville. Our train was held up at Salida for several hours, for the tracks to be cleared of the remains of a freight and construction train that had met on the mountainside. As I had always lived in the prairie states of Iowa and Kansas, I was frightened and felt sure I would never again ride on a train over mountain roads. However, we reached Leadville safely and put up at the Gregory House on Third Street, not far from Harrison Avenue.

On June 6th, we left Leadville by stage coach for Independence, a mining camp over the Divide. We stopped at Twin Lakes for dinner and left there a six-year-old boy, Jesse Scoggins, with his father, who was there for the summer; and, by the way, he was also father of Charley Scoggins, writer of the song, "Where the Silvery Colorado Wends Its Way." The Scoggins family were neighbors of ours at Abilene, Kansas. Just before sundown we reached a station which, as I remember, was the end of several stage lines and was situated at the foot of Independence Pass. Just as our driver stepped down, the driver of another stage stabbed him. He did not die, but was in a hospital in Leadville for several months. As I remember, the other driver (I do not remember the name of either) had sworn to kill on sight, because of some former trouble. As I had known no life but that of the

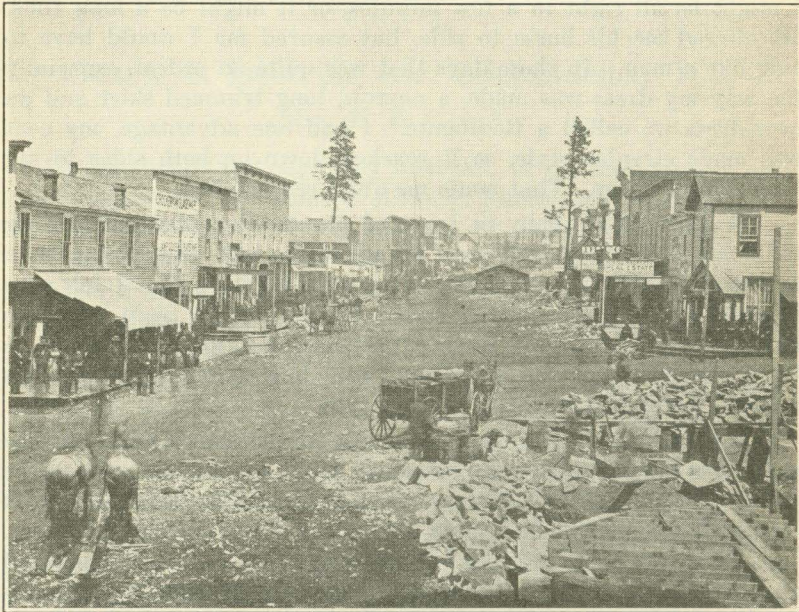
<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*

\*Mrs. Hall now lives at Pawnee, Oklahoma.—Ed.



with the girl many times. Her parents had a small store, where my little girl liked to stay, so we semi-invalids lived out of doors most of the time. I wish I could remember their names.

Our cabin was made liveable and later I was very glad of the floor. The door had been hewn out of a log, so thick that no bullets could go through it, which I appreciated, as there was much careless shooting going on. There was a half window in front and one on the side. The house was built on the side of a hill. The rear rested on the ground, while the front was several feet above the street. The only hotel in the camp was about six feet from our cabin. At the front, between the buildings, the hotel people had



HARRISON AVENUE, LEADVILLE (about 1879)

built a storeroom that extended back several feet. I am telling you all this to explain what happened. Several feet above the cabin was a ditch that carried off the waste water from the mines. One day this ditch broke loose and the water rushed down between the buildings. The window gave way and, fortunately, the door was open, so it flowed out of the door and across the street and into a tent saloon. I had a glimpse of a man on a table, then the tent collapsed, probably diluting the stock in trade with the muddy ditch water.

The hotel people had two little girls who had played with mine. One day they had some kind of a mixup and their mother came to my door with a knife in her hand, to tell me, very emphatically, that I had to make my child behave herself. When she left, I saw three men in the street ready to help me if I needed them.

Our little girl had the time of her life, too bad she cannot remember those days. She would watch for the miners coming from their work. They kept her pockets full of silver. A man who had a saloon would call her in to play, when there was no trade. I remonstrated but he said he had two little girls in Leadville and promised to always send her home when anyone came in. I had her hair cut short and someone called her "Little Tommie." There was a mine named for her. The "Little Tommie" was a paying one. For a short time she was the only child in the camp. She learned to swear, would repeat the most awful oaths, and I was silly enough to punish her for it.

A man rode through the camp one day and told someone that President Garfield had been shot. Most of the population met the stage a mile away that night. There was great excitement in Leadville, for Guiteau's former wife lived there. She had married a man by the name of Wilson, who ran an employment office. They were both called east to testify as to Guiteau's former life.

A woman from the underworld at Leadville built a house in the camp and when it was finished, one evening the stage came in with a capacity load of girls, who announced to the crowd gathered around the stage, "We are here, boys." As we were so close to the hotel we saw all the new arrivals and, as the camp promised big things, there were people coming all the time from Leadville and other places.

There was very little legitimate amusement, so the men of the camp got up a dance. There were four women who could be counted on, but just before the time set one of them had to go away. We were invited but I had no intention of going, for though I had always danced, I felt it would be really disagreeable to dance in a place like that. However, they came for us and my husband insisted that I help them out. So I went and danced as long as I could stand up. I do not remember how many men were there but the building would not hold them. The floor was made of boards just from the saw mill and were anything but smooth, so candles were whittled up and spread over the floor. More than one person sat down suddenly while dancing, but it was something different and everyone seemed to have a good time.

If I remember, the ore was principally gold, found in pockets that proved to be shallow; so the boom was short lived. There



were many things to enjoy. The wonderful scenery, the low drifting clouds that settled on us when we were tramping, the return of health, the new folks and environment, the men with their pockets filled with valuable specimens of ore, the thrill of listening to the story of the "best find yet," the chivalry of the men that I was so much afraid of at first, because they carried guns.

But the reverse side showed, this little town of one street, with the percentage of saloons over-balancing that of the population, the professional gambler, the saloon and the underworld all ready, day or night, to prey on the men who did the hard work of the mines.

In some ways it seemed like a dream and yet, years later, in the boom oil towns of Oklahoma, I found the same element of chance, the gambling spirit and excitement when a new gusher came in, the same situation where the few reaped the benefit of the riches taken from old Mother Earth. In spite of the difference of the setting, there was a real reproduction of the spirit and mind of the mining camp.

During the summer a stage road was built over the pass. It was very rough, not much like the highway that has been built there recently. We met one of the drivers and liked him very much. He was young and pleasant. His name was Bob Carson, said to be a relative of Kit Carson, but I do not know if that was true. I think he owned an interest in one of the stage lines to Leadville. In the fall when we were about ready to go to Leadville for the winter, my husband was called to the murder trial again. I could not go with him without sacrificing more than I cared to and, having perfect confidence in Bob, I waited a few days before starting. I do not remember the exact date, but it was some time in October; anyway the morning I started was quite cool. Several men took the short trail, expecting to meet the stage at the foot of the pass, so it happened that my little girl and I were the only passengers. All went well until we got to the top. The stage was very heavy, being drawn by six horses. For some reason the brake refused to work and the heavy stage plunged against the horses and frightened them, and the way we sailed around the corners! Talk about the ride of Paul Revere—that was an easy canter compared to our wild ride. At the first plunge we went to the floor, but we did not stay there. I never could understand how Bob stayed on that high seat, but he kept the lines, looking back to say, "I'll get you there, Mrs. Hall," but did not say where. There were people living on the road who depended on the stage for their mail. I remember glimpses of them staring at us, with letters in their hands for the outgoing mail, but even Uncle Sam's mail could not stop us. A friend who had gone on horse-

back started to meet us, knowing we were passengers, but could only give us the road. We finally reached the station, the horses having run every step of the way. We were badly shaken up but we were transferred to another stage, and another driver, and went on our way to Leadville without any more trouble. My husband met us and took us to the Gregory House, where we spent the winter of '81 and '82. He worked in the office of a smelter, the "Harrison," if I remember. In the spring we moved to Stray Horse Gulch.

While living there, the city had a fire that destroyed many buildings. It started in the roof of a hotel. An engineer at one of the smelters saw it and sent out such unearthly whistles that everyone was out of bed to see what was wrong with the smelter. The night clerk ran out and found that the roof was burning, and going in, with a gun in each hand, went from floor to floor, shooting and calling. There were some lives lost. One of the buildings was a hardware store that kept all kinds of explosives used in the mines and that made it very dangerous for the firemen, a volunteer company, as I remember it. A morning paper said that if the Lord's Prayer had been written on the clouds, it could easily have been read.

When my husband was on the night shift, I liked to go with him and watch those great furnaces melting and separating the ore from the slag. The sight of the silver running into the moulds and the red hot slag dropping were very fascinating. I understand that the slag was worked over, later on, with improved machinery, in a way that paid well.

One day a lawyer shot a policeman. The only mob I ever saw was headed by the police, looking for the lawyer, but the sheriff somehow got him out of town, to some place near where the trial was held. If my memory serves me right, he was a relative of General Early, of southern fame. He was defended by Senator Vest, of Missouri, who was said to be the best criminal lawyer in the country at that time; anyway, the lawyer was acquitted.

There were at least two legal hangings, Gilbert and Rosecrans, I think. One day my brother, F. Belden, and I were walking down Harrison Avenue. We heard the report of a gun and a man fell dead a few feet in front of me. The shot came from a desperado across the street, and that ended the chapter for both of them. I remember visiting in Tennessee Park, where Charley Scoggins' sister lived.

In the fall of 1882, we moved back to the Gregory House. Sometime during the winter, an epidemic of smallpox broke out.



One evening twenty-seven of us stood in line for vaccination. Later I was ill, so we concluded I had better go to a lower altitude for a while. I left, expecting to return, but the smallpox was so general that I never did, and later my husband joined me at our old home in Abilene, Kansas, and so ends the story of my experiences in Leadville and Independence Pass.

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## Kit Carson County's Ghost Towns

H. G. HOSKIN\*

In 1887, when it had been definitely decided that the Rock Island railroad was to pass through eastern Elbert county, a great many men saw opportunities for easy money in the platting of townsites. However, it appeared that the railroad officials had their own ideas in the matter, and they seemed to feel that if there was any money to be made from the platting of towns along the line of the railroad, they were the boys to make it. Therefore, it followed that most of the independent townsites failed to live.

Among these towns were Carlisle, Larsen, Columbia, Crystal Springs and Beloit, all located in what is now Kit Carson county. The following information has been gathered concerning these towns, and as it is bound to be somewhat incomplete, we will be glad to have any further information that anyone can or may be able to give concerning them.

Larsen was located on the southeast quarter of section twenty-nine, in township eight, south of range forty-two, a mile and a half east of Peconic. This town was platted and laid out by the Elbert County Townsite Company, on a quarter section that had been homesteaded and patented by James Stuart. The Elbert County Townsite Company, with a capital of \$5,000, consisted of J. C. Markle, president; J. F. Kellar, vice-president; H. W. Clement, secretary; L. C. Morris, treasurer; and N. L. Mack, trustee. Mr. Markle afterwards ran a blacksmith shop in Burlington, located on the corner just east of the present Nazarene Church. Mr. Kellar farmed for many years near Larsen and J. W. Clement was a Burlington lawyer.

Larsen was laid out on a large scale, having 53 blocks and covering the entire quarter section. Among the lot owners were Lee Ramsey, county clerk of Elbert county; Leo and Lucy Thoman, H. B. Stout, M. Donelan, W. S. Wager and others who afterwards became more or less prominent in Burlington history. Lar-

sen died so rapidly that in 1890 it was sold for taxes at the first tax sale held in Kit Carson county to J. C. Markle, who held it until his death. It is now owned by Bernice Markle Ruland, of Gunnison, Colorado.

Carlisle. There is no recorded plat of Carlisle, but it seems to have been platted and to have had at least 43 blocks. It was located on or near the present site of Peconic and was for three or four years a busy trading point. It was established sometime before the coming of the railroad and was the point to which supplies were freighted from the B. & M. and the Kansas Pacific. Among the residents and lot owners were Francis E. Chaney, Elbert L. Gallinger and William Holt.

Columbia was platted in May, 1888, by the Columbia Townsite Company, on land homesteaded by David E. Scott. This was the southeast quarter of section thirty-four, township eight, south of range forty-six, three and a half miles east of Stratton, at that time called Claremont. The Columbia Townsite Company consisted of H. O. Conaway, J. J. Bell, C. C. Payne, R. H. Patterson and W. H. Larned. This townsite was first surveyed by W. H. Larned and afterwards checked and resurveyed by Wm. M. Hollowell.

Columbia was the one town in this part of eastern Colorado whose founders had vision enough to allow wide streets, part of them being 110 feet wide and the remainder being 100 feet wide. The blocks were 300 feet square and block 7, being approximately in the center of the townsite, was designated as a public square. The business lots, 25 by 140 feet, all faced this public square. Among the business houses in Columbia were the Chicago Lumber and Coal Company, and the Columbia Banking Company. In 1889 the townsite was sold under an attachment and levy by Sheriff A. N. Wilcox to C. M. Root, and Columbia passed out of existence. The land is now owned by G. L. Zurcher of Stratton.

Crystal Springs was laid out on the northwest quarter of section nine, township nine, south of range fifty. It consisted of a tract 1,902 feet from east to west and 1,930 feet from north to south, and was located in the southeast corner of the quarter section. Presumably, the railroad was to pass through the center of the section, but to get a better river crossing and grade, it swung a half mile further south. Carilla M. Strode proved up on this piece of land and sold it to Stephen S. Strode, who laid out the townsite. Lloyd Cross was the surveyor and the town had 20 blocks, part of them being 300 by 400 feet, and the remainder 300 by 410 feet. Main Street was 100 feet wide and the others were 80 feet wide.

\*Mr. Hoskin is manager of the Kit Carson County Abstract Company at Burlington, Colorado.—Ed.



A rather unique plan of naming the streets was adopted. The first four streets running north and south were called Chicago, Rock Island, Colorado, and Railway, as a compliment to the Chicago, Rock Island and Colorado Railway. The other streets were named Spring, Front, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth.

In 1889 Mr. Strode filed in the office of the county clerk an affidavit to the effect that none of the lots in the townsite had been sold and vacating the survey. This townsite was located three and a half miles east of Flagler, and is now owned by A. J. Hartzler.

Beloit was by far the most ambitious of all the townsites that expected to benefit by the Rock Island. Its founders also made the poorest guess as to the location of the road, for the railroad passed it by, eight miles away. It was known that the Rock Island was heading for Colorado Springs and the promoters of Beloit knew that a survey had been run from a point just west of Goodland on a direct line to Colorado Springs. They also knew that the B. & M. was building to St. Francis with the avowed purpose of reaching Pueblo. Therefore, the natural conclusion was that at Beloit the two roads would cross and Beloit would be the biggest town in the eastern part of the state. Some of the organizers of Beloit had been in at the birth of Seward, Nebraska, and they felt that they could duplicate the success of that city in eastern Colorado.

Beloit was laid out in a tract of 44 acres at the point where sections 7, 8, 17 and 18, in township 10, range forty-five, came together. Eleven and one-fourth acres were taken from each section in such a form that the section lines passed through the townsite from corner to corner. A well 200 feet deep was dug at the section intersection and the buildings were placed in a square about 300 feet back and facing the well. This well furnished water for the entire countryside for a number of years.

Southwest of the well were located the J. T. Roberts grocery store and postoffice, Matthies Brothers hardware store and the townsite office. On the northwest was the sod residence of Marion Roberts, which was afterwards used as the office of the *Beloit Weekly Bugle*. On the northeast was the sod residence of D. H. Roberts and on the southeast was the Ed Hoskin blacksmith shop and the sod residence of C. L. V. Sampson, which was also used as a school house.

The Matthies building and stock and the J. T. Roberts building and stock were later moved to Claremont. The Ed Hoskin blacksmith shop was moved to his ranch, two miles east of Beloit. The *Beloit Weekly Bugle* outfit was sold to one of the Burlington papers and a special Beloit edition was gotten out for a few weeks

and then ceased. Cattle rubbed down the sod buildings, windmill and pump were sold and the well was filled up.

The Beloit postoffice was one of the earliest established in the county and mail was originally brought from Cheyenne Wells. A road between the points was surveyed and parts of it may still be seen running straight as the crow flies across the country. Where it crossed the Smoky a barrel was sunk in the sand and water was thus furnished for wayfarers. After Claremont was given a postoffice, the mail route ran from Beloit through Claremont to Tuttle one day, and back the next.

The men interested in the Beloit Townsite Company were the three brothers, J. T. Roberts, Marion F. Roberts, and D. H. Roberts, Lem and Frank Durland, Welby S. Betzer, M. F. L. Bezing, Clement L. V. Sampson. Posters in red ink, four feet long, were plastered all over central Nebraska and these posters invited settlers to come to Beloit, the future county seat of eastern Elbert county, division station for the Rock Island road and junction of the Rock Island and the B. & M.

Beloit was the voting place for precinct 12 and elections were held there and at the Hoskin ranch until 1894. In 1891 the county commissioners established a public road where main streets should have been, but the dry years of 1893 and 1894 were too much for the community. The settlers moved away until there were only one or two families left, and in 1894 Beloit ceased to exist. The SE quarter of section seven is a part of the Collins ranch. The NW quarter of section seventeen is farmed by Velma Agler. The NE quarter of section eighteen is owned by Ed Beeson and the townsite part of section eight is owned by H. G. Hoskin.



## Across the Plains in a Prairie Schooner

FROM THE DIARY OF ELIZABETH KEYES\*

April 11, 1866. My aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Stone, who lives at Camp Collins, Colorado, kindly invited me and my son, Will, to come out and make our home with her; so I decided that when a favorable opportunity offered to make the trip I would join her. An acquaintance of hers, H. C. Peterson, whose former home was in Williamsburg, Ohio, decided to go there and bring his brother, Fountain L. Peterson, and wife, Carrie, back with him. Clay Peterson came by to see me on his way East and said I could make

\*Mrs. Keyes became the first school teacher in Fort Collins, holding her class in "Aunty" Stone's pioneer cabin. She married Harris Stratton on Dec. 30, 1866. A copy of the diary was kindly furnished by Mrs. Agnes W. Spring of Fort Collins.—Ed.



the trip with them, so I joined them. Fount Peterson shipped four horses and some of his belongings from Williamsburg to St. Joseph, Mo., then the end of the railroad, where the party congregated, bought a wagon and harness and the necessary provisions for the long journey across the plains.

The bluffs before we got to Quincy were very pretty, reaching out a long ways. Before we got there a man on the train wanted us to buy omnibus tickets to the ferry, but another man told me it was but a few steps from the station to the ferry. A boy carried our things to the ferry and a gentleman kindly assisted us on the boat and off. So we got along nicely. The railroad was very smooth at first and we were getting along nicely until stopped by a wrecked freight train which detained us four hours, so that we reached St. Joe at 9 a. m. instead of 5 a. m. as we should have done.

April 23. \* \* \* On Thursday my trunks came as also did the rest of our party; so now off for Colorado. Friday they were all day getting provisions and all the little things that are needed on such a trip.

Saturday, April 28. After dinner we started, went out about ten miles and camped in the nicest place, where we had our first experience in camp life; very pleasant it was too, to begin with, but I expect will be tiresome enough to end with. Not but what we had our troubles the first day. The horses were not used to being driven together and the men none of them knowing how to manage four horses. We had balks innumerable, some enough to scare us pretty well, but in the end on we would go as merry as ever, with the horses feeling just like jumping one at a time every time they start.

Sunday, April 29. Did not sleep well till daylight, the usual fact of horses being within six inches of my ears, stamping, snorting and all other noises and efforts that horsekind is capable of making, conspired to cheat the drowsy god from my pillow till the rays of morn dawned through a crack in the wagon cover, when, thinking we would not be eaten alive in daylight, my fears allowed me to forget for about two hours, when our camp was astir. We had a nice breakfast of fried bacon, eggs, bread, dried beef, cheese, jelly and those things equally good, not forgetting coffee. There are seven in our party, H. C. Peterson, Fount Peterson and his wife Carrie, George Peterson, a nephew, Pierce Holland, Wilbur P. Keyes, aged 10, and myself.

We traveled about fifteen miles today, thinking it would be better for the horses to travel a little at first; we came to the banks of the Wolf River or creek, a beautiful place. I could

enjoy myself to stay there a week. We made our first biscuits, rather poor, but we consoled ourselves with thinking that a "poor beginning, etc." After dinner our party broke up, the men, dreadful to tell, tried fishing, but said they did no sin as they caught nothing to speak of. Mr. and Mrs. Peterson took a long walk and I seated myself to write to my mother, as I promised to write to her every day. The men returned and pitched the tent, which is very nice. They put their beds in it as it looks like rain. \* \* \*

Thursday, May 3. At 10 o'clock we arrived at Marysville on the Big Blue River in the edge of Nebraska. There is quite a village here and it is quite a fine location. If there was more timber here, there is no reason why this is not as fine a farming country as there is. It is worth the trouble of coming so far to see such a vast stretch of country and not a sign of improvements as far as one can see. There are stone quarries here and several of the houses are built of it and they look nicely.

There are some bad people here if the population is thin. They are building a very stout jail of stone. The grass is fine for feed but so far we have not used it but get hay for the horses. Came 26 miles at half past three and camped Thursday night at Cottonwood Creek. Had a nice, clean, snug place all to ourselves. We made up bread this morning to bake tonight; had lots of fun over it, but it came out all right and made the nicest biscuit and light bread, the first we have had.

We have come to the conclusion that if we could have as nice places to camp, fine weather and good roads, we should not mind traveling all the time. Nebraska is not so very far away as we had thought, and wonder why it does not settle up faster. The Big Blue is a fine stream with every appearance of flowing through a good country, but perhaps the soil is clayey. \* \* \*

Saturday, May 12. At Fort Kearney. We struck the Platte River about 20 miles from Fort Kearney, but there was no timber and we came on to the fort and found we must go from there in a wagon train. Here our first bad luck appeared, which to me, personally, is terribly serious. Mr. Peterson's and my trunks were stolen last night and we are detained here searching for them, but I fear it is a waste of time. Nine o'clock a. m. They have found the trunks, but both had been opened and rifled of their contents. The men are searching everywhere for the goods, but with no trace of them. This Dobe town, as it is called, bears a terrible bad name for stealing. It is so near the fort that thieves have the soldiers for a cloak for their rascality. We had a military and civil posse out searching and each laid the theft on the other kind of people.



Monday, May 13. We stayed at Dobe town till near noon, when a train of 80 wagons carrying emigrants started. The post commander had detained all emigrants until a sufficient number had congregated to form a train of that size to travel together for mutual protection. One of the members of the party was elected wagon boss, or captain, whose duty it was to select camping grounds, detail night guards to protect the stock, etc. We thought it a waste of time to stop longer to search for our things. The Masons seemed to be interested in it and if they should ever hear of the things they will let us know. The trunk I brought along contained all the extra clothes for Will and myself, so we are short on wearing apparel. I had also baked a fruit cake to take along, thinking it would be a treat on the way. It was in the trunk; the thieves got that, too. We had an opportunity of seeing General Sherman and staff here. He is on an engineering tour, they say, for some railroad. I was glad of the chance to see him. It was the U. P. survey he was making.

Monday, May 14. We stopped yesterday after covering 10 miles, and camped with a train for the first time. Have not seen any of our company. They are emigrants and we prefer them to freighters as they are more congenial. The Platte River is a fine looking stream here. It is as broad as the Missouri, but so shallow that it can be forded anywhere, though the quicksands are dangerous for horses.

Friday, May 18. We had some ranch eggs for supper. They were but forty cents a dozen. We camped last night at Plum Creek, 38 miles from Dobe town, and are corralled in with the train for the first time. We have quite a village. There is a baby in the next wagon, a bride on the corner, with quite a sprinkling of others. The wagon boss has a family. His daughter called on us this morning. All sympathize with us for our loss. I do not get a bit tired of riding, but the wind is terribly annoying, as it blows the sand into the eyes and throat.

Saturday, May 19. Last night we had the most magnificent storm cloud I ever saw. I watched it gather for some time. A fire was built on the prairie between us and the cloud, which burned brightly. It lighted up the cloud and with sharp lightning and heavy thunder it was a spectacle nearly as grand as the burning of Atlanta, as one gentleman said. The storm passed to the east, as they say it never rains on the Platte; it is like the Nile in that respect, but not to be compared for fertility.

May 21, Monday. Some of our neighbors called on us yesterday, one a young lady whose father is the leader of the party. They are going to Oregon to reside. There are 13 persons in their

wagon, 9 of their own family. There is another large family with a babe that was but three weeks old when they started. The babe is getting along nicely. It likes the motion of the wagon. Then there is a bride and her husband with a nice outfit going to the mines in Oregon. He has spent six years in Oregon. They have a saddle horse for each to ride, a light wagon and a baggage wagon. They are from Lockport, New York.

Tuesday, May 22. Passed Cottonwood Springs this noon and feel as if we are making good time and progress toward Julesburg, Colo. Cottonwood is quite a place. It is a military post and has a saw mill. It is very warm in the middle of the day, but cool mornings and evenings. We camped last night 10 miles from Cottonwood and had no water. The Platte River is some distance away.



ELIZABETH KEYES STRATTON  
First School Teacher in Fort Collins, Colorado

Friday, May 25. We are camped at Fremont Springs; had to drive some distance to get water. There is a doctor in the train but I have not heard of any sickness. We passed an ox train this morning. A little six-year-old girl was driving one of the teams.

Saturday, May 26. Yesterday we crossed O'Fallon's Bluffs. Here the bluffs come quite near the river and the road goes over



them for a mile or such a matter. It was hard for the horses as the wind blew strongly. The wind blows from all quarters and is cold enough for great coats and shawls.

Monday. We stayed over Sunday near Alkali Station and it is well named. The ground all around is covered with a white incrustation looking like ice. The train had a stampede of mules Sunday morning. They ran back more than 20 miles. A very valuable one came near dying from drinking too soon. We are right in the worst place for Indians, but have seen none yet, though heard there were some in the neighborhood. Some of the train members are nervous. This noon we came to Star ranch, the old California crossing of the Platte.

Tuesday. We are almost to Julesburg. For several miles the road has been over the bluffs, very sandy and hard on the horses. Mr. Peterson is about sick and I have a very sore throat. This is the edge of Colorado, 180 miles from our destination. If not detained we should soon be at our journey's end. Our Oregon friends expect to cross the river here. There is no timber along here at all. Wood sells for \$100 per cord. A government wood train dropped enough to supply us.

Wednesday. Our train split up here, a portion to cross the river and go up the North Platte, consequently we were detained to wait the arrival of teams enough to make up a train with 36 men. Fortunately our quota was filled last night and this morning we were glad enough to leave Julesburg. The roads are bad, the sand deep. Julesburg is like Fort Kearney, most officers' quarters. Buildings are going up on the other side of the river. Corn \$5.75 per bushel, dried apples 40c, bacon 38c a pound. Dealers have no conscience as regards skinning emigrants.

Thursday, May 24. Had dreadful roads out of Julesburg, the sand hills so bad the horses could hardly pull through them. We heard in the afternoon at a ranch terrible stories about Indians. It was said they were on the north side of the Platte, and on the Republican they stopped and plundered a government train and stage. We shall be glad when we get out of the Indians' reach. Last night we had the first rain on the Platte, though it threatens to storm every night. We have not had such hard winds lately as we had farther down the Platte. A man here wants to go almost up to Collins with us so we shall have some company if we can take him.

Saturday, May 26. We had quite an adventure yesterday. The Overland coach came and let the passengers out at the foot of a hill as we were out walking. A gentleman asked Will where he was from and finding that he was acquainted with me he came on

up to speak with me. Though I had only casually known him at home, yet meeting him here seemed like seeing an old friend. We had time for but a few words when the stage driver called, "All aboard."

This morning a member of our train killed an antelope, the first that anyone had been fortunate enough to get. He generously divided the meat among us. Mr. Peterson thinks it an old antelope and very thin, though not "sour grapes" by any means. We passed "Fort Wicked" today. The place is well fortified against Indian attacks. The corral for cattle is enclosed with adobe and has portholes. The house and buildings are also enclosed. This was the only stage station left on the road after the Indian raid of a year ago. It is thirty miles from there to the Junction.

Sunday, May 27. We camped last night nine miles east of the Junction, and still we have not a glimpse of the royal Rocky Mountains, the envious clouds still keeping their thick veil down over them. We hope soon to be near enough to behold the mountains face to face in spite of the clouds or caps. We passed the Junction without being halted, left our train and came on kiting and now, hurrah, for Collins. If no preventing providence intervenes we shall soon end our tedious trip. We still hear marvelous tales of Indian depredations which as near as we can trace them up are like the three black crows.

Monday, May 28. Wonderful to tell! We had a genuine snow storm last night. We got on swimmingly yesterday, roads fairly good. Got to Fremont's Orchard when it began to snow thick and fast. It had been growing cold all day and we had been putting on extra coats and shawls till we were wrapped up for winter. We got our tent pitched before it snowed enough to wet the grass. The men and horses had a bad time of it, but we had nice wood and had a hot supper on the table. It snowed several inches but is thawing and we will start on this morning. There is considerable timber in Fremont's Orchard, but not fruit trees—all cottonwoods.

Tuesday, May 29. Had to cross some terrible sand hills yesterday and today but are finally at the ferry. No immediate prospects of crossing but hope for the best. We are so near the mountains that they loom up considerable. They look to be near but are over 30 miles away, I suppose. Fount Peterson shot an antelope and we are waiting patiently for it to be brought in so we could cook some of the meat for dinner. It is quite vexatious to have to stop here instead of keeping on to Aunty's (Mrs. E. Stone) which we could reach by noon tomorrow if not detained here.

Wednesday. The ferry boat has not arrived and our visitor, Mr. Knute Nelson, went up to Latham Station Tuesday evening



and found that the horses could ford the Platte there and that there was a skiff in which we could carry our things across. Latham is five miles above. We picked up and started, having decided not to wait for the ferry. While we were on the way a thunder cloud arose. The wind blew cold and in about an hour it hailed, snowed and rained as severely as I had ever witnessed. The storm was of short duration. The men put up the tents and we got dinner. After dinner the men began taking the things across the river with a will and by sunset we were on the home side of the Platte in good spirits, but tired. The wagon was taken across one wheel at a time—some job.

Thursday, May 31. In the night there was another rain storm. They tell about its being dry here, but we have had more rain than we wanted. This morning the mountains were beautiful. The snowy range glows pure and white in the sunlight above the black hills. We are on the Cache la Poudre River which rises in the snowy range and flows past us. The water is fine and cool and refreshing to drink. Mr. Nelson, whose things we brought from the Junction, left us five miles from the Platte on a ranch. And there Mr. Peterson met a man right from Aunty Stone's. He said she had been worried about us. We are at noon today within 12 or 13 miles of Collins. We hope to get through tonight if the roads are not too bad.

Friday, June 1. Arrived safely at Collins last night after a hard drive, but could not think of stopping so near. Found Aunty Stone well. She has a very comfortable home for this country. There are three large rooms below and chambers for sleeping rooms. She very kindly gave me her spare room and says I can consider it my private room. It has an ingrain carpet, nice bed, windows affording a nice sunset view of the hills and the pretty Cache la Poudre.

We are all very tired tonight. Mrs. Peterson and I have done a large washing, the accumulation of so many weeks for so many persons. Aunty is busy with her increases of family. She already has eight officers as regular boarders besides the men who are at work on Fount Peterson's photograph gallery. The officers are very anxious for him to begin taking pictures.

Saturday, June 2. I enjoy it here very much. My aunt does all in her power to make it pleasant, and if I and Will keep well shall not regret the trip across the plains in a covered wagon.