

The Diary of David F. Spain

Gregory's Grubstakers At The Diggings

Edited by JOHN D. MORRISON*

In the early spring of 1859, a group of eight young men from South Bend, Indiana, left their homes and families to join the rush to the "Pikes Peak" gold regions. Of this group (Wilkinson Defrees, Archibald Defrees, Charles Zigler, William Duey, Richard Bright, John Wall, David Wall and David F. Spain), only the Wall brothers had had previous mining experience, being among the California gold seekers of 1850.¹

After being joined at Omaha by John Zigler and W. E. Chess, the party crossed to the "gold fields" via the Platte River Route, and arrived in Denver City on April 30. Determined to make the most of their opportunity, the well-provisioned group moved into the "rusty, ragged" mountains, ignoring the hundreds who were streaming back east mumbling "Pikes Peak humbug."

Within a few days, David Wall had grubstaked² an improvident Georgia miner, John H. Gregory,³ who was convinced that he knew where the precious metal could be found. Accompanied by members of the recently arrived South Bend party, Gregory made his famous strike of May 6, 1859, a strike destined to alter the course of early Colorado history.

Transporting their provisions deeper into the mountains, the South Bend party split into two groups⁴ for mining purposes, and were soon among the very few "Pikes Peakers" washing out gold in paying quantities.

The diary which follows was kept by David F. Spain, a young man of twenty-nine years at the time of his trip to the gold regions.

*John D. Morrison, Assistant State Historian of Colorado since 1956, is a graduate of the University of Colorado. Through Mr. Morrison's correspondence with Mrs. Thomas E. Stanfield, granddaughter of David F. Spain and Curator of the Northern Indiana Historical Society, he obtained, as a gift for The State Historical Society of Colorado, this exceedingly valuable diary kept by David F. Spain, and copies of letters written by Spain to his wife during Colorado's early Gold Rush Days. Previous historians and newspapermen, including Horace Greeley, have mentioned David K. Wall's party of Indiana prospectors to which Spain belonged, but no detailed account of the mining experiences of these companions of John H. Gregory has been published, to our knowledge. Historian Jerome S. Smiley said in 1901 that Gregory's discovery in May, 1859, "proved to be the richest lode ever found in Colorado, and one of the richest ever known in the world."—*Editor*.

¹For a brief account of the activities of David K. Wall, see: W. B. Vickers, *History of Denver*, O. L. Baskin & Co., Chicago, 1880, p. 646.

²A statement dated Nov. 30, 1899, appearing in *The Rocky Mountain News* of Dec. 5, 1899, and signed by David K. Wall, states: . . . "I moved my wagon to the base of the Table mountain, three miles below where Golden is, the other South Bend boys with me, John Gregory heard of my being an old Californian, and came to see me. He had wintered at that place, what was then known as the Arapahoe Bar. In our conversation he told me that he had been in the mountains and had found light prospects in which was some fine gold in the little creek at the foot of what is now known as Black Hawk mountain, but not in sufficient quantity to induce him to think that it would pay for the toil of looking further. From his report I was induced to believe that [it] would be expedient perhaps pay to have him return and make a new search, but he was rather despondent and refused to go, giving as the most important reason that he was out of provisions and that he had been living on venison for ten days. I told him that my commissary was at a low ebb and more precious than gold, but in the case I would supply his needs in that respect if he would return and take the South Bend boys with him and make a new search, which he finally concluded to do, more, perhaps, for the opportunity of filling his stomach than faith. The result of it was that one of the best, if not the best, gold leads that was ever discovered was done by the Western eloquence that I gave him, and resulted in the early development of the mines of our great state. . . ."

³For an interesting account of Gregory, see: "The Elusive Figure of John H. Gregory," by Caroline Bancroft, *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XX, No. 4 (July, 1943), 121-135. Also, see: "The Perplexing Case of John H. Gregory," by Margaret I. Meaders, *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XL, No. 2 (June, 1956), 113-129.

⁴*Early Records of Gilpin County, Colorado*, by T. M. Marshall, Boulder, 1920, pp. 5-6.

Running from March 8, 1859, through July 27, 1859, this diary reveals better than any cold summary of facts, the hardships, the laughs, the homesickness and the elation felt by these pioneer gold seekers. The diary is printed here exactly as written, except that spaces have been left between sentences where they did not exist in the diary.

The Colorado Magazine wishes to express its gratitude to Mrs. Thomas E. Stanfield of South Bend, Indiana, granddaughter of David F. Spain, who graciously gave the original diary and photographs to the Society, and to Miss Katherine Kenehan of Denver, who thoughtfully informed us of the diary's existence.

The letters of David F. Spain, written to his wife Ella (Mary Ella Henkle Spain) during this same period, will be published in the April, 1958, issue of *The Colorado Magazine*.—J.D.M.

Tues. March 8, 1859. Left So Bend for Pikes Peak arrived in Chicago @ 7.50 left C[hicago] for Iowa City @ 11 My fare from S.B. to C 1\$ from Chicago to Iowa City 2¼\$ All in good spirits took a cup coffee and a jolly old Smoke out of Smithmeyers' pork [sic] pipe

Wed. March 9. Arrived at Iowa City at 1 o'clock P.M. after a long tedious ride, of 14 hours matters here look rather bilious. The roads are almost impassable. it makes us feel rather blue, guess we will try it though, day after tomorrow

Thur. March 10. Unshipped our Waggons-loaded them. paid a man 2/-[sic] to haul it to the Barn. had Wild Goose for Dinner. it has rained very nearly all day. Mud comes about 3 inches below the Coat Tail. Charlie [Zigler] Arch [Defrees] and Ike Calvert went out to Shoot Ducks. treated the Boys Pickles. Pronounced them extra. Will sleep in the Waggon tonight

Fri. March 11. Last night slept in Waggon had rather an interesting time, having for room mates Horses, Cows, Calves, oxen, and Dogs. This morning mended Waggon cover, after Dining with our friend Ike Calvert went up into the City Saw a couple Ladies dressed in Bloomer Costume." Bill [Duey] myself followed them 3 squares, for a fair sight

Sat. March 12. Finished rigging our Waggons cleaned and greased my Boots After Dinner Went in Company with Ike Will Duey Charly Dave [Wall] and John [Wall] two miles out the city to see a Horse race the Boys took their Guns Shot several times at geese and Ducks, but killed none, had lots fun

Sun. March 13. Up by times. This morning Doned my Red Shirt My Tall Boots and Bill & myself went to church, heard an old-fashioned Methodist Sermon took Dinner with Bloom at the Crummy House. Wrote to my wife & John Zigler. If not

⁵A South Bend, Indiana, merchant. Information courtesy of Mrs. Thomas E. Stanfield of South Bend, Indiana.

⁶"... a style of dress for women introduced about 1849 by Mrs. Elizabeth Smith Miller and adopted and publicly recommended by Amelia Jenks Bloomer in 1851. It was intended to effect a complete revolution in female dress and add materially to the health and comfort of her sex." *The Encyclopedia Americana*, 1952, Vol. 4, 115b-116.



DAVID F. SPAIN

raining tomorrow we start out. Weather looks Bilious. fearful of rain

Mon. March 14. Started this morning for Omaha stalled before we went one hundred yards. I have often heard of Bad roads but this day caps anything I ever saw about sundown Stuck & had to unload. fell down both hands in mud to the Elbows. I can tell you now it made me think Dam it

Tues. March 15. Staid last night at a farm House Slept on the floor Mans name is Wolfe Started this Morning Roads still awful, stuck several times the last time, in sight of the Town of Homestead. this time completely discouraged me. One Horse gone entirely. We lifted out finally traveled 13½ miles. Went to bed in the Waggon

Wed. March 16. Started from Homestead 8 o'clock Roads quite passable. Passed Maringo about 11 o'clock Stopped on the bank of a little Stream and fed. Dined on hard bread and herring, traveled 21 miles and put up at the Ohio House for the night. had an Excellent supper on Ham Eggs & Coffee which I relished finely

Thur. March 17. Staid last with Mr Dunning. Snowing a perfect hurricane. been sitting around the stove cracking Jokes Now for a Start. traveled 8 miles through miserable black mud stoped with C. W. Winchester for night. been snowing greater part the day. prospect for a fair day tomorrow The Boys all sitting round the Stove anxiously waiting for Supper

Fri. March 18. Traveled 14 miles today over very bad Roads. passed through a little one Horse Town by the name of Brooklin. Not feeling very well I tried all over town to get a Cup of Tea or Coffee 'Divil the bit' could I get Stoped for the night at the Green Mountain House kept by an old "Down East Yankee"

Sat. March 19. Traveled 28 miles part the time over passable Roads. Some very long hills Everything went off right except the last few miles Charley Drove into a slew, and stuck as is our luck had unload part the things. Stood in water to my Knees Caps Mud from head to foot. by the time we got out which took a solid hour this day I shall not forget very soon

Sun. March 20. Left Newton @ 9 o'clock A.M. Made "Skunk Bottom" by noon fed our Horses Corn our faces hard bread. then put out to cross the Skunk. and of all the bottoms I ever saw Skunk bottom is in every sense of the term the bottom of bottoms. trailed through mud & water for one mile & half

Mon. March 21. traveled 21½ miles today without much trouble Roads pretty good, passed through Des Moines and Camped 2½ miles West of the City ate a hearty Supper and shall retire shortly. There is some 6 or 8 teams camped near us

Tues. March 22. Tonight we roost in the little one Horse Town of Adel. We have traveled 22 miles today part of the time over what I call Darned mean Roads Just as we were crossing Raccoon River D K Walls team got badly Slewed. All hands pitched into mud & water waist deep & helped David on dry land O what a laugh we had at him

Wed. March 23. Traveled through some of the most splendid Country I have seen since left Iowa City. The Roads are still improving very fast. Our Horses being Somewhat worn we have concluded to lay over one day at Longsdale inn 1¼ miles West of Morrisburg in Guthrie County

Thur. March 24. Laid over at Longsdale Inn. a pleasant little country tavern situated on an eminence overlooking a beautiful Valley through which winds the South fork of the Coon River. This is the third Stream of that name we have crossed the North South and Middle Coon

Fri. March 25. Today we have traveled over a perfect Sea of Rolling Prairie for 12 miles we were out of sight of tree or House, and tonight we for the first time camped and cooked our own "grub" This my first Experience in the art of Cooking, Succeeded first-rate. Not overly clean but it tasted almighty good

Sat. March 26. Left Camp at 6 o'clock this morning, went Short distance Shot a fine Prairie Chicken Several of the Boys fired and got 3 out of the same flock, our rout was through a Prairie, with scarce a house in Sight all day. Tonight we cleaned our chicken for breakfast

Sun. March 27. Campfire lit this morning by 4 o'clock breakfast over and train in Motion by ½ past 5 o'clock. traveled 26 miles through one continuous Prairie. without house or tree passed through the town of Lewis Camped on a little stream Supper over, and ready for bed

Mon. March 28. Off this [morning] by the time it was light had a stormy night but Slept quite comfortable. it has been snowing a[nd] blowing hard all day We Stopped at a Stage Station 10 miles from the Bluffs for Dinner, Arrived at the Bluffs at 5 o'clock. Stopped at Robison House for the Night. Wilk, gone on to Omaha to See if the Boys have come. Bluffs are rather Muddy at present

Tues. March 29. John [Zigler] and Will [Chess] arrived this morning all glad to see them got a letter from Ell also one from Father, all well at home which is good news for me Expect to cross the Missouri tomorrow Shall probably Camp in this Vicinity a few days to recruit our teams

Wed. March 30. Rugged up our teams and drove over to Omaha where expect to remain until the first April John sent me back to the Bluffs to by him a Horse wrote a letter home and mailed it and now for bed.

Thur. March 31. Got up this Morning by Daylight took my Horses and Rode to the Ferry supposing I could cross over without [waiting] but greatly to My displeasure had to wait 3 hours for the Old Steamer to come over and nearly frozen to Boot find any amount of teams here starting for the mines I noticed a man & two dogs hitched to a cart John Charly &

myself have all got to pile into the Waggon tonight its getting quite cool & windy

Fri. April 1. John & Charly & myself Slept a little in the Waggon had hard night of it last night, Started from Omaha about noon had not been on the Road an hour, until it began snowing and continued up to this time, and is Still snowing hard. it rather "gets us down"

Sat. April 2. This Morning about 11 oclock, it quit snowing and cleared off nice a[nd] warm we all hope now for fair weather. The Boys are all anxious to leave Old Skinflint. As soon as it will do to travel we may go in the morning. Saw three nice deer a few moments ago

Sun. April 3. We left Orient, Old Skinflint's Town this morning we went as far as Elkhorn & put up again in consequence partly of another snow storm. it 'beats all nater' how it Snows and that too in April We found the Elkhorn Hotel a very pleasant place kept by a Mr Stoms Will Duey & I will sleep together

Mon. April 4. Laid over today at Elkhorn in order to ascertain the prospect for crossing the Rawhide its an awful Slue and we shall have trouble in getting over Will Chess Wilk & I visited 3 Indian Lodges (Pawnees) and of all the filthy brutes with human forms, these are ahead.

Tues. April 5. Crossed the Great Elkhorn bottom took us till dark to get every thing safe over I think I wade about 2 miles in water from Knee deep up to my Coat Tail I cant Say that I admire such traveling but suppose I shall have to Grin and bear it.

Wed. April 6. We traveled from the Horn 30 miles to North Bend the Land Lord from the Horn followed us for the full amt of pay we refused he threatened us with the Indians gathered fifty or more we still refused. he then proposed a compromise, begged off and we paid him three Dollar, give him a cussing & left

Thur. April 7. We left North Bend early got along finely until 4 oclock in the afternoon we got into a Slue Stuck got out went 2 miles and camped for the night. Boys all got a regular Ducking have rather a poor opinion of Slues

Fri. April 8. Traveled from 2 miles this side Slue, to Loop [Loup] fork. Camped on the opposite in a beautiful cottonwood grove. There was some 10 teams beside our train of 4. we cooked a pot of Pork and Beans to do over Sunday

Sat. April 9. Started from camp at 5 oclock, went 2 miles up Loop fork on wrong road, went back & got on right road

traveled over beautiful country. Met a government train of 11 Six mule teams carried our goods over Prarie Creek what I should call a Bore got my feet wet. had bad luck generally.

Sun. April 10. Had to unload again today and ferry our traps over Big Slue in a waggond Box paid a man a dollar and Drove to valley and stoped to dine and feed Camped in the open Prairie at sundown passed rather a cold disagreeable night

Mon. April 11. Left Camp Early came near being Slued at the start passed over some magnificent country also passed the Lone tree, peeled some Bark and registered our names this has been a warm bright day looks rather rainified tonight hope it wont for this is my night to stand guard

Tues. April 12. Stood guard last night till 12 oclock and as my luck would have it the rain did not come until just as my hour for guard Expired. I slept fine we passed Stage Station 35 miles from the Fort at the crossing of Wood River traveled 8 miles today and camped on Wood River

Wed. April 13. Left Wood River Camp by daylight crossed the Valley again to the Platt. Made the Platt crossing by camping time Crossed part way over and camped on a little Island in the middle, in Sight of Fort Kearney. Saw the American [flag] waving from the top

Thur. April 14. Crossed West Platt this morning. our teams got stuck in quick sand in the deep water Boys got out and lifted at the Wheels and gave us another start Wilks team got in the same fix and we got them out same way

Fri. April 15. Yesterday left the Fort at 5 oclock came out 17 miles and camped on South Platt Boys have been chaseing Buffalo & antelope today but got none of either We have traveled 30 miles to day and camped again on South Platt This is my night to stand guard

Sat. April 16. Camped last night on an Island in the Platt. This morning the Sun arose bright traveled 25 miles over a nice country came in the location of Cheyenne Indians they followed us to camp Staid till after supper, we gave them [something] to eat & they left peacably

Sun. April 17. Just after breakfast 6 antelope Made their appearance in front of our camp Will Duey and Arch Defrees went out. got a shot at them but did not kill. They made for the Bluffs at full speed

⁷A large cottonwood tree located near what is now Central City, Nebraska, on which travellers would carve their names. It was destroyed in 1865. See: *Nebraska History*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2 (June, 1950), 147-153.

Mon. April 18. Had to go 35 miles today without water which made it very bad for the Horses passed the Battle ground between Gen Harney* and the Cheyenne Climbed a high hill fired a Salute with My Revolver and returned

Tues. April 19. Nothing strange happened today. We have traveled over rather monotonous country not a tree or shrub have we seen. the chief & his wife of the Ogallaly Band of Sioux came to us while at Dinner today he is rather a fine looking Indian

Wed. April 20. This has been a Very changable day. The forenoon was quite warm about noon the Sky became overcast afternoon looked quite like rain in the evening it commenced raining tonight I & Charley have to stand guard I fear we shall have a *very* disagreeable night of [it] for the air feels quite like snow now.

Thur. April 21. Last night was one with me long to be remembered. Charley & I went ¼ mile from camp to herd the stock the wind blew a hurricane and the rain turned to snow. The Horses stamped and in running after them I lost my hat. we found after a time considerably frightened we [thought] there was either Indians or Wolves about. A large Wolf past the camp about 2 o'clock but I was so cold I could not handle a gun so he escaped

Fri. April 22. Last night was a stinger Wilk D—— was on guard in the afterpart of the night the Horses were very unruly consequently Wilk "swore some" today has been rather more pleasant than yesterday Bad News from the Mines "No Gold" and people starving by the hundreds so says rumor, it gives us all the Blues

Sat. April 23. Still meet a great many poor ragged starveing and disheartened Packers Begging their way back to the States. we give all that ask a little. We still keep going ahead and intend to go through now that we are started and see for ourselves

Sun. April 24. We traveled over a Very Barren desolate looking country. The land perfectly saturated with alkali [alkali] so that its dangerous to Stop with Stock at all we Dinnereed on a little flat where there was a Spaniard herding 40 head ponies We saw one of the[m] try his Skill at Lassoing

Mon. April 25. Today we camped at noon on account of being caught in a Thunderstorm we camped on the Platt at

*This probably refers to The Battle of Ash Hollow, Sept. 3, 1855, between Harney and the Sioux under Little Thunder. For an account of this battle, see: *Life of General William S. Harney*, by L. U. Reavis, Bryan, Brand & Co., St. Louis, 1878, pp. 246-267.

the mouth of a deep Ravine it being my night to stand guard again of course it stormed. my luck always

Tues. April 26. Left our camp at 7 o'clock after an hours hunt for the Horses Stopped & Dinnereed on the Plain camped this Evening in a nice little Grove Wood being plenty I Boiled a pot of Pork and Beans

Wed. April 27. This morning early Dick and John went ahead the teams and killed a fine large Antelope after they came in the rest of us went out and Will Duey and I killed a fine Buck & Charley killed what we call a "JackAss" Rabbit had Antelope for dinner

Thur. April 28. We have been in sight of the Mountains for several days today being cloudy they are entirely hidden from view we left Douglass City⁹ at Sunrise, passed St. Vrain's fort at 9 o'clock camped at noon 6 miles this side shall get into Auraria tomorrow the news from there today is good

Fri. April 29. Will Duey and I stood guard last night till 12 o'clock the Wolves howled and we let em we traveled within 9 miles of Auraria and camped for Dinner Drove 3 miles farther, found good grass and Wood and Stopped for the night tomorrow we make a grand entry into the city of Auraria

Sat. April 30. Left Camp Early. Arrived in Denver City about 10 o'clock found a cluster of unfinished Houses on one side Cherry Creek called Denver on the other Auraria find Emigrants most all fixing for home we shall cross Cherry and prepare for prospecting with but *Small* hope of success

Sun. May 1. Crossed the Platt Enroute for Arrappahoe¹⁰ arrived there at 10 A.M. the prospect for Mineing not very flattering. I am not much encouraged by the prospect. We have secured a very comfortable double cabin Shall move in tonight

Mon. May 2. Are getting along quite nicely in our cabin like it much better than camping out have been prospecting got about 10 cts for a half days hard Washing dont pay a bit we shall try the Mountains

Tues. May 3. Seven or Eight Miles high up in the Mountains. Just got through Eating a cold bite Wilk and John are down in a small stream near by prospecting guess they have not got "the color" as yet. This is the most romantic spot I

⁹This "city" was located at the junction of the Thompson River and the South Platte River. It never did materialize beyond a few tents. See: LeRoy R. Hafen, *Overland Routes to the Goldfields*, Southwest Historical Series, The Arthur H. Clark Co., Glendale, California, 1942, Vol. XI, 159.

¹⁰Arrappahoe City (Arrappahoe) was organized November 29, 1858, on Clear Creek about two miles east of Golden. *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2 (April, 1955), 84fn.



PORTION OF SPAIN DIARY.

have seen it Suits me. had no luck prospecting did find color now for a long walk to our Cabin.

Wed. May 4. Had an interesting tramp home from the Mountains. Charley Arch and Wilk started for the Mountains again to prospect another spot.¹¹ if that fails then for the states again Baked Soda Biscuit this morning for the first time had first rate luck except burning my hand badly

Thur. May 5. Today Will Duey & myself have been Running a Sluice. they call it have washed out the Enormous Sum of \$3.80 half of which we get being 95 cts each. This sluicing is what I term labor

Fri. May 6. Up this morning by the time the sun was an hour high put out and run the sluice till 10 o'clock then took a cold bite went up to see Dave Wall he has quite a nice garden¹² it rained and we quit

Sat. May 7. Rained all the forenoon. So we staid in our Cabin till about 1 o'clock. when Will Duey Will Chess and myself took our Guns went up to the mountains to hunt Antelope Saw two Antelope & one Black Tail Deer which we scared from his hiding place by rolling Rocks downhill

Sun. May 8. This morning finds me feeling Bluer than any-time since I left Home I am really HomeSick The Boys got in from the Mountains and report good Diggings. Now we have got to Pack our provisions 30 miles farther over the worst kind of a Mountain road. I am worn out with hard travel

Mon. May 9. up by daylight packing our Horses with provision for the Mountain Diggings Off by 8 o'clock camped about 13 miles out and this has been the most fatiguing days travel since I left Old South Bend our road has been up the steepest Kind of Mountains and down into Rocky Ravines. Spare me from another day like this I was completely given out when we camped

¹¹Although Gregory is not mentioned in this passage, this must have been the expedition which led to the famous strike of May 6, 1859. As O. J. Hollister says, ". . . he [Gregory] prevailed on Wilkes DeFrees, of South Bend, Indiana, to accompany him back into the Mountains. They reached the spot in a tedious journey of three days over the hills and ridges. This little party is hardly less an object of interest than Magellan seeking with a will of iron . . . to circumnavigate the globe; or than Columbus . . . sailing . . . through unknown seas to discover a new world." (O. J. Hollister, *The Mines of Colorado*, Springfield, Mass., 1867, p. 62.) Another account of this strike may be found in: J. C. Smiley, *History of Denver*, Denver, 1901, p. 261.

¹²"In coming down from the Mountains a few days since, we took a look at the farm of James [sic] K. Wall & Co., situated at the west foot of the Table Mountain, on Clear Creek, and were truly gratified to notice the rapid progress of garden and farm produce. . . . Friend Wall has a fine farm and stock ranch, and will ere long have a pleasant and beautiful mountain home." *Rocky Mountain News*, June 18, 1859, p. 4, c. 2.

"David Wall's farm of a few acres on Clear Creek was the entering wedge that opened to the world the new empire of agriculture that Colorado was destined to present—in itself a source of wealth even greater than its sources of gold and silver." "David K. Wall," *The Sons of Colorado*, Vol. One, No. Twelve (May, 1907), 19.

For another account of D. K. Wall's contributions to Colorado agriculture and, more specifically, irrigation, see: *History of Agriculture in Colorado, 1858-1926*, by Alvin T. Steinel, State Agricultural College, Fort Collins, 1926, pp. 180-183.

Tues. May 10. This morning Dick¹³ & myself took each a gun and walked ahead of the Train to Shoot Elk. got lost wandered over Mountain up Ravine & at last nearly tired out got back to the Trail I never traveled over such a Road. Very Romantic but awful tiresome

Wed. May 11. This is our first day in the mines we are building a cabin and preparing to go into it right for Wilk thinks there is a speculation in these old ragged Rocky Hills. wont I be glad if I can take back a nice little sum

Thur. May 12. Still at work at our Cabin find it more of a job than we expected as it is or will be the first mansion in the place, we claim the right of nameing it So I proposed "Hoosier City" as an appropriate name from the fact of its being built by Hoosier Boys. Now for a nights lodging [in] our half built Cabin

Fri. May 13. Moved our Traps over to our New Cabin last night had a hard nights rest it stormed all night. This morning the Snow on this side of the Mountain was 3 inches deep. and kept storming till noon the afternoon we spent in building a chimney. Tonight we shall be quite comfortable

Sat. May 14. Today Will and I have been finishing our Cabin, chunking and Daubing it, and makeing a bed to sleep on, We think we have a pretty cofortuble bed, it consists of quakin Asp Poles Pine branches & grass, and our blankets on top Will and I pitched in with our hands, and concluded we were *some* Daubers.

Sun. May 15. This is the first Sabbath that I have had a chance to keep since I left home. And this I have kept much as I use to by taking walks Reading &c I read 15 Chapters in my little *Lillies*¹⁴ Bible. I think a great deal about home but feel encouraged with a fine prospect of makeing some money

Mon. May 16. Got up this morning and by request of Wilk helped to run the *Whip Saw* until and of all the labour I ever performed this is by far the hardest. I would not Saw another day if I were sure of 10 dollars at night. this afternoon we cut & carried timber off Mountain

Tues. May 17. Have been half sick today from the simple fact that I worked to almighty hard with that everlasting Whip Saw if ever I run with *that* Machine again then split

¹³This is the last reference to Richard L. Bright in the diary. He returned to Indiana for his family, and came back to Colorado with them in early December, 1859. See: *Colorado Argonauts of 1858-1859*, Henrietta E. Bromwell, 1926. This non-published work may be found in the Western History section of The Denver Public Library.

¹⁴Lillie [Spain Derr] was the daughter of David F. Spain, born in 1853, and the mother of Mrs. Thomas E. Stanfield, the donor of this diary.



"THIS LOG HOUSE WAS THE FIRST ONE IN THE MOUNTAINS AT PIKES PEAK. BUILT BY D. F. SPAIN, WILL CHESSE, ARCH AND WILK DEFREES, CHARLES AND JOHN W. ZIGLER IN THE YEAR 1859. PRESENTED BY J. W. ZIGLER TO LILLIE SPAIN DERR." REMARKS ON BACK OF ORIGINAL PHOTO.

me the Boys got in from Town today and brot me three letters *golly* wasnt I glad

Wed. May 18. Still under the weather but feel some better than yesterday. This forenoon I spent in fixing up Shelves in our Cabin. This afternoon assisted the Boys in rigging our washer we washed 4 sacks of Dirt & mud from present appearance[?] it aint "all right"

Thur. May 19. Have been running our Sluice all day think we have saved some Gold, but don't know how much as yet One thing I do know though that its Darned hard work toating Dirt 100 yards down a steep Mountain it *ought* to pay awful *well*

Fri. May 20. Washed out 21 dollars yesterday Have been putting the *old* machine through on the fast line today and have done considerable better taken out 70 Dollars. There came in quite a lot more of Hoosiers today "Let em Come"

Sat. May 21. All hands were out and at by times this morning, but Will and John were down with the Ague by noon which left Charley and I to run the Sluice alone we run through Sixty Dollars but this Evening I felt awfully under the weather. I worked to hard

Sun. May 22. I awoke this morning as I expected. quite unwell, feel rather Agueish, it makes me feel Blue for how can I afford to be Sick when John & Will are both Ailing. I feel the want of my wife more when sick than at any other time

Mon. May 23. Felt quite better today worked study [steady] and hard all day long and at [night] had the exquisite pleasure of knowing that we had washed out 90 Dollars, All I ask is that we may be able to keep it up till Sept

Tues. May 24. Worked hard all day and at night found that our Dirt had not been paying So we did not Retort, if it don't pay better tomorrow we shall tap our upper claim that infernal Mexican flour gives *me* trouble. I dont fancy it

Wed. May 25. Our lower claim kind o give out. So we tapped our upper claim found the Vein and got 5 Dollars first pan. We Run the Sluice this afternoon & took 294\$—Dollars. that makes Dave [Spain] Laugh

Thur. May 26. Today we worked like Bucks. And by the "Powers of Mud" we took out of *Old Mother Earth* Four hundred and Thirty Dollars. *Well* to say we all felt good don't do the Subject Justice. Hurrah for the Hoosiers

Fri. May 27. Well Be dads the Old Matron "*Shelled out*" big again today she gave Four hundred and Ninety five (495)

Dollars if that [doesn't] beat all 'nater then Dave knows nothing about fried Wool. Now if Saturday turns out in proportion we will call it good¹⁸

Sat. May 28. Started our Sluice this morning early & agreed as it was Saturday, and all hands haveing put in a good weeks work to "*Dry Up*" at 3 o'clock and prepare for a good Sundays rest, We took out Three hundred & forty Dollars

Sun. May 29. This day Mostly Spent in writing letters one to Ella one to Father and one to Uncle Dave a Very pleasant Employment if it did take them an age to go to their destination sold our lower claim today for 3500\$

Mon. May 30. Put into it hard to day felt more fatigued than at any other time since been mineing, but feel pretty well paid even at that, for we took out Three hundred Dollars of the Very nicest kind of Gold. All I ask is let her continue so

Tues. May 31. Today we had in the forenoon rather poor Dirt in the after part of the day it was better we took out one hundred & Seventy Six Dollars we were all taken in the Evening with Violent Diarhea John Charly & myself were not able to do much

Wed. June 1. Was not able to work at all. had not strength sufficient Billy [Duey] Run the *machine* all day alone Charley John & myself being invalids Billy took about 3¼ ozs made it pay pretty well considering

Thur. June 2. Our Pit being in bad Shape today we did not get down to pay Dirt till almost night consequently we only took out Eighty Six Dollars in Dust today. We think tomorrow of geting in about 250 or 300, if no preventing providence

Fri. June 3. This has not been a Very bad day for One Horse miners we have taken out Two hundred and Twenty five Dollars in the "Pure Rino" one forth of that pays for a nice little *Pony* that I Bought for *Ned*¹⁹ have sent him to *Walls Ranch*

Sat. June 4. All hands out and at it by ½ past Six put in like good Hoosier Boys do out here. and to[ok] out one lb

¹⁸The following article appeared in the *Rocky Mountain News*, May 28, 1859, p. 2, c. 1. ". . . Crossing the mountains to the Northward we next reach Quartz creek a tributary of the North fork of Vasquer river. Near the mouth of this stream the first vein of Gold bearing quartz was discovered by J. H. Gregory, of Georgia, on the 6th of May; and much credit is due him for persevering under difficulties having to encounter snow and subsist on what he could shoot with his rifle for two weeks. The vein or lead runs from N.N.E. to S.S.W., crossing the creek and extending an unknown distance into the mountains, it has been traced but a short distance. The first claim from the creek is owned by W. Duey, C. Zigler, J. Zigler, D. T. Spain and making from \$80 to \$100 per day washing with a short sluice. The next three claims are owned by W. Defree, A. Defree, and W. Chess, and making about the same as the former Co. . . . The next two claims are owned by J. H. Gregory working four men using a long sluice and making a little over \$100 per day."

¹⁹Ned [Edgar Henkle Spain] was the son of D. F. Spain, born in 1855.



"LOG SLIDE IN WHICH WE BROUGHT THE ORE FROM THE GOLD MINE TWO HUNDRED FEET ABOVE DOWN TO THE WATER SLUICE. THE ORE BEING TIED IN BUFFALO SKINS." REMARKS ON BACK OF ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPH.

240\$ Dollars. that Makes us Eleven hundred this week thats good enough for "Poor folks" as Dave Wall [says] All I ask is a continuation of the above

Sun. June 5. Well, we have passed rather a pleasant Sabbath in our Mountain Home. we had lots of Company in the forepart of the day in the afternoon John & I visited Doc & Harry at night I sewed a white muslin patch on the seat of my Breeches also on the Knees and the Boys had the impudence to laugh

Mon. June 6. Last night John was quite sick had to get up and Retort numerous times. we went it alone today and took out 242\$ thats all right we cant complain got a letter from mine frau to and it made me feel awful good although it was over a month old

Tues. June 7. We this morning moved our sluice from the lower Ditch farther up the Mountain got it newly rigged with Slats so that we think it will save nearly all the "Spondulix" in the afternoon we made a Box to wash Blankets also made a door to our Cabin

Wed. June 8. This has been a *Big day* for Hoosier City. We were Visited by our friend *Horace Greely*. he called at our Sluice and I was introduced to him and gave him a report of what we had been doing I was a hard looking bird alright though he gave us a fine speech this Evening it made me think of Old Times Greely was followed by two others take it all in all we had a good time¹⁷

Thur. June 9. Run half the day on poor dirt afternoon we got better and the Sluice showed a good color when we cleaned up Dave Wall came up from Arrappahoe Says Neds Poney is doing first rate. *Now for Bed*

Fri. June 10. This morning Bill got [up] and found himself "with the Bellyache" So he could not work Charly John & myself Run the old machine ourselves took Three hundred yesterday John fell off the Three legged Stool. we laughed and he gave it a dry Damn and let it go

Sat. June 11. Yesterday Washed out Two hundred and Twelve Dollars as I have often Said before that is good enough for *poor folks* We were blessed today with a lot of lazy scalliwags standing round the sluice asking all manner of questions. I was tempted to Boot Some of them. how glad its Saturday

Sun. June 12. Washed out 250\$ yesterday This morning

¹⁷For a complete account of Greeley's inspection of the mines, see the "extra" edition of *Rocky Mountain News*, June 11, 1859. This is reprinted in Marshall, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-10.

Bill and I put on our Store Cloths and went up to Mountain City¹⁸ to Church. We listened to the first Religious discourse ever delivered in these Rusty Ragged Old Mountains Twas a good one.

Mon. June 13. Today we put in a New Joint of Sluice and the Tarnal thing didnt work well in the Start and it bothered us all day John Swore a Streak we only got out one hundred & Twenty five Dollars. We'll *make it up*

Tues. June 14. We all agreed this morning that Each one guilty of swearing should be fined 50 cts We took out today Three hundred and Eighty five Dollars. I was summoned on a Jury to day but declined on the ground of haveing to get grub so they took John and Charley

Wed. June 15. I got John down one Dollar & fifty cents for Swearing and he has me 50 cts We have been running the *machine* pretty study today guess we have about the same as yesterday have not retorted yet

Thur. June 16. Took out 246\$ yesterday There was five Men Burned to death a few Miles above us, in Mountain yesterday.¹⁹ Some wretch had set the pines on fire and when a man has to Climb a *Mountain* to get clear of fire he stands a poor chance

Fri. June 17. Put the Old Sluice through today hot as it was tomorrow will be our last run and we will give her fits we sold our fifty feet today for *Ten Thousand Dollars* as soon as that is paid then we are ready to emigrate Eastwards

Sat. June 18. This is our last days Sluicing for the present Mr. Mason²⁰ takes possession on Monday we intend to take times a little more easy than we have in the past four months and I guess we will make just as much

Sun. June 19. Wilk and Will Chess started for home this morning before we were out of Bed.²¹ made us all feel a little Blue to see them off and Bid them Good By. Will Duey and I

¹⁸Mountain City was later absorbed by Central City. *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. IV, No. 3 (May, 1927), 94.

¹⁹A most destructive fire has been raging amongst the pines in the mountains during the past week, in which three men were found burned to death. . . . On Wednesday, June 15, Mr. John N. Sapp, a miner, while prospecting, came upon the bodies of three men having the appearance of miners on a prospecting tour, burned to death. . . . *Rocky Mountain News*, June 25, 1859, p. 1, c. 3.

²⁰The following address was jotted down in the back of D. F. Spain's diary: "W. W. Mason, Harlansburg, Lawrence Co., Pa."

²¹"To the surprise of nearly all our community, two of our fortunate gold hunters returned home last Friday evening—Wilkinson Defrees and W. E. Chess. They have sold out their claims and so have the other South Benders, the other company obtaining \$10,000.00 for theirs, to be paid in weekly instalments. Messrs. Defrees and Chess state that all the other five South Benders will return home in September, after collecting the amounts for which they sold their claims. . . . we think that each of the seven fortunate Delegates from our town to the diggings will be \$5,000.00 to \$8,000.00 richer this fall for their seasons work, if they realize the whole amount for which their claims have been sold. But very few others have made anything like this. . . ." *St. Joseph Valley Register*, South Bend, Indiana, July 21, 1859. Courtesy of Mrs. Thomas E. Stanfield of South Bend.

went to Church & heard a Very good Sermon came home got dinner & finished the day Reading & gassing.

Mon. June 20. Our man Mason was on hand this morning by times Was troubled considerable on account of scarcity of water Will had fuss with Henderson²² Have just had a social game of Eucre, with Bill John & our friend Livermore²³ Now to Bed

Tues. June 21. Myself Bill & Charley put in a part of the day Cleaning & Walling our Spring it is now in *apple pie* order This afternoon Bill & I replenished our Wood pile, went up on top the Mountain and rolled down some big Pine logs. retorted 58\$ and quit

Wed. June 22. Bill & I took a stroll over the South Mountain gained the Sumit and took a Birds Eye View of Gregorys Lead. after feasting our Eyes a few moments on a most beautiful scene we descended on the other side followed around the Spur back to our Cabin Baked apple pie for Dinner & eat it

Thur. June 23. This in part was an uneasy day for us Our men that bought our lower fifty are likely to give us trouble John & Will and I took a long walk up Vasquers fork.²⁴ The huge piles of Rocks far exceeded anything yet, and the wildest scenery & tallest Pines

Fri. June 24. This morning we took claim No. 2 into our own hands the thing still is in an unpleasant shape both Parties now claim the preference. and one threatens to sue for a Verbal contract they claim to have made with John, but we will *show them* different

Sat. June 25. I kept Cabin today while the Boys went up on the Mountain and cut timber to timber up the sides of our claim I got grub for them by the time they were done. This Evening I expected a sure thing on getting a letter from Ella, but none came & I know I never felt more disapointed

Sun. June 26. This has been a Very unpleasant day for me. have had a severe headache all day, and the *Blues to Kill*. all on account of not hearing from Ella I have written to her but don't know where to direct. this is a position I never wish to occupy again

²²A Henderson from Farmington, Indiana, is mentioned in Greeley's report, Marshall, *op. cit.* This is probably the E. W. Henderson mentioned in Samuel Cushman & J. P. Waterman, *The Gold Mines of Gilpin County*, Central City, 1876, p. 15. This man bought and worked the Discovery Claim from Gregory. Hollister, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-65.

²³The Emigrant's Register of the *Rocky Mountain News*, p. 2, c. 4, for May 18, 1859, lists a W. Livermore as arriving from Iowa.

²⁴Clear Creek was often referred to as Vasquez Fork. *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. IX, No. 2 (March, 1932), 49.

Mon. June 27. Finally settled our claim difficulty with Cook & Co²⁵ feel much better satisfied than if we should have went to law Will Duey Charley and I went down to Vasquers fork. and had a *tip top Bath*. felt like a new man again

Tues. June 28. Today John Bill & myself went up Clear Creek fishing for Trout. Saw Several but caught none Spent the most of the day mending cloths running Bullets &c. quite an Excitement among the miners. The Utes have killed two out of three of a party of prospectors on Sunday last²⁶

Wed. June 29. The excitement still increases in regard to the Ute Indians there will an expedition leave tomorrow for *South Park* in quest of the Murderers of Dr. Shank and Kenedy John Wall took Dinner & Supper with us today. John [Zigler] & Bill behaved very badly as they always do when I have company

Thur. June 30. To[day] John and I took a *Big tramp* in a Northwest course, over some of the highest Peaks in or [our] Vicinity We went to a point where we could see Pikes Peak far away to the South and the Snowy Range to Northwest. Came back by the Gunnel Lead²⁷ rested our wearied limbs and came back through Mountain City Home this closes up June

Fri. July 1. This has been a beautiful day. I imagine if I were at home I should have some cherry pie & Whortle Berry Sauce. but nothing but meat & Bread in this Wooden country, but hold, next Tuesday I leave these mountains & a few more days of toil & a few weeks of dusty travel & I hope to land safe in S Bend

Sat. July 2. This has been an exceeding warm day. I took a walk all alone over the Northwest Mountain I rather feared it would not pay, but after gaining the top of the Old Soldier the View off to South & East was so beautiful that I felt richly paid I have washed up my cloths ready for a start home next week

Sun. July 3. Did not rise this morning until quite late. Got our breakfast over and in company with John Charly Tom Reese²⁸ & our friend Geo Simmons²⁹ went down to Clear creek and washed *all* over. Got back too late for Church so we put in the day reading the Register

²⁵In the back of his diary, Spain listed "Geo. Cook & Co." as purchasers.

²⁶For an account of the murder of Dr. J. L. Shank and J. B. Kennedy by the Utes, about 20 miles from Gregory's Diggings, see *Rocky Mountain News*, July 9, 1859, p. 1, c. 2.

²⁷Named for the discoverer, Harry Gunnell, a New York City store clerk. Smiley, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

²⁸This could be the man who was associated with Gregory in the spring of 1860. *Ibid.* p. 262. Also, Bancroft, *op. cit.*, 128-129.

²⁹A Simmons from Chicago, Illinois, is mentioned in Greeley's report. Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Mon. July 4. (Seventeen Seventy Six) 4th of July in the Rocky Mountains who would have supposed that I should be so fortunate as to celebrate the 83d anniversary of American Independence in this wild romantic spot by fireing 15 rounds from our Revolvers Eat a 4th of July Dinner at the Hoosier City Hotel

Tues. July 5. Out of the Mountains *By Jove* and such a trip as I have had Oh my Legs My feet & My Everything how I ache from head to Toe carried our Gold on our backs only about 30 lbs but if it didnt feel like one hundred before we got to the Ranch then Dave lies—thats all

Wed. July 6. If my Poney aint got a Colt I am Darned. I'll give the little cuss to John Wall & Take the Mare home. I milked her Three or four times. first time ever I done any milking. She is a nice one, sure. Well I feel better to think I am out of the Mountains

Thur. July 7. This morning I had an hours chase after Nelly finally caught her after running her down with Johns Poney This afternoon I came with Dave & John Wall out four miles from the ranch to their farm claim helped Dave make hay Shall spend the night here on a hay cock under my blankets

Fri. July 8. Up by daylight Boys sent me up the creek to buy a coffee pot of new milk which with some cold bread constituted our breakfast I got up the Ponies & John Wall & I started for the ranch with a load of Hay got near home & it all fell off and we had a *good time* geting it loaded again

Sat. July 9. Left Walls Ranch at 9 oclock & made Denver by 1 oclock picked up what little provision we wanted went to the Express Office. Fields gave me a Tribune dated 25th June, also a nice Mosquito Bar. Fields³⁰ is a good fellow. left Denver about 3 oclock came out 6 miles to a Spring & camped Charley came this far with us he returns tomorrow

Sun. July 10. All hands astir by 3 oclock breakfast over & on the road by 4 oclock. We all regretted bidding Charley good by but hope we may see him in So Bend this fall "all right" I had a fine chase on *Neds Poney* after a young Antelope We passed Luptons Bents³¹ and St Vrains forts. Came as far as Douglass City and camped. The mosquitoes came near using us up

³⁰Field, Martin, mentioned by Larimer as in charge of the Post Office in Denver (or P. O. Branch of Express Co.) (letter 1859).³¹ *Colorado Argonauts*, *op. cit.*

³¹The phrase "Bent and St Vrains" probably refers to Fort St. Vrain which had been maintained by Bent, St. Vrain & Co. See, *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. V, No. 1 (February, 1928), pp. 11, 15.

³²In May, 1859, Jones, Russell and Company purchased from Hockaday and Liggett the contract for mail transportation from Missouri to Salt Lake City." LeRoy R. Hafen, "Early Mail Service to Colorado, 1858-1859." *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. II, No. 1 (January, 1925), 27.

Mon. July 11. Left Douglass at 4 oclock passed 27 Waggon & 4 hundred oxens all belong to Jones & Russell^r of Leavenworth We camped for Dinner in a nice little Valley under a large cottonwood. Bill had fruit cake for Dinner Left Dinner Camp at 2 oclock got into a nice little cottonwood grove about 8 oclock had a nice place to camp Went to an adjoining camp & heard a Violin

Tues. July 12. Camped last night in Fremonts Orchard. John & I watched till 12 oclock and went to bed in the waggon left camp at 5 ock traveled over Sand hill till afternoon About 4 ock in the afternoon we had one of the most Terriffic Thunder Storms I ever saw we turned too & took it for an hour hard

Wed. July 13. Quite more comfortable traveling since the rain Camped last night at a point where Bill & I stood guard on an Island in the Platt as we went up passed several Chyenne Vilages today all on the North Side the river a number of the[m] came to our Waggon and followed along for Several miles

Thur. July 14. This has been a schorcher Bill & I have for three days been compelled to hunt *Buffalo Chips* to cook with and part of the time could not even find them. and were compelled to supper and breakfast on crackers and Dry Beef several times. I shot a gofer a Gentleman gave us antelope

Fri. July 15. Started from camp at four ock met a team Bound for the Mines one of the persons in Co. was a Mr. Walter Davis. Bro of A. Davis of S B. We gave them all the encouragement we could but fear they will not do much this year We arrived at the Crossing in the afternoon met Sam Good & Co. on their way west

Sat. July 16. Left camp at 3 ocl precisely Came about 12 miles stopped for breakfast one hour. Started out again camped near O'Fallons Bluffs for Dinner put out about 2 ocl again passed a Government Train (bound for Salt Lake) of 27 Waggon Came in the Vicinity of Fremonts Springs camped for the night

Sun. July 17. Started ¼ past 4 ocl past Cottonwood Springs about noon came on a few miles and Camped for Supper we intend driveing all night. were caught in another terriffic Thunderstorm and came near being capsized

Mon. July 18. After the Storm last night it being pleasant & cool and no dust, we concluded to drive all night. About 8 ocl we put out and traveled until 5 in the morning passed

Plumb Creek at or near noon will have Buffalo Bull for supper tonight

Tues. July 19. Saw several large Buffalo & one Calf today. One *Old Bull* rather acted as though he had a mind to pitch in to us. last night while at supper the Horses strayed off; it was near Eleven ocl before we found them We met Buzby Witter Rose & Co today Spent a couple hours Very pleasantly got into the Fort [Kearney] little after Noon

Wed. July 20. Crossed the Platt last night made Wood river today at 10 ocl on our way met near one hundred Sioux Warriors with 51 Pawnee Scalps & one Squaw & 2 Paposes taken as prisoners in a recent fight they takeing the squaw up to Burn her at the Stake as she was the wife of one of the Pawnee Braves

Thur. July 21. Left Camp on Wood River at Sun Rise last Night we had another Storm similar to the two previous The wind changed in the night the rain beat in upon us and before we were aware of it were soaking wet down to our waist passed through Dutch Settlement, met 8 Sioux Warriors passed Lone Tree in the Evening and camped in the Prarie

Fri. July 22. Left camp on the Platt at 3 ocl passed Eagle Island at 10 ocl made Prarie Creek crossing by noon John caught a mess of *chubs* had them for Dinner crossed Loop Fork at 5 ocl saw and talked with pretty Woman felt like Hugging She is the first since I left the States came 7 miles farther and camped

Sat. July 23. We left camp 10 miles east of Loop Fork came through North Bend (I wish it were So Bend) came to Fremont by 4 ocl making 40 miles since 3 ocl this morning tomorrow will bring us to Omaha then I shall consider myself in America again This is the Town where the LandLord set the Pawnees on us

Sun. July 24. Left Fremont at 1 ocl This morning on account of the Mosquitoes being so almighty bad that it was impossible to sleep we made Elkhorn by 6 ocl ate breakfast and are at the Bluffs now great excitement about the Peak family

Mon. July 25. This day has been spent gassing. We have had calls from a great number of the citizens Printers &c and this evening there was some half dozen Ladies came to our room to get a peep at our dust

Tues. July 26. We supposed yesterday that we should get off today sure, but learn this morning that there is no Boat down till Wednesday so we shall have stay another day which

dont go down well at all Mabies Circus & Menagerie Exhibit here today. We shall go there to kill time

Wed. July 27. Had an interesting time of it this morning gave Nutt our dust yesterday to keep for us dureing circus come to get ready to start the Safe hed had it in refused to unlock until almost too late for the Boat. we are all aboard now though³³

³³"Last Saturday, John W. Zigler, Wm. Duey, and D. F. Spain, three of the fortunate South Bend Company, reached home, bringing some eight to ten thousand dollars of gold dust with them. Archibald Defrees and Charles Zigler remain at the diggings, to collect the pay for their claims, as fast as it is washed out by the purchasers, and will not probably return home till after the close of the mining season." *St. Joseph Valley Register*, South Bend, Indiana, August 4, 1859. Courtesy of Mrs. Stanfield.

Partial list of articles purchased for trip.

Sea bread	Auger
Crackers	Chisels
Flour	Water can 2
Rice	Square
Crush sugar	Drawing knife
Butter	Powder
Lard	Caps
Box raisins	Lead
Salt	Candles
Pepper	Guns 2
Dry peaches	Revolvers 2
Beans	Clothing, boots, socks
Dry beef	Bed clothing
Bacon	Corn meal
Soda	Coal oil
Cream tarter	Tobacco
Ginger	Mustard and salt
Nutmegs	Boxes of pills 2 or 3
Vinegar 2 gal.	Cholera mixture
Tin plates 5	Ess. peppermint
Tin cups 3	Pins 2 papers
Knives and forks 3	Needles 3 papers
Tin teapot	Black linen thread
Coffee pot	Silk thread
Large pan 1	Court plaster
Copper teakettle	Curry combs and horse brush
Frying pan 1	Lantern
Dutch oven and lid	Liniment
Large spoons 3	Pens
Small spoons 3	Paper 3 qrs.
Soap 10 lbs	Envelopes 4 pkgs.
Coffee	Arnolds ink 1 qt.
Tea	Books
Crow bar	Combs coarse and fine
Mining pans 3	Looking glass
Picks 3	Scales
Shovels 3	Garden seeds
Ax 1	Matches ½ dz. boxes
Hoe	Kindlers
Sheet iron	Water pails 2
Nails	Prunes
Saws 2	Drill 20 yds.
Hand ax	Pants buttons 1 gross
Chalk and line	Blankets
Plane	Rubber coat
	Over coat

The Denver and Rio Grande Railway

Colorado's "Baby Road"

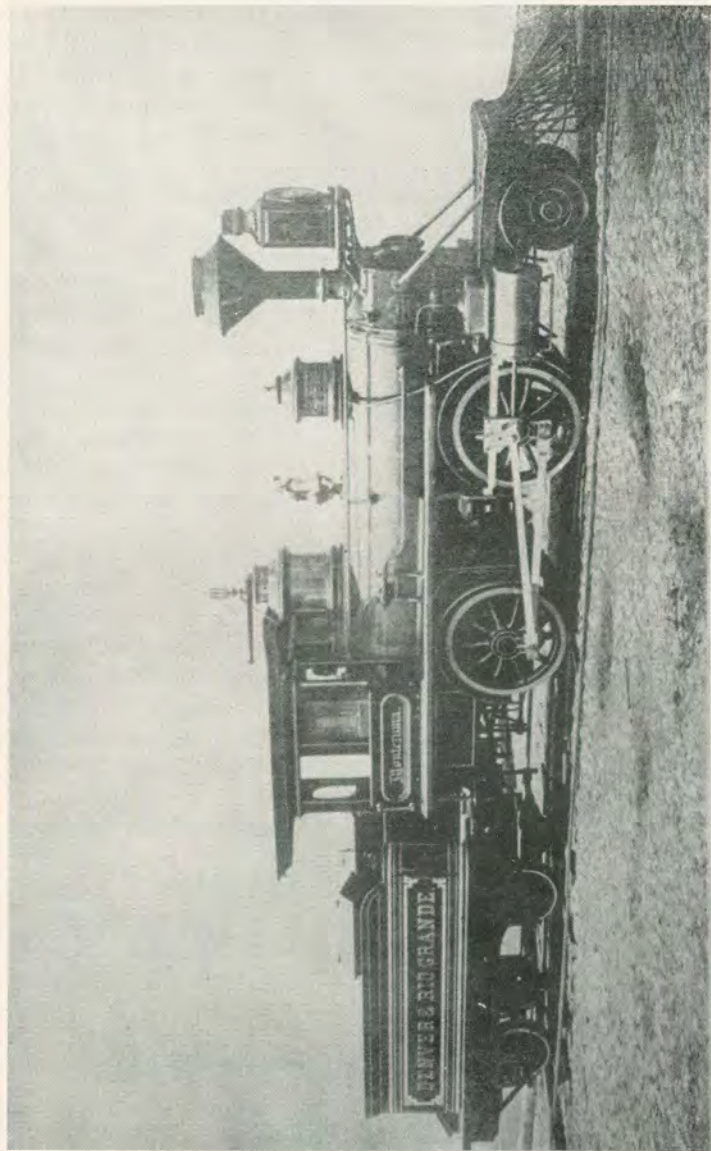
By ROBERT G. ATHEARN*

At precisely eight o'clock on a bright autumn morning, in 1871, the people of Denver watched a shiny, new train move along the edge of the city, pause at F [Fifteenth] and Larimer Streets, then disappear southward along the Platte River. As it passed they could see the name "Montezuma" painted on the cab of the thirty-nine foot engine and the words "Denver & Rio Grande" spread the full length of its tender. Then came a baggage car followed by "two elegant passenger coaches," one bearing the name "Denver," the other, "El Paso." In that fleeting moment a whole story of railroad enterprise passed them in review. The words on the coaches and tender explained the road's projected termini while the engine's name revealed a hope that it would one day enter the city of the Aztec kings. But on this twenty-sixth day of October the train was going only to Colorado Springs—a village that was barely three months old.

The passengers were neither the paying variety, nor just ordinary folk. This was "show day," and to display its accomplishments the management invited a number of regional editors to enjoy an excursion, at its expense. Among them were men like Nathan C. Meeker, of the *Greeley Tribune*, O. J. Goldrick, Denver's first schoolmaster, now of the *Denver Herald*, and *Rocky Mountain News* editor W. N. Byers, an ardent supporter of all Colorado enterprises.

As the train moved along at a steady fifteen miles per hour, the *News* reporter admired the clear, blue atmosphere, marred only by a few thunder-heads that sulked harmlessly in the distance, and indulged himself in a brief, but glowing, essay on Colorado's climate. Meanwhile, the little engine, weighing only twenty-five thousand pounds, tugged its load along a grade that gradually increased to seventy-five feet to the mile as it scaled what was known as "Lake Pass." Beyond the right of way were stands of excellent timber, and piled along the road lay a half million feet of lumber awaiting shipment.

*Dr. Robert G. Athearn, Associate Professor of History, University of Colorado, is the author of *William Tecumseh Sherman and the Settlement of the West*, recently published by the University of Oklahoma Press; *Westward the Briton*, published by Charles Scribner's Sons; and many historical articles. His "Railroad Renaissance in the Rockies," reprinted from the *Utah Historical Quarterly*, January, 1957, is a scholarly portrayal of the twelve-year trusteeship of the Denver and Rio Grande Western by Wilson McCarthy and Henry Swan (1935-1947). Dr. Athearn now presents the beginnings of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway as the first of two articles to appear in *The Colorado Magazine*. Later these will be incorporated in his forthcoming book-length history of the D. & R. G. R. R. Last spring Dr. Athearn was honored by election to the Executive Committee of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association.—*Editor.*



MONTEZUMA, LOCOMOTIVE NO. 1, DENVER & RIO GRANDE RAILROAD. PUT IN SERVICE JULY 3, 1871.

Five hours, and seventy-six miles, south of Denver they came to a station labelled Colorado Springs where a railroad chef had a meal ready. Their host, young and genial road President William Jackson Palmer and his right-hand man, former Territorial Governor Alexander C. Hunt, were waiting to escort the party to the site of Colorado Springs. After lunch members of the excursion inspected the tract, upon which the first house had been built that August, and then went back to the railroad cars for the return trip to Denver.¹ Perhaps the most enthusiastic member of the group was W. N. Byers, whose newspaper became a strong supporter of Palmer and his project. The editor had a great admiration for such enterprising newcomers and he did all he could to lend assistance through the columns of the *News*.

During these years there were a number of young men like Palmer in the plains and Rocky Mountain West—veterans of the Civil War, in search of fresh economic opportunities in a land that was new and as yet relatively undeveloped. Some of them sought the gold fields as a source of sudden wealth, others aspired to the title of cattle baron or merchant prince, but Palmer cast his lot with the railroad builders, believing that transportation was the key to success in the limitless stretches of public domain beyond the Missouri. Like General Grenville Dodge, chief engineer of construction on the Union Pacific, or former Confederate General Thomas L. Rosser, who had a similar position with the Northern Pacific, General Palmer was anxious to start life anew with what appeared to be a very promising western industry.

Few, if any, of the former soldiers returned to civilian life with better prospects. Using his previous railway experience as private secretary to J. Edgar Thomson, of the Pennsylvania Railroad, Palmer made himself available to a business whose expansion would match any other in the post-war boom. It was with careful consideration that he chose the Union Pacific's Eastern Division, a road being built across the plains of Kansas, and one that soon would adopt the optimistic name of Kansas Pacific. He foresaw, quite correctly, that the West offered enormous opportunities for enterprising individuals who were qualified to act as agents for eastern capitalists and, accordingly, he accepted the treasurership of the road, along with the post of secretary-treasurer of the construction company that proposed to build it.

¹*Daily Rocky Mountain News*, October 28, 1871. Same story appears in *The Rocky Mountain News (Weekly)* for November 1, 1871.

Originally, it was planned that the Union Pacific's Eastern Division would connect with the main line at the 100th parallel, somewhere in the vicinity of Fort Kearny, Nebraska, but the enthusiasm of the road builders, spurred by the pleas of Denver for a direct connection with the East, resulted in the decision to build to that mining capital. During 1867 surveys were made across the plains, and that fall two more parties, over which Palmer had general charge, were sent forth to choose a route west of the Rio Grande to the Pacific coast in anticipation of a transcontinental road. It was here, while trying to choose between a route along the Thirty-Second parallel or the Thirty-Fifth parallel, that he became acquainted with the country of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. Enthusiastically he reported that while the population of these parts was still small the potential was great. Certainly, he urged, a line built through a country that was possessed of both agricultural and mining resources would be profitable.

Congress did not share the road projectors' enthusiasms and declined to provide the necessary subsidy to build on to the Pacific along the Thirty-Fifth parallel, as Palmer had urged. Nevertheless, by the fall of 1870 Denver welcomed the tracks of the Kansas Pacific and realized its ambition of a connection with the Missouri River. The "Queen City of the Plains" would have to wait another sixty-four years for the opening of a line due west to San Francisco. Meanwhile, the Kansas Pacific people were obliged to satisfy their desires for a transcontinental route by making a connection with the Union Pacific, at Cheyenne.

Palmer now cut himself loose from his employers and struck out on his own. His almost passionate defense of the country south of Denver, offered in the official report on the Thirty-Fifth parallel route, had revealed him as a man of vision reminiscent of Colorado's former Governor Gilpin who had for years talked in glowing terms of railroad opportunities in the West. In Palmer the business leaders of Denver found a friend and an enthusiastic booster. Men like Governor A. C. Hunt and former Governor John Evans welcomed him and shared his excitement over the prospects for Colorado.²

²The best account of Palmer's early days in the West is found in George L. Anderson, *General William J. Palmer: A Decade of Colorado Railroad Building, 1870-1880* (Colorado Springs, 1936). See also: Owen Meredith Wilson, "A History of the Denver and Rio Grande Project, 1870-1901," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, 1942; Samuel Donald Mock, "Railroad Development in the Colorado Region to 1880," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1938; and Paul Stewart Logan, "The History of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway, 1871-1881," unpublished master's thesis, University of Colorado, 1931. Part of this last work appeared in "Building the Narrow Gauge from Denver to Pueblo," *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. VIII, No. 6 (November, 1931), 201-208. *The Weekly Gazette* (Colorado Springs) for August 6, 1896, devotes the entire issue to an historical reminiscence of the town's founding. One of the articles was written by W. J. Palmer.

Palmer's desire to build a road along the mountain front south of Denver was revealed privately months before the Kansas Pacific line reached that city. After trying, without avail, to persuade the directors of the company to build up the rich Arkansas valley to Pueblo and then north to Denver, the youthful promoter determined to stake out the claim for himself. In the spring of 1870, accompanied by William P. Mellen, a wealthy easterner, his daughter, Queen, and Colonel William H. Greenwood, chief engineer of the Kansas Pacific, Palmer visited Colorado City near the future location of Colorado Springs. It became clear to him that a railroad along the



WILLIAM JACKSON PALMER

canyon mouths that opened from the mountains onto the plains, with branch lines into the valleys, was certain to catch the traffic passing to and from the mines. Convinced he was right, he went forward with his grand scheme for a mountain railroad.

When the party returned to Denver, Palmer persuaded his friends, A. C. Hunt, F. Z. Salomon, and Irving Howbert to organize a dummy railway company to hold the field for him until he was in a position to perfect his own plans. Next, he

turned to the acquisition of land. Much of the country along the mountains was "offered land," that is, subject to private entry, and on some of it people had already taken up claims. Since land, the value of which would rise with the coming of a road, was to be one of the bases for financial support of the whole project, it was necessary to acquire title to as much of it as possible before publicly announcing his plan. Accordingly, Hunt and Howbert covered the ground between Denver and Colorado City, to determine what part of it would be valuable, after which the latter embarked upon a buying trip, obtaining the necessary relinquishments for next to nothing. Then the property was purchased from the federal government with agricultural scrip which was also very cheap. The land upon which Colorado Springs was built sold for eighty cents an acre.³ The right of way for the road bed itself was gained from the United States government by a direct charter conveying to the company a strip two hundred feet wide with twenty acre-tracts for depot purposes at ten mile intervals.

By the late summer of 1870, with the Kansas Pacific finished to Denver, Palmer was ready to pursue actively his plans for the construction of his own railroad running south of Denver to El Paso. On October 24, he wrote to William Mellen, "We are determined to put through the N. and S. Line immediately . . . ; I have a very tempting plan of Pool ready, and will vouch for the ready paying from the start; expecting to live along this line and to make a speciality of this railroad system, I shall undertake to make it a success."⁴ To show he had something more to offer than enthusiasm, Palmer revealed that Wilson Waddingham, a New Mexico land speculator, had just called upon him at which time the young railroader "invited him to put in his money, which he did at once to the extent of \$50,000, and authorized me besides to sell his Maxwell [Land Grant] stock while abroad and put the proceeds into our little railroad." This would raise perhaps another quarter of a million dollars, enough to assure a successful beginning.

Palmer promised to be in Philadelphia on November 5, when the promoters, calling themselves "Colorado Construction Company, Friends," would meet to discuss the progress of their proposed road. Dr. William A. Bell, who had become well acquainted with Palmer during the Kansas Pacific surveys, and was now associated in the new venture, was hard at

³Irving Howbert, *Memories of a Lifetime in the Pike's Peak Region* (New York, 1925), pp. 220-222.

⁴Fisher, John S., *Builder of the West: The Life of General William Jackson Palmer* (Caldwell, Idaho, 1939), pp. 192-93; Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

work raising money in Europe. Using the influence of his father, a prominent English physician with a wealthy clientele, Bell hoped to raise a half million dollars to build up a proposed colony near Colorado City, which would, in turn, help to support the railroad venture.⁵ From the financial standpoint, the picture seemed very bright.

Before leaving for the East, where he not only would attend the November 5 meeting, but two days later would marry Queen Mellen and take a honeymoon trip to Europe, Palmer busied himself with final details of the projected road in Colorado. His close friend and associate, W. H. Greenwood, who would also leave the Kansas Pacific to join the new venture, assured him that the grand plan for a North-South railroad was both feasible and logical. The Rocky Mountain front, said the engineer, would cause all transcontinental railroads, except the Union Pacific, to alter their westbound direction in seeking an outlet to the Pacific. The new railroad, lying athwart these routes, would be in a perfect position to collect both through and local traffic from the large lines. It should be of three-foot gauge, he further explained, because it would run through mining country where some of its branches must, of necessity, be constructed by the mining companies. For economic and topographical reasons the narrow gauge was the best. By so constructing the entire line there would be no break in service between points of supply and the mines. Aside from these considerations, the narrow gauge was thought to be superior because it would reduce the cost of tunnels and cuts in a complex and tortuous terrain.⁶ Since there were no other roads south of Denver, Greenwood supposed that the initial use of the narrow gauge by the Denver and Rio Grande Railway Company, as the road was to be known, would dictate its use by all subsequent lines in the region.

Alexander C. Hunt, now removed as territorial governor to make room for one of President Grant's favorites, but still very close to Palmer, supported Greenwood's notion that the country south of Denver was ideally situated for a railroad. From it came much of the lumber used in the city as well as along the other railroads entering that place. Not only did the route intersect numerous roads into the gold mines but along it were deposits of gypsum from which plaster of Paris

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Rio Grande builders were "sold" on the narrow gauge after one of them, Captain Howard Schuyler, recently with Palmer on the Kansas Pacific construction, visited England where the narrow gauge was being tried. The Festiniog Railway, a little Welsh road with a two-foot gauge, was at that time receiving a good deal of attention. Its chief engineer, C. E. Spooner, had written a good deal about his road, much of which was incorporated in his volume *Narrow Gauge Railways* (London, 1871).

was made, as well as known coal veins. The climate, varying sharply as one proceeded south, was bound to attract pleasure seekers and it certainly would yield a wide range of agricultural products. Finally, the line would tap the southern cattle ranges and offer transportation to remote military posts. Hunt, whose enthusiasm matched that of Palmer, was quite excited about the promise of Colorado's future.⁷

Determined to overlook nothing that might frustrate his plans, Palmer also solicited the advice of Samuel E. Brown, attorney, and engaged him to study the articles of incorporation to make sure no conflicting interests might rise up to complicate his plan. The field was clear, Brown reported. The Denver and Rio Grande had complied with the law and there were no legal obstacles in its path.⁸ Satisfied, Palmer proceeded with formal organization.

On October 27, 1870, the certificate of incorporation for the railroad was filed. It had a capital stock of \$2,500,000 and the main office was located at Denver. The Board of Directors consisted of William P. Mellen, New York; Robert Henry Lamborn, a Philadelphian who had served with Palmer during the war; Alexander Cameron Hunt, Denver; Captain Howard Schuyler, closely associated with Palmer during Kansas Pacific construction days; and Palmer himself. The announced route of the main line—to be very important in later litigation—was south from Denver to the Arkansas River near Pueblo, westward through the “Big Canon of the Arkansas,” across Poncha Pass into the San Luis Valley to the Rio Grande River and thence along it to El Paso. Seven branches were proposed, covering a good portion of the mining country, and including one through to Salt Lake City.⁹

A contract to build was let to the North and South Construction Company, of Philadelphia, on December 1, 1870. During that month it was succeeded by the Union Contract Company, a firm chartered by the Pennsylvania legislature and headed by Palmer's wartime friend, Charles S. Hinchman. In return for building the estimated 875 miles between Denver and El Paso, the Union Contract Company was to receive \$14,000,000 in first mortgage seven per cent gold bonds, less \$16,000 for each mile it failed to complete. It was agreed that the Denver and Rio Grande could also pay in its own capital

⁷A. C. Hunt to W. J. Palmer, October 30, 1870. *The Denver and Rio Grande Railway of Colorado and New Mexico* (London, 1871), pp. 14-16.

⁸Samuel E. Brown to W. J. Palmer, October 7, 1870. *Ibid.*, pp. 21-23.

⁹Anderson, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55; O. W. Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-18.

stock or in any municipal, county, state or federal bonds it could secure.¹⁰

Energetically the management of the new road set about its task. Dr. Bell, busily seeking out prospective investors abroad, wrote to the English land speculator, William Blackmore, in January, 1871, “We are thoroughly in earnest about this enterprise, the grading has *already commenced*. . . .”¹¹

During the same month Palmer published in London a twenty-nine page pamphlet entitled *The Denver and Rio Grande Railway of Colorado and New Mexico*, in which he told potential stockholders about the advantages of his railroad. The land along the Rockies was arable and well-watered. It also contained coal, iron ore, fire-clay, limestone and building materials, not to mention the well-known deposits of precious metals. The road was bound to be valuable in supplying miners. “A population engaged in mining,” he explained, “is by far the most profitable of any to a railway. A hundred miners, from their wandering habits and many wants, are better customers than four times that number otherwise employed.” The high price of foodstuffs paid by these men would make farming very profitable to those who would come to till the soil.

Due to delay in receiving iron rails from England, the first spike was not driven until July 28, 1871. Appropriately, it was Colonel Greenwood, general manager of construction, who put it down, after which solicitor Samuel Brown, rather defensively, told the gathering that the rest of the nation's railroad builders were using too broad a gauge. He predicted that in twenty years the three-foot width would be standard.¹²

Now track laying began in earnest. By the first of September the little iron rails, weighing only thirty pounds to the yard, reached out from Denver twenty-three miles. On October 21, they came to the brand new colony town of Colorado Springs, and the seventy-six mile first division of the Denver

¹⁰Denver and Rio Grande Railway subscription schedule, in William Jackson Palmer Papers, Division of State Archives and Public Records, State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver; copy of agreement with the Union Contract Company, in Denver and Rio Grande Western Archives, Division of State Archives and Public Records, State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver.

¹¹William Bell to William Blackmore, January 3, 1871. Item 0158, William Blackmore Papers, Museum of New Mexico Library, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

¹²*Daily Rocky Mountain News*, July 29, 1871; Paul S. Logan, “Building the Narrow Gauge from Denver to Pueblo,” *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. VIII, No. 6 (November, 1931), p. 202. One of the reasons for Brown's defensiveness was the constant criticism around Colorado of the proposed gauge. It was so widespread that in the spring of 1871 the road promoters found it necessary to print and distribute a circular defending the three-foot width. On February 17, 1871, the *Daily Rocky Mountain News* not only reprinted the circular but wrote a sharp editorial in its behalf. One of the principal arguments against the narrow gauge was the belief that it could not haul cattle successfully. The *News* denied this assertion.

and Rio Grande presumably was ready for business. All it needed was traffic.

Palmer had already thought about that matter. From the outset he planned to participate in the establishment of a colony town near Colorado City and to use it in support of his project. On June 21, 1871, he signed an agreement with General R. A. Cameron, lately of the Greeley Colony, providing for the establishment of a joint stock company with a capital stock of \$300,000, to be divided into shares of \$100 each. Property at and around the Springs, owned by Palmer, was then to be sold to the new company, which, in turn would sell a thousand shares for cash and pay the proceeds to Palmer, who promised to loan one-half of it to the company for three years at seven per cent.¹³ The president of the Colorado Springs Company was William Jackson Palmer.

The colony's pamphlet propaganda was so successful, particularly in England, that soon the new village would be dubbed "Little London." So rapidly did the newcomers arrive that the manager Cameron had to send a rush order to Chicago for a hundred and fifty portable houses to prevent suffering during the first winter.

By early 1872, two months after the completion of the road's first division, Colorado Springs claimed a population of almost eight hundred. Already there were a number of business houses, a newspaper, two churches, a reading room and a proposed schoolhouse.

As they watched the Colorado Springs colony grow the promoters made plans to duplicate the success all along the line. During 1872, A. C. Hunt reminded Palmer that "We have connected with our own enterprise, over a million and a half acres of land. The ostensible purpose for which these lands were purchased was for colonization." Why not send agents abroad, to Switzerland, Sweden, Germany, and particularly to troubled Alsace-Lorraine, to seek out "hardy husbandmen" for further colonization? Follow the example of the Mormons, Hunt advised. Offer the newcomers half-fare tickets, cheap lands, a healthy climate, rich soil and a place to settle among friends. He thought company holdings along the Arkansas and in the upper Rio Grande country ideally situated for the land-hungry farmers of Europe.¹⁴

¹³Memorandum Agreement of June 21, 1871, signed by William J. Palmer and R. A. Cameron, Denver and Rio Grande Western Archives, Division of State Archives and Public Records, State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver.

¹⁴A. C. Hunt to W. J. Palmer, November 9, 1872, in William A. Bell Papers, Division of State Archives and Public Records, State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver.

Regular business on the small railroad began on the first day of 1872, when the Union Contract Company turned it over to the new owners. It was an immediate success.

Before the day of rail travel a tri-weekly stagecoach, carrying an average of five passengers per trip, ran between Denver and the Colorado Springs area. During 1872 the Denver and Rio Grande carried 25,168 passengers, an average of 484 weekly. With a great deal of pride General Palmer pointed out that this was an increase of fifteen hundred per cent. During that year the road hauled over forty-six thousand tons of freight, most of which was commercial, the rest, construction materials. Among the freight items hauled were wool, hides, furniture, hay, wagons, agricultural implements, groceries, iron, nails, hardware, grain, lumber, cordwood, stone, lime, cattle, sheep, coal and mining machinery. The pineries along the divide, south of Denver, added a good deal to the traffic, Palmer wrote. "Their produce is shipped both ways over the railroad, and the demand is rapidly increasing for all the requirements of a new country without trees on the plain, and rapidly filling up with towns and farm-houses. There are about 20 saw-mills along the completed line." Then, there were the coal mines near Canon City, not quite reached during 1872. They held great promise as a source of locomotive fuel. Palmer never tired of essaying upon Colorado's resources and its brilliant future.¹⁵

The General had a right to boast. When he began his project, in 1870, Denver was a small place of 4,800 people. North and west of the City lay Golden and Boulder, little towns that would grow slowly. To the south there was Colorado City, with perhaps three hundred residents, with another five or six hundred scattered along the mountain base toward Trinidad. The region's real metropolis was Santa Fe, an old and well established commercial point of around 8,000 residents.¹⁶

By the end of 1872 Palmer made the claim that in two years Pueblo's population had jumped from five hundred to thirty-five hundred, and that Colorado Springs was already a thriving city of fifteen hundred, having grown almost a hundred per cent during the year. Trinidad, he said, now had eleven hundred people, while Denver was a relatively large city of fifteen thousand. Allowing for some exaggeration on the promoter's

¹⁵First Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway to the Stockholders, April 1, 1873, p. 9.

¹⁶Arthur Ridgway, *Denver and Rio Grande: Development of Physical Property in Chronological Narrative* (Denver, 1921), p. 2.

part, population figures had mounted noticeably with the coming of the major railroads to the Denver area. Unquestionably, the plans of the Rio Grande and the excellence of its projectors' salesmanship had advertised the region south of Denver. All over the West emigrant families followed the rail routes to make their new homes. They would come, in great numbers, to live along the little narrow gauge.

Newcomers watched the operations of the new road with interest. It gave them a feeling of satisfaction to see the tiny "Montezuma" or the "Cortez" moving across the foothills, pulling their thirty-five foot long by seven-foot passenger cars. Divided into two apartments, the cars had double seats on one side of the aisle and single seats on the other, with the arrangement reversed in each apartment to preserve balance. They weighed only twelve thousand pounds. Interesting also were the somewhat larger freight engines, bearing names like "Tabi-wachi," "Ouray," "Shou-wa-no," costing \$8,500 each. They pulled either the eight-wheeled truck-type freight car, twenty-four feet in length, or the tiny, twelve-foot, four-wheeled cars. Because of the lightness of the cars and the small amount of rolling stock owned in the initial period, the railroad's first switch engine was a mule, a fact that probably seemed less quaint at the time than it does today.

These were small beginnings, but Coloradoans were proud of what they called "The Baby Road." Even though it had a mule for a switch engine and its first schedule was no more than a plain piece of paper upon which the Superintendent of the road himself affixed departure and arrival times, a start had been made. And it was not an easy beginning. Tracklaying to Colorado Springs was completed in the fall of 1871, but before the roadbed could be ballasted or surfaced severe winter weather had stopped the work. Even after the first of the year, when trains began running regularly, the roadbed was soft and unreliable. Added to these difficulties the gradient on the first division was heavy and the curvature sharp. The ascent of two thousand feet and descent of thirteen hundred made construction more costly than had been anticipated. The newness of track, the experimental character of the rolling stock, high shop and other labor costs, and the expensive, inferior coal that had to be used before the Canon City area mines were reached, added to the complexities surrounding the initiation of the venture.

On January 1, 1872, the day regular service to Colorado Springs was inaugurated, grading commenced on the second

division toward Pueblo, 118 miles south of Denver. Connection with Pueblo was not an announced part of the original plan. The charter talked of building south toward the Arkansas River, to the Labran coal fields in the vicinity of Canon City and "near Pueblo," after which the rails would pass through the Grand Canon of the Arkansas, and seek the headwaters of the Rio Grande. Even after grading south of Colorado Springs began, the railroad company declined to reveal publicly its next immediate goal.

For over a year, Palmer and his associates had studied the country to the south. Meanwhile, in March, 1871, a mass meeting was held in Pueblo to discuss the possibility of a rail connection with Denver by means of the new line. Townsmen were agitated when they listened to a letter, written by A. C. Hunt, explaining that Pueblo was not on the main line because it would lengthen the route by twenty-five miles. The inference was clear that if they wanted a road, they would have to do something about raising money to assist in its building.¹⁷

During that summer, as southern Colorado pondered its railroad future, Palmer and Hunt continued their appraisal of the situation. In November, Palmer, Mellen, Lamborn, Greenwood and Josiah C. Reiff organized a new land company called The Central Colorado Improvement Company, the purpose of which was to buy the Nolan Grant and other land. This large tract lying south of the Arkansas River, near Pueblo, originally was granted to Gervacio Nolan by Mexico. On July 1, 1870, Congress confirmed its title, but only to the extent of some forty thousand acres. Palmer and his associates bought it from Charles Goodnight, Peter K. Dotson and Charles Blake.¹⁸

Excited by the knowledge that Canon City had approved a \$50,000 bond issue to bring the road from Colorado Springs, and fearful of being left out, the people of Pueblo went to the polls in late June, 1871, and overwhelmingly voted to assist the Denver and Rio Grande. During the following months, as the railroad officials negotiated for the Nolan Grant, nothing was said about the direction of their proposed construction. Stories made the rounds that the \$100,000 voted in June by Pueblo was not a large enough sum. When a committee was appointed to press for a decision, and word leaked out that it might even flirt with other railroads, Palmer was forced into action. Toward the end of November, Hunt came to Pueblo and

¹⁷Daily Rocky Mountain News, March 5, 1871.

¹⁸Irving W. Stanton, *Sixty Years in Colorado: Reminiscences and Reflections of a Pioneer of 1860* (Denver, 1922), p. 178.

announced that the narrow gauge would build into that city if another \$50,000 in municipal bonds was forthcoming. This, he said, was needed to build a branch line to the Labran (Florence) coal fields. Reluctantly, on January 30, 1872, voters agreed to the final stipulation.¹⁹

Meanwhile, apparently certain of a favorable vote, the railroad had, on January first, arranged with the Union Contract Company for the laying of tracks to within a mile of the Pueblo Courthouse. On June 19, 1872, the first train entered the old Santa Fe Trail trading center. Shamefacedly the *Colorado Chieftain* confessed that the Rio Grande's arrival was "accomplished so quickly and so cleverly, that but few of our citizens were aware that the road had reached town." Pueblo, however, made up for its civic laxity on July 3, when an excursion train filled with Denver dignitaries arrived amidst a thunder of welcome. The passengers were promptly escorted to the Courthouse where a banquet was served and for those who could stay on, there was a grand ball. The whole affair, said the paper, "served to place Pueblo and Denver in closer and more endearing bonds of fellowship."²⁰

The bonds of fellowship did not get a chance to cement. Palmer's organization, now in possession of the Nolan Grant, decided to move the Pueblo depot across the river to a new and favored company town called South Pueblo. Deeply angered by what they regarded as both an act of duplicity and a breach of agreement, the people of the county declined to honor the promised bonds. The railroad at once instituted suit, but the decision was unfavorable to it and the delivery of the bonds was never made.²¹

Despite what they felt to be a betrayal, Pueblo business men had to admit that the road was highly beneficial. With its approach that sleepy municipality sprang into life and experienced a sharp boom. During 1872 a hundred and eighty-five new buildings, worth approximately \$621,000, were built. Forty acres on the north side of town were brought into the city, and South Pueblo, that child of the Central Colorado Improvement Company, brought new settlers into the community. The latter addition was particularly stimulated by the railroad extension to the coal fields of Fremont county.²²

¹⁹O. M. Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-45.

²⁰*Colorado Chieftain*, June 20, July 4, 1872.

²¹Irving Stanton, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

²²Milo Lee Whittaker, *Pathbreakers and Pioneers of the Pueblo Region* (Pueblo, 1917), p. 110.

Building the branch to the Labran coal mines, near Canon City, was commenced before the main line reached Pueblo. At a meeting on May 1, 1872, it was agreed that the Central Colorado Improvement Company would purchase a million and forty thousand dollars worth of the railroad's bonds and pay, upon receipt thereof, \$825,000.00 in cash, or just under eighty per cent of the face value. The road builders promised to construct a sixty-five mile railroad and telegraph line from Canon City, down the Arkansas Valley to the mouth of the Huerfano, east of Pueblo. That portion between Pueblo and the coal mines was to be in operation within a year; the remainder, by May 1, 1874. The Rio Grande further agreed to haul coal for the Improvement Company for fifteen per cent less than that charged anyone else for coal haulage over its tracks for a period of thirty years.²³

Dirt flew, and by the end of October, 1872, a thirty-six mile spur called the Canon Coal Railway Company reached the coal fields, fulfilling the long desired connection with fuel supplies and an additional source of traffic. But the Denver and Rio Grande's eyes were bigger than its pocketbook. When the Union Contract Company prepared to turn over the new branch, Palmer and Company could not pay, so the contract company retained possession of this spur until 1874. It was the construction company, using its own funds, that finally finished the stretch into Canon City.²⁴

Completion of the branch to Labran in 1872 ought to have made the residents of Canon City happy. It did not. They complained bitterly that instead of building on into the city, the Rio Grande graded the road that far and then with what appeared to be stubborn arbitrariness, refused to lay the necessary rails, apparently wishing to spend the money capturing new and unclaimed territory elsewhere. Palmer, of course, would not confess to them that he was unable to pay for the already constructed part of the branch.

For about a year and a half Canon City experienced a depression and, like a man dying of thirst with water just beyond his reach, its people angrily viewed the nine mile stretch of graded but trackless space that separated them from a rail connection with Pueblo. Fremont County, which in 1871 had voted a \$50,000 bond issue, now was asked to confirm that decision and to add a like amount, as the price of rail

²³Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Denver and Rio Grande Railway, May 1, 1872, in Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad Archives, D. and R. G. W. Offices, Denver; Milo Whittaker, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-109.

²⁴Minutes of the Board of Directors, etc., July 17, 1874.

service. Rural inhabitants doubted that a railroad into Canon City was worth that much, and even some of the townsmen objected to the railroad's tactics. Nevertheless, in March, 1873, a county election was held and while the result was favorable, the county commissioners did not regard a majority of two votes as sufficient popular enthusiasm to give their approval. Finally, in March of 1874, the city held its own election and agreed to the railroad's demands: \$50,000 in bonds and \$50,000 worth of adjacent lands. Four months later, on July 6, the first locomotive entered Canon City. The Rio Grande had held out for its price and it had been paid, albeit with great reluctance.

Two of southern Colorado's important cities now had rail service. But in gaining it a good many people in that part of the country felt they had paid dearly. Time would reveal that the Denver and Rio Grande's greediness was expensive, for the decision to go south through Pueblo deeply disappointed Canon City. The die was cast at a meeting of the Board of Directors, held January 30, 1872, when William Mellen offered a resolution to the effect that at least a hundred miles could be saved in building the main line by running south from Pueblo across the Spanish range, near the headwaters of the Huerfano or Purgatoire, instead of "going by the route originally contemplated up the Arkansas River by Canon City."²⁵

Within a half dozen years the whole picture would change, and the Rio Grande, then extremely anxious to lay its tracks through the Grand Canon of the Arkansas, or what was later called the "Royal Gorge," would discover that it had few friends in Canon City. Confronted by vicious competition from the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, Palmer would have to make the fight of his life to retain the narrow defile that offered the only logical passageway into the mountains for some distance. When the General looked back upon the events surrounding the entrance of his road into Pueblo and Canon City, he may have recalled a remark he made in a letter written to his wife during their courtship days: "One thing I feel certain of—that amidst all the hot competition of this American business life there is a great temptation to be a little unscrupulous."²⁶ Southern Colorado felt that he had indeed yielded to the temptation.

²⁵Minutes of the Board of Directors, etc., January 30, 1872.

²⁶Palmer to Queen Mellen, June 11, 1869, in John S. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

Charles Autobees

By JANET LECOMPTE*

V.

On February 20, 1853, Charles Autobees and "as many settlers as he could take with him" arrived at the mouth of the Huerfano to claim the land Ceran St. Vrain had promised him.¹ In 1873 Charley testified: "I now live on the Huerfano river on the Las Animas [Vigil and St. Vrain] Grant and have lived there continuously without interruption since February 20, 1853. I commenced there by trapping, farming, and trading with the Indians."² Charley picked out a mile-wide bottom on

*Copyright by Janet Lecompte, 1958. Janet Shaw Lecompte, of Colorado Springs, has been, for a long time, transcribing the Cragin notes and other materials relating to early Colorado. She was co-author with her mother, the late Dorothy Price Shaw, of an article entitled, "Huerfano Butte," *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2 (April, 1950). She was author of "The Hardscrabble Settlement, 1844-1848," *idem.*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2 (April, 1954). Parts I and II of the Charles Autobees story were published in *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3 (July, 1957); Parts III and IV, in Vol. XXXIV, No. 4 (October, 1957).—*Editor.*

¹Statement of Wilbur F. Stone, Oct. 31, 1872, Pueblo, Colo., Records of the General Land Office, Colorado Private Land Claim No. 17, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

²Testimony of Charles Autobees, Pueblo, Colo., Jan. 16, 1873, Records of the General Land Office, Colorado Private Land Claim No. 17, National Archives. The evidence is overwhelming that Autobees began his settlement in 1853. He stated it himself, not only in the reference cited above, but in the following sworn testimony taken in 1866 by Moses Hallett, Chief Justice of the Colorado Supreme Court, only thirteen years after the settlement was begun: "Charles Autobees . . . states under oath that he resides on the Huerfano River, near its mouth . . . and has resided in that place ever since the year 1853 . . ." *H. Exc. Doc. 89*, 42nd Cong., 3rd Sess. (Ser. 1565), 2. Still there are many other guesses as to the date of the settlement.

1847. Wilbur F. Stone drew up a petition to the Pueblo Land Office in 1871 stating that Autobees got a promise of title to his land from Ceran St. Vrain in 1847, in which year he made a settlement on the grant.—"Petition of Charles Autobees," Feb. 20, 1872, Records, GLO, Colorado Private Land Claim No. 17, National Archives. Stone probably wrote up this petition in a hurry without consulting his client, for later, under oath, Stone amended the date to 1853.

1849. Frank Hall says that Autobees made the first settlement in 1849 "under promises . . . of a title to a considerable tract of land." *History of Colorado*, Vol. III (Chicago, 1891), 487.

1851. Tom Autobees says that in 1851 "Dick Wooten, Doyle, Autobees, Barclay, Mitchell &c. went up to settle on mouth of Huerfano . . ." but we know the statement is a careless one since Barclay never lived at the mouth of the Huerfano nor did Mitchell, and that Wooton and Doyle did not come to live on the Arkansas until 1853. (Tom Autobees, Avondale, Colo., Nov. 7, 1907, to F. W. Cragin, EFWN II-25, Cragin Collection.) In another interview Tom says his father traded with the Indians "till he settled at the Doyle-Wootton town on S. side of Ark. r. 1 mi. above mouth of Huerfano r. in 1851," (Nov. 9, 1907, EFWN II-76). Again, this is a careless statement because "Doyle-Wootton town" was not begun until 1853, as we shall see in this chapter. The error may have been Cragin's and not Tom's, however, since Cragin did not distinguish in his notes between what the person interviewed said, and what Cragin himself knew, or thought he knew, and freely added to the notes. On the other hand, there is no proof that Autobees did not come to the Huerfano as early as 1851, make a ditch, put in a summer's crop and then return to Rio Colorado for the winter.

1852. Eight months after the interviews quoted above, Tom Autobees told Cragin that "This ranch Chas. A. had had since 1852, when he & Kroenig with Levanway & Shelton, & Charlefoix began to take out ditch & farm on the Huerfano, altho they made thr. home in the old vill. till '55. The village field had no crop in '55; neither in '54 acct. of massacre. But in '54 & '55 both, Chas. Aut. had crop at his ranch. Kroenig furnished materials & Aut. put in the crop for 3 yrs. ('52, '53, & '54)." (July 29, 1908, EFWN IV-7.)

There are other statements, all refutable, that the settlement began in 1852. In 1883 Calvin Jones testified:

the west side of the Huerfano river extending from the river's junction with the Arkansas to three miles above its mouth, and defined on the west by low river bluffs beyond which were miles of prairie upland. In the summer of 1853 G. H. Heap described a location two or three miles upstream from Charley's farm, but of the same aspect:

Descending the buttes to the Huerfano, we encamped on it about five miles above its mouth. A bold and rapid stream, its waters were turbid, but sweet and cool; the river-bottom was broad, and thickly wooded with willows and cottonwoods, interlaced with the wild rose and grape-vine, and carpeted with soft grass—a sylvan paradise. This stream was about twenty-five yards in breadth, and five feet deep close to the banks.³

It was a pretty spot, and this was of course one of the reasons it was chosen. How could Charley know that his "sylvan paradise" was underlaid with soil that has since been pronounced "of little agricultural value"? But, unaware of its drawbacks, Charley made his land grow corn, beans and hay for nearly thirty years.

In 1873, when Charley had to prove his title to the land, his lawyer Wilbur F. Stone wrote that Ceran St. Vrain had sent Charley to settle on whatever land he chose within the limits of the Vigil and St. Vrain grant, "for the express purpose of preventing the hostile Indian tribes from interfering with settlements on the Grant . . ." Stone must have meant future, not existing settlements, for we know of no other white men living upon the grant when Charley arrived. Stone would have done better for his client had he clarified this statement at the time he made it. The wrong interpretation detracts from Charley's real achievement as a pioneer settler in a lonely land. In the past, groups of farmers had settled at various lo-

³Q. Where did you go in 1852?

A. I went to the Arkansas River at the mouth of the Huerfano River.

Q. From 1852 onward what was your employment?

A. I was running a train for a man by the name of Joe Doyle, an ox train; I traded with the Indians during the winter, and followed that for three years." (*Transcript of Record*, U. S. vs. Maxwell Land Grant Co., U. S. Supreme Court, Oct. term, 1886, No. 974, p. 171.)

But two years later, in 1855, Calvin Jones testified that he wintered 1852-3 on the Cimarron with a man named Mitchell, left in the spring of 1853 and went to the Arkansas (*Transcript of Record*, Maxwell Land Grant and Railway Co. et al. vs. Guadalupe Thompson et al., U. S. Supreme Court, July term, 1894, No. 581, pp. 310-11.) In 1857 William Bransford, then manager of Ceran St. Vrain's flour mill at Mora, testified: "About the fall of 1852, Richings L. Wooten, Charles Williams, and others, formed a settlement on and near Huerfano river, on the grant, by permission of the claimant, Ceran St. Vrain. . . ." (*H. Report* 457, 35th Cong., 1st Sess. (Ser. 967), p. 276. But Wooton was in California in the fall of 1852.

⁴G. H. Heap, *Central Route to the Pacific* (Phila., 1854), p. 61. In his journal Heap says he met the Huerfano five miles above its mouth; but in a letter to T. H. Benton, Fort Massachusetts, June 8, 1853, published in the *National Intelligencer* (copy in Colorado State Historical Society Library), he says "four" miles.

⁵A. T. Sweet and Wayne Inman, *Soil Survey of the Arkansas Valley Area, Colorado*, Bulletin 24, Dept. of Agriculture (1926), pp. 18-19, 31.

⁶Wilbur F. Stone to Hon. Willis Drummond, Commissioner General Land Office, Pueblo, Colo., March 5, 1874, Records, GLO, Fort Reynolds, Abandoned Military Reservation File, National Archives.

cations in the Arkansas valley—near Bent's Fort; on the Purgatory near later Trinidad, Colo.; at the trail crossing of the Greenhorn; at the trail crossing of the St. Charles; at Pueblo; and, on the Hardscrabble above Pueblo.⁶ But when Charley first came to the Huerfano to live, there were probably only two other occupied settlements on the east slope of the Rockies within the limits of the present state of Colorado, and they were William Bent's log houses at Big Timber eighty miles down the Arkansas,⁷ and the old Greenhorn village twenty-five miles southwest of the Huerfano mouth.⁸

Wilbur Stone was to state in 1872 that Charley brought with him to the Huerfano "peons, tenants, servants and employees . . . as well as his own family and relatives, Mexicans and half-breed Indians."⁹ Perhaps Stone was thinking of "Autobees town" as it looked in the 1860's when he first saw it, for although Charley undoubtedly brought some peons to start the farm, and perhaps a relative or two, he would not have brought his entire household over the mountains in the middle of a particularly deadly winter to this uncivilized place. His son Tom, in fact, states that Charley's family stayed in Rio Colorado until 1857, with the exception of the oldest boy Mariano.¹⁰

Autobees probably came to the Huerfano with his friends William Kroenig and Marcelino Baca in a party of 25 men with 60 pack mules that left the village of Rio Colorado, New Mexico, around the first of February, 1853, for a trading trip to the Arapahoes on the other side of the mountains. The winter had been a severe one, and the traders filled their packs with provisions for the hungry Indians. William Kroenig, the young German storekeeper of Rio Colorado, closed out his business to make the trip. Years later he wrote down the incidents he remembered of the journey, but he mentioned

⁶*El pueblo de leche* near Bent's Fort was described by many travellers of 1839. See LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann Hafen, eds., *To the Rockies and Oregon 1839-1842* (Glendale, Calif., 1955), 164n; John Hatcher's Purgatory settlement is described herein, Chap. IV; the Greenhorn settlement as it was in the summer of 1853 is described in detail by Lt. E. G. Beckwith, "Report," Pacific Railway Reports, II, *H. Exec. Doc. 91*, 33rd Cong., 3rd Sess. (Ser. 792), 39. It had been occupied since the early 1840's. The St. Charles farm of Charles Autobees was described in Chapt. III. Pueblo and Hardscrabble are treated in Janet S. Lecompte's "The Hardscrabble Settlement, 1844-1848," *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XXXI, No. 2 (April, 1954), 81-98.

⁷Lieutenant Beckwith, "Report," *op. cit.*, 28. This was also called "Big Timbers." *Editor.*

⁸Where only Baca and Montoya and their families lived. See Kroenig's narrative, *infra*. The settlement on the Greenhorn was not at this time, or for many years to come, considered to be within the limits of the Vigil and St. Vrain Grant, because it was in the watershed of the St. Charles river. Oddly enough, this ancient settlement was not even used by claimants of the Nolan grant to prove settlement. Much later, however, a claimant of the Vigil & St. Vrain Grant was awarded land on the Greenhorn.

⁹Petition of Charles Autobees per his attorney Wilbur F. Stone to the Register, Pueblo Land Office, Filed Feb. 20, 1872. Records, GLO, Colorado Private Land Claim No. 17, National Archives.

¹⁰Tom Autobees, Avondale, Colo., July 29, 1908, to F. W. Cragin, EFVN IV-8, Cragin Collection.

the names of only two of the traders—"Beaubien," (probably J. B. Beaubien of Rio Colorado, nephew of the Taos judge), and "Leblanc" (William LeBlanc of Arroyo Hondo).¹¹ There is no documental proof that Autobeas and Baca were in Kroenig's party, but the probability is strong. Baca told Captain Gunnison at Greenhorn in the summer of 1853 that "he crossed . . . [the Sangre de Cristo pass] in February last, a winter of unprecedented severity and great fall of snow; that he was seven or eight days in making the crossing, which is usually made in two—the snow being ten feet deep in the ravines, while the ridges were nearly bare,"¹² a description of the trip that tallies well with Kroenig's; while Kroenig stated, and his description bears him out, that his party was the first to use the Taos trail over the Sangre de Cristo pass that year (and of course the Taos trail was the only feasible route between Rio Colorado and the Arkansas valley).

From Rio Colorado the traders travelled slowly north through snow that lay smooth and level over the San Luis Valley. After several days they reached the foot of the Sangre de Cristo pass, where the trail was hidden under two feet of snow, for there had been no other travellers ahead of them to mark the way. The snow concealed rocks and fallen trees, gullies and other pitfalls, so the men dismounted and led their

¹¹Charles Irving Jones, "William Kronig, New Mexico Pioneer," *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. XIX, No. 4 (Oct., 1944), 291-300; and, William Kroenig, Sr., "Autobiography," typed copy of original manuscript (apparently lost), Denver Public Library, Western History Department. Charles Irving Jones reworded the original manuscript without sufficient knowledge of Kroenig or his milieu, and the Denver Public Library typescript shows evidence of the illegibility of the original. Because of these failings I have checked both versions against each other and the account of the journey here presented is a composite of both.

¹²Lieutenant Beckwith, "Report," *op. cit.*, 39. Beckwith does not identify Baca further than "Massalino," but the known facts of Baca's life, compared with Beckwith's biography, show that they are the same man. Beckwith says that Massalino was about 45, of the Spanish New Mexico race, by turns a hunter, a trapper, voyageur, lighter, farmer and guide; that in 1852 he had lived at Greenhorn with his Pawnee squaw, but the Utes made farming unprofitable, so he moved to the Pueblo where he resided with his family in August, 1853, the sole occupants of the place. (*Ibid.*, 35.) From other sources we learn that Marcelino Baca was born in Taos about 1808, son of Salvador and Tomasa Silva Baca (Elena Baca Autobeas, Pueblo, Colo., Oct. 31, 1907, to F. W. Cragin, EFVN III-96f, and II-1f, Cragin Collection.) Baca began to trap in the Rocky Mountains as early as 1831 (Testimony of Richens L. Wootton, Las Vegas, N. M., May 20, 1885, *Transcript of Record*, U. S. vs. Maxwell Land Grant Co., U. S. Sup. Ct., October term 1886, No. 974 p. 692), and is probably the "Marcellin" of Ruxton's *Life in the Far West* (N.Y., 1849), p. 193, "who, though Mexican, despised his people and abjured his blood, having been all his life in the mountains with the white hunters." Isaac P. Rose mentions "Masselino, a big Spaniard" three times in his account of trapping with Wyeth and the American Fur Company from 1834 to 1838 (James B. Marsh, *Four Years in the Rockies*, Long's recent reprint of edition of 1884, pp. 89, 142f, 217). Baca acquired his wife when he was captured by the Pawnees and about to be sacrificed. The chief's daughter went in tears to her father and begged for Baca's life, which was spared. Baca married her and gave her the name of his mother, Tomasa. (Jose Valdez, Walsenburg, Colo., Dec. 8, 1907, to F. W. Cragin, EFVN VI-9f, Cragin Coll.) Their son Jose was born in 1839 on the South Platte near present Denver; their son Luis was born at Fort Laramie in 1841; and Elena, who later married Mariano Autobeas, was born at Hardscrabble in 1846. (Elena Baca Autobeas to F. W. Cragin, *op. cit.*) Baca lived at the Hardscrabble settlement from 1844 to 1846, then briefly at Taos, then at the Greenhorn village from 1847 until the summer of 1853 when he moved to the old Pueblo, then to a ranch across the Fountain from the Pueblo. He was ruined financially in the Ute attack of December, 1854, moved to Greenhorn and finally to New Mexico. He was killed at the battle of Valverde on Feb. 21, 1862, by a shot in the forehead, while serving with the New Mexico Volunteers. Tomasa died in 1871. (Felipe Cisneros, Pueblo, Oct. 19, 1907, EFVN III-77; and Elena Autobeas, *op. cit.*)

mules up the rough southern slopes of the mountains far above the trail, where the snow had partly melted. To travel from the bottom to the top of the pass, a distance of only ten miles, took them eight days. They spent another day stamping a path through a mammoth drift in the saddle of the pass. On the eastern slope the climate was warm and mild, and the snow was gone. Rapidly they descended the Huerfano river to the plains, turned north along the trail and camped for a night near the Greenhorn village, where Baca and Montoya and their Indian wives were the only inhabitants. The next day they camped near a couple of deserted log cabins at the trail crossing of the St. Charles.¹³ The night after that they crossed the Arkansas and made camp near the old Pueblo,—"the building was there yet in a very good state of preservation," says Kroenig, indicating that it was unoccupied.¹⁴ They started down the north side of the Arkansas, and a few days later reached the Indian village, (located in the Big Timber, 100 miles below Pueblo, although Kroenig does not say where it was).¹⁵

The traders had meant to trade only with the Arapahoes, but the neighboring Cheyennes were also starving and insisted upon taking part in the trade. Within two days the traders had exchanged their beans and bread for luxuriant winter buffalo robes and buckskins, and started back the way they had come. At Greenhorn Baca and Montoya persuaded Kroenig and LeBlanc to plant a crop that summer in the village field where the land was already level and the ditches already dug, and the deserted houses still in good repair. Kroenig took his robes and buckskins back to New Mexico and returned with provisions, farming equipment and six peons. By May 20 he had put in his crop of beans, corn, wheat and vegetables at the Greenhorn settlement.¹⁶

Old trader Charles Autobeas would not have missed the excellent trade at the Indian villages in Big Timber, and he must have stopped at the Huerfano on the way back. The date

¹³In both the Jones version and the "Autobiography" typescript, Kroenig says that the St. Charles cabins had been deserted when the first news of the discovery of gold in California reached the inhabitants two years earlier. Accordingly the editor of the published version dates Kroenig's trading trip 1851. Kroenig himself gives no date for the trading trip, but he gives the date of August, 1853, to another trading trip obviously made in the same year.

¹⁴So says the "Autobiography." The Jones article alters the wording, and the meaning, thus: "The building was standing years later in a very good state of preservation." (Jones, "William Kronig," *op. cit.*, 293.)

¹⁵Since the 1840's the Cheyennes and Arapahoes had made their winter villages in Big Timber with some regularity. Lieutenant Beckwith passed the log houses "occupied as a trading station by Mr. Wm. Bent, during the past winter" in the summer of 1853, indicating that again in the winter of 1852-3 the Cheyennes and Arapahoes had located there. Lieutenant Beckwith, "Report," *op. cit.*, 28.

¹⁶Jones, "William Kronig, New Mexico Pioneer," *op. cit.*; Wm. Kroenig, Sr., "Autobiography," Denver Public Library.

Charley and his men arrived at the Huerfano—February 20, 1853—was not too early to begin preparing the land for its first crop. The irrigating ditch that was taken out three miles above the mouth of the Huerfano had to be dug in the frozen ground. As soon as the soil thawed, needle grass and wildflowers were plowed under, and in April or early May corn was plowed into the virgin loam and wheat sown later. But Charley Autobees was not at his farm on the Huerfano when the shoots poked through the earth in early summer. By April he had returned to Rio Colorado where, on April 26, 1853, he gave José Gonzales a quit-claim to the share of the Cebolla grant he had sold him three years earlier.¹⁷ He was still, or again, in Rio Colorado in June, 1853, when G. H. Heap met him in the plaza and followed him to his house.¹⁸ A year later, on June 1, 1854, he was witness to a sale of land in Rio Colorado,¹⁹—and so much for his statement that he lived on the Huerfano “continuously without interruption!”²⁰

When he was in Rio Colorado, did he leave men on the Huerfano to care for his crop? He must have done so, but none of the travellers who passed within a mile or so of his farm mentioned it in their journals, nor did they catch a glimpse of Charley's peons and animals at work in the summer of 1853. Most of these travellers were looking over the Arkansas valley as a possible route for a railroad to the Pacific. The mouth of the Huerfano assumed importance as the point where the route would leave the Arkansas to follow the Huerfano to its source in the Sangre de Cristo pass. A month after Autobees arrived at the Huerfano, Congress appropriated money for the exploration and survey of all the possible routes to the Pacific, and Captain J. W. Gunnison was chosen to explore the “central route” that followed up the Arkansas and Huerfano rivers.²¹

¹⁷H. Exec. Doc. 296, 42nd Cong., 2nd Sess. (Ser. 1520).

¹⁸Heap, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁹Taos Co. (N. M.) Records, Book A-1 (1852-1870), 109.

²⁰Another possible “interruption” might have involved the building of Bent's New Fort in Big Timber in the fall of 1853. Autobees' obituary, a poor account, says Charley “assisted in the building of Bent's old fort, near where Fort Lyon now stands.” (*Pueblo Chieftain*, June 22, 1882, p. 4, c. 2.) We have shown in Chapter I that Charley probably had nothing to do with the building of Bent's old fort (1834-1849), but his new fort was near Fort Lyon and in later years served as the commissary building for the military post. George Bent says the new post was begun in the spring of 1853 (letter to Geo. Hyde, Feb. 26, 1906, Denver Public Library), and R. M. Moore, later Bent's son-in-law, said Bent went away to trade with the Kiowas in the winter of 1852-3, leaving ten men at Big Timber to get out rock for the post. (Frank Hall, *History of Colorado*, Vol. I, p. 165.) But travellers through the Big Timber in the spring and summer of 1853 saw neither the ten men nor the stone fort under construction. William Bent was in Westport in June, 1853, when he apparently informed Captain Gunnison that he had spent the winter of 1852-3 trading at his now deserted log houses at “Big Timber.” (Lieutenant Beckwith, “Report,” *op. cit.*, 13, 28.) The fort was built by December, when Fremont bought horses and provisions of William Bent there. (S. M. Carvalho, *Incidents of Travel and Adventure in the Far West; with Col. Fremont's last Expedition* . . . N. Y., 1857, p. 71.)

²¹*Pacific Railway Reports*, Vol. II, title page and facing.

Before the official expedition under Gunnison was completely organized, a small party of men led by E. F. Beale, going to his new job in California as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, and by Gwinn Harris Heap, who kept a journal of the trip, left St. Louis to travel the “central route” to the Pacific. West of Bent's Fort, Beale's maps were inaccurate. Instead of striking the Huerfano at its mouth, the party met it four or five miles above the mouth, just out of sight of Charley's farm. On June 5, 1853, the party reached Fort Massachusetts, the new military post on the west side of the Sangre de Cristo pass. The next day Beale and the post commander went to Taos for men and animals. When they returned, the expedition continued across the San Luis valley and over Cochetopa pass until, in the high waters of the Grand (Colorado) river, it lost most of its provisions and ammunition. With a few men Heap returned to Taos for more supplies. He reached the plaza of Rio Colorado on July 6, and there “Mr. Charles Otterby, a Missourian, long domiciliated in New Mexico, invited me to his house and procured me a fresh horse, as the one I had ridden from the Costilla (a distance of twenty-two miles) in two hours and a half, had broken down. I left [Rio] Colorado at noon. . . .”²² The little party went on to Arroyo Hondo, where Heap hired “a young American, Thomas Otterby, to go with us to California, he having a reputation almost equal to Kit Carson's for bravery, dexterity with his rifle, and skill in mountain life.”²³ Heap bought his supplies at Taos, returned to his party camped on the banks of the Grand, and went on to California.

On July 29, the official exploring party under Captain Gunnison passed Bent's Fort. From Bent's Fort up the Arkansas, Gunnison's maps, like Beale's, were poor. In consequence he followed the Apishapa, mistaking it for the Huerfano, all the way to the Taos trail crossing, again cheating us of a description of Charley's farm. In the San Luis valley a member of the party was sent to Taos for provisions with which he returned and the party went on to Utah.²⁴

By the middle of August, after two visits from Heap and one from the official exploring party, the people of Taos must have been buzzing with the important news of the railroad that might pass the mouth of the Huerfano, bringing civilization and great riches in its wake. At any rate, Ceran St. Vrain no longer had to beg and bribe men to settle upon his grant.

²²Heap, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴Lieutenant Beckwith, “Report,” *op. cit.*, 28-88.

Late in 1853 he offered Charles Francis Clark, stationed at Camp Burgwin near Taos, a share in "a farm and store on the Arkansas River near Bent's Fort for the accomodation of the California Emigration and Indian trade" if Clark would put up some of his own money and take management of the whole concern.²⁰ Nothing came of this proposal to Clark, but by the time the offer was made, there was already a settlement started on the Arkansas. According to a letter dated Taos, October 22, 1853, and published in 1854 in the appendix of G. H. Heap's journal, "There is now being commenced a settlement on the Arkansas River at the mouth of the Huerfano, at which place emigrants can also procure such necessaries as they may be in want of; also information as to the route, or guides if they wish. There is also a good ferry at the mouth of the Huerfano."²¹ The letter was signed by R. S. [L.] Wootton, a former trapper for Bent, St. Vrain & Co., and since 1848 a resident of Taos. After the American occupation Wootton had a contract to supply soldiers stationed at Taos with beef. He kept his herd of cattle, so he said in his "autobiography," at the mouth of the Huerfano as early as 1849, "where I had picked out a fine body of land and started a 'stock ranch.'"²² If his recollections happen to be accurate in this case, the existence of the "stock ranch" would account for the fact that no one says Charley Autobeas was the first settler on the Huerfano. Wootton, however, had kept herds of buffalo calves or cattle at various dates and at various locations along the Arkansas, and he tended in his accounts to get these dates and locations confused.²³

Besides his beef business, Dick Wootton and his brother-in-law Charles D. Williams²⁴ kept a store on the south side of the Taos plaza, supported in large measure by the soldiers stationed in the town of Taos. When Col. E. V. Sumner canceled civilian contracts and removed the soldiers from the towns in the summer of 1851, R. L. Wootton & Co. began to founder. To recoup, Wootton and Williams made a brilliant and much imitated speculation: In June, 1852, they borrowed

money from Jesse B. Turley, added some of their own, bought 14,000 sheep, fattened them near Fort Barclay, and then Wootton and 31 men drove them to California. The flock brought very high prices in California, and Wootton says he made a profit of \$40,000. On January 8, 1853, Wootton arrived back at Taos.²⁵

It was probably the proceeds of Wootton's sheep speculation, along with what Ceran St. Vrain would have furnished in men, equipment, or cash, that financed the village near the mouth of the Huerfano. The settlement was begun not later than the middle of October, 1853, when Wootton wrote the testimonial for Heap, and not earlier than the first week in August, when Thomas Fitzpatrick, Upper Arkansas Indian Agent, passing up the north side of the Arkansas to Pueblo, described the "rich alluvial bottom lands" and other natural attributes that would someday, he thought, make the land valuable, without mentioning the new settlement, later plainly visible from the other side of the river.²⁶ There is no evidence who the early occupants of the Huerfano village were, or as to whether Wootton himself directed its establishment. Around the first of December, 1853, the last exploring expedition to concern itself with the practicability of the "central route" passed the mouth of the Huerfano. It was led by J. C. Fremont, who wrote: "In the beginning of December we found yet no snow on the Huerfano river, and were informed by an old resident, then engaged in establishing a farm at the mouth of this stream, that snow seldom or never fell there, and that cattle were left in the range all the winter through."²⁷ The "old resident" could have been Wootton; he also could have been Charles Autobeas, who helped to open the settlement, as we shall see.

By the beginning of 1854 Wootton had made up his mind to live on the Arkansas. He mortgaged his store at Taos²⁸ and built himself "a very substantial fortress" on the Arkansas. In July he sold his Taos business²⁹ and arranged to have his wife Dolores and their three children sent from Taos to Fort

²⁰Letter of C. F. Clark to his father, dated Cantonment Burgwin, Taos, N. M., Dec. 22, 1853. H. O. Brayer, *To Form A More Perfect Union, the Lives of Charles Francis and Mary Clark from Their Letters, 1847-1871* (Albuquerque, 1941), p. 63.

²¹Heap, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

²²H. L. Conard, "Uncle Dick" Wootton, (Chicago, 1890), pp. 205-6, 281.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 88-9, 296, 388; and see Hall, *History of Colorado*, II, 254.

²⁴Wootton married Dolores LaFevre; Williams married Guillerma; both were daughters of the carpenter from Carondelet, Mo., living in Taos, Manuel LaFevre. (Eliza Ann Wootton Walker, Trinidad, Colo., June 4, 1908, to F. W. Cragin, EFVN IX-34, Cragin Collection.) Williams had come out as a sergeant with Kearny's army, was ordered up to Taos in 1848 and there discharged. He testified he began living at Rayado in 1848, but he had apparently forgotten about his store in Taos. (Testimony of Charles Williams, Trinidad, Colo., Nov. 2, 1883, *Transcript of Record*, U. S. vs. Maxwell Land Grant Co., U. S. Supreme Court, October term, 1886, p. 188f.)

²⁵MS contract between R. L. Wootton & Co. and Jesse B. Turley, with the Turley Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, courtesy of Lester F. Turley, El Monte, Calif. Jesse was Simeon Turley's brother and came out from Missouri in 1847 to settle Simeon's estate. He made his home in New Mexico until he died in 1861 at Mora. Other details about this sheep drive may be found in Conard, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-276, and the *San Francisco Call*, March 23, 1888, p. 5, c. 7, file in the California State Library, Sacramento. There is reason to doubt that Charles Williams accompanied Wootton on this trip. On Nov. 6, 1852, the County of Taos paid Charles Williams "the price of 1 book—\$3.00." Taos Co. (N. M.) Records, Book C-1, n.p.

²⁶*H. Exec. Doc. 1*, 33rd Cong., 1st Sess. (Ser. 710), 365.

²⁷*S. Misc. Doc. 67*, 33rd Cong., 1st Sess. (Ser. 705), 2.

²⁸Taos Co. (N. M.) Records, Book A-1, p. 66.

²⁹Taos Co. (N. M.) Records, Book B-3, p. 5.

Massachusetts, where an escort of soldiers met them and brought them over the Sangre de Cristo pass to their new home.³⁵

So began the Huerfano village. Charles Autobees drove a wedge into the unsettled region in February, 1853; Dick Wootton followed in October. Soon there came other men, driven from New Mexico by hard times, or lured to the Huerfano by hopes of a Pacific Railroad, or tempted by St. Vrain with promises of choice land. The names of these men have been lost, but there were many of them, for the Huerfano village was the biggest that the Arkansas valley had yet seen.³⁶ The settlement was located at a fertile and irrigable spot, just across the river from the most popular emigrant camp in the region, and far from the mountains that sheltered the vengeful Utes. The Huerfano village began with every expectation of becoming the Upper Arkansas valley's first permanent settlement.

³⁵Conard, *op. cit.*, p. 296. William Bransford testified in 1857 that Charles Williams was a settler on the Huerfano, too (see footnote No. 2), but no other source locates him at any time on the Huerfano except in 1855 when he was a captain in Ceran St. Vrain's punitive expedition against the Utes.

³⁶Felipe Cisneros, Florence, Colo., Nov. 14, 1907, to F. W. Cragin, EFWN XV-21, Cragin Collection.

VI

Sometime after October, 1853, when Dick Wootton or his men began the Huerfano village on the south side of the Arkansas river a mile above the mouth of the Huerfano, Charles Autobees moved down from his farm several miles up the Huerfano and built himself a house in Wootton's settlement. At least, his son Tom says he did;¹ so do George Simpson² and Pedro Sandoval.³ Dick Wootton says Autobees lived "two miles above me" or "two miles up the river," and by "river" Dick seems to mean the Arkansas, but he could mean the Huerfano instead and be referring to Charley's farm.⁴ An 1872 newspaper article, which announces that most of its material derives from Charles Autobees himself, says, "On the Huerfano J. B. Doyle, R. L. Wootton, Charles Autobees and their employes, had opened a settlement and were keeping stock and farming to a limited extent."⁵ Charley, however, himself states

¹Tom Autobees, Avondale, Colo., Nov. 8, 1907, to F. W. Cragin, EFWN II-57, Cragin Collection, Pioneers' Museum, Colorado Springs, Colo.

²Article signed "Senex" [George S. Simpson], clipped from the *Trinidad Daily News* of April or May, 1884, in Dawson Scrapbook X-298, Library, Colorado State Historical Society, Denver.

³Pedro Sandoval, Webber P.O., N. M., June 12, 1908, to F. W. Cragin, EFWN IX-58, Cragin Collection.

⁴H. L. Conard, "Uncle Dick" Wootton (Chicago, 1890), pp. 296, 303.

⁵*The Pueblo People*, March 30, 1872, newspaper clipping in Randall Scrapbook, Vol. VI, 5; Western History Dept., Denver Public Library.

under oath in 1873 that he has lived on the Huerfano "continuously without interruption" since 1853⁶ (but there were interruptions aplenty, as we have already noted). And Felipe Cisneros, who as a grown boy lived with Marcelino Baca at the mouth of the Fountain in 1854 and is generally an excellent witness, insists that Autobees never lived at the Huerfano village at all.⁷ Every one of these statements is based on recollections of old-timers, memories that perhaps lay undisturbed anywhere from twenty to fifty years after the events in question. It is upon such shaky evidence that any description of the Huerfano settlement must depend. The records are silent, not only about Charles Autobees living there, but about the very existence of the village, short-lived and remote as it was. Only a few scraps of contemporary reference, only the deserted buildings that mystified travellers in later years, and the memories of old men, recall the little town.

By the fall of 1854 other men from New Mexico had moved to the Huerfano village. In October, 1853, Joseph B. Doyle and George S. Simpson came up from Fort Barclay, N. M., to live again in the old Pueblo they had built eleven years earlier at the mouth of Fountain creek.⁸ Fort Barclay had been a failure. Col. E. V. Sumner had not only refused to buy the handsome structure, but in 1851 he built Fort Union seven miles north.⁹ In August, 1852, Barclay deeded Doyle half his property at *la junta de los rios*¹⁰ and by February, 1853, the fort was being advertised for sale in the columns of the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, "the proprietors wishing to close their business in New Mexico."¹¹ But the property did not sell, and when Barclay died there early in 1856, his half-interest in the fort was part of his estate.¹² Doyle and Simpson spent the winter of 1853-4 at the Pueblo. In the spring of 1854 they moved to the mouth of the St. Charles, where Doyle built an elaborate log *placita*. Finding the St. Charles prone to floods, they abandoned the St. Charles house in the fall of 1854 and moved into another one Doyle had constructed in the Huerfano village.¹³

⁶Testimony of Charles Autobees, Pueblo, Colo., Jan. 16, 1873, Records of the General Land Office, Colo. Private Land Claim No. 17, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

⁷Florence, Colo., Nov. 14, 1907, to F. W. Cragin, EFWN XV-19, Cragin Collection.

⁸Article signed "Senex" in *Trinidad Daily News*, April or May, 1884, *op. cit.*; and Pedro Sandoval to F. W. Cragin, *op. cit.* Sandoval names as people who came from Fort Barclay to the Pueblo with Joe Doyle and his family: Charley Pray and wife, Benito Sandoval (Pedro's father) and family, Ben Ryder and family, Tom Suaso, Juan Ignacio Valencia, MacIntosh and family, Maurice and family, Tanislado de Luna and family, and Bob Rice.

⁹Jacob Beard, El Paso, Texas, Oct. 30, 1904, to F. W. Cragin, EFWN 1-4, Cragin Collection.

¹⁰Mora Co., (N. M.) Records, Book I, 98.

¹¹Feb. 19, 1853, p. 1, c. 1.

¹²Taos Co. (N. M.) Records, Book C-3, pp. 13, 76, 92.

¹³Article signed "Senex" *Trinidad Daily News*, April or May, 1884, *op. cit.*, and Pedro Sandoval to F. W. Cragin, *op. cit.*

Another resident of the Huerfano village was William Kroenig. After he had harvested a crop on the Greenhorn in July, 1853, he packed it up to Fort Laramie and traded it to emigrants and Indians. In August he started south with 94 sore-footed emigrant cattle and 200 Moreno sheep that he meant to take to the "nice hilly country" around Fort Barclay to start a ranch. At the mouth of the Fountain he met Marcelino Baca, who was establishing a farm on the northeast side of the rivers' junction. Baca persuaded him to stay on the Arkansas, and at this point Kroenig's own notes end.¹⁴ Tom Autobeas says Kroenig built a *placita* in the Huerfano village and went into partnership with Charles Autobeas at the farm on the Huerfano river, Kroenig providing the seed and Autobeas the labor. This arrangement lasted three years, says Tom, and the field produced good crops every year.¹⁵

In 1907 Tom Autobeas gave F. W. Cragin a description of the Huerfano village, based upon the recollections of others, and upon his own boyish investigations of the ruins (for the village had been deserted for two years when Tom, then a lad of eight, first saw it in 1857). The wealthy members of the settlement were Doyle the Indian trader, Wootton the stock-raiser and emigrant-trader, and Autobeas the farmer. Each had his *placita*, or large house consisting of rooms built around an open square, in the manner of New Mexican country houses of that period. Doyle's *placita* was the largest, measuring about 75 by 60 feet, and was constructed of *jacal*—vertical poles interlaced with twigs and vines and plastered with mud. It had rooms for Doyle's and Simpson's families, as well as a dining room, kitchen, blacksmith shop, storage rooms, and a trade room. The trade room was not for Indians but for Doyle's peons, since Doyle conducted his trade at the Indian camps and villages.¹⁶

¹⁴Charles Irving Jones, "William Kronig, New Mexico Pioneer," *New Mexico Historical Review*, Vol. XIX, No. 4 (October, 1944), 300-311; and William Kroenig, Sr., "Autobiography," Western History Dept., Denver Public Library. Charles Irving Jones adds to Kroenig's own notes the information that Kroenig had a "store and other buildings" at Pueblo, destroyed in the massacre. Jones is quoting incorrectly from *History of New Mexico* (Pacific States Publ. Co., 1907), II, 954-56, a source apparently supplied by Kroenig himself and cited by L. B. Bloom, editor of the *Review*, in a footnote. What the article in *History of New Mexico* actually said was that business on the Arkansas was broken up by several Indian attacks whereupon Kroenig went to Costilla and started a store and distillery—and that, too, is not quite accurate, for he joined Charles Autobeas on the Huerfano first. In the many detailed accounts we have of the massacre no one mentions Kroenig living near Pueblo at the time, and Kroenig did not file a claim for any property lost during the massacre, as he did for property lost in a later attack on the Huerfano village as we shall see later. It is interesting that Lieutenant Beckwith, on August 6, 1853, met a trader from New Mexico returning from Fort Laramie with a herd of cattle and horses, camped on the Graneros, a few miles south of the Greenhorn. (Beckwith, "Report," Pacific Railway Reports, II, 34.) This must have been either Kroenig himself or his employee whom he names as Charles Muston, taking the livestock to the junction of the Mora and Sapello, as planned.

¹⁵Tom Autobeas, July 29, 1908, EFVN IV-7. See Chapt. V, n.2 for quotation of Tom's statement regarding this partnership, and for comments upon its reliability.

¹⁶Tom Autobeas, Nov. 8, 1907, EFVN II-60.

Tom recalls that Autobeas' house was smaller than either Doyle's or Wootton's, but he gives us no description of it. Eliza Ann Wootton, who was five when she left the Huerfano village, fifty-seven when she talked to F. W. Cragin, describes her father's house, a typical *placita*: The outside was a rectangular log stockade, with pointed pickets and a big gate in the center of the long southwest wall. Along the long sides of the inside of the stockade wall were rooms of horizontally-laid logs with flat dirt roofs, each room opening out upon the yard. On either side of the big gate was the Wootton family quarters, consisting of a living room, two bedrooms and a kitchen. Along the wall opposite the gate were rooms for peons, a trade room, and quarters for Ben Ryder and his fat wife Chepita. Against the southeast wall of the stockade there were no rooms, and against the northwest wall there was an open shed with puncheon floor (split logs flat side up), part of which was used for storage of wagons and heavy implements, part for husking and storing corn. (Floors in the other rooms were probably dirt, swept constantly until as hard and dustless as concrete.) The top of the shed was covered with a few inches of soil and used by the women for roof-farming. In the yard just in front of the shed was a blacksmith shop with forge and bellows and a chimney in the north corner. Outside the stockade on the northwest end of the rectangle was a yard with a big Mexican bake-oven in it, where the Woottons' cook, Juan "Chiquito" Trujillo, made tortillas. To the northwest of the yard was the corral.¹⁷ Wootton himself said his *placita* had "strong bullet proof bastions" at diagonally opposite corners of the stockade wall.¹⁸

Tom Autobeas says that William Kroenig, Levin Mitchell and Juan Manuel ("Guerro") Pais also had *placitas* in the village, but he is mistaken at least about Mitchell, who lived up the Arkansas at the mouth of the St. Charles. Tom says that Doyle's *placita* was about 300 yards east of Wootton's, and east of Doyle were, in this order, Autobeas, Mitchell, Kroenig, and Juan Pais. South of the *placitas* by the river bluffs was a row of *jacal* cabins where the peons lived. Down by the river were a group of dug-outs where French and Mexican laborers lived, among them Charlefoix and John Smith with his Cheyenne wife. Opposite the grove of cottonwoods on the north side of the Arkansas where the emigrants camped was a ferry and about thirty feet above the ferry was a ford. At one end

¹⁷Eliza Ann Wootton Walker, Trinidad, Colo., Dec. 15, 1907, to F. W. Cragin, EFVN XI-5f.

¹⁸Conard, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

of the village were a few Indian sweat-houses—steam baths made by pouring water over red-hot stones and capturing the steam in a wooden frame covered with tanned buffalo hides (apishamores).¹⁹

In a hewed log cabin midway between the houses of Doyle and Wootton lived Tom Whittlesey with his wife Maria.²⁰ Whittlesey was called *Tomas el Matador*, a nickname he picked up at the Hardscrabble settlement some years earlier after hacking to bits his mistress and her lover.²¹ *El Matador* was not the only criminal living on the Huerfano, for Juan “Chiquito” Trujillo, Wootton’s tiny cook, was said to have murdered his mistress’ husband in Taos and escaped the consequences by coming to the Huerfano village with Wootton’s family.²² There is no record of this murder in Taos, however, and one suspects that the story grew as a legend in the Autobees family to help account for the later blood feud between Juan Chiquito and the Autobees.²³

At the mouth of the St. Charles, eleven miles west of the Huerfano village, some Americans had moved into the house Joe Doyle abandoned in the fall of 1854. These men, whose names have been compiled from various sources, were: Levin “Colorado” Mitchell, J. W. Atwood, A. P. Tibbetts, Samuel Harrison, Charley Carson, George McDougal, Tom Suaso, Francis Yara, one Steele, a man whose name sounded to Tom Autobees like “Tortez,” and their retinues of peons and “wives.”²⁴

On the north side of the Arkansas at the mouth of the Fountain was Marcelino Baca, whose cornfield was located just where the Pueblo stockyards are today. Baca had moved to the mouth of the Fountain from Greenhorn in the summer of 1853, and now lived with his family in a four-room house.

¹⁹Tom Autobees, Nov. 8, 1907, to F. W. Cragin, EFWN KK-58f.

²⁰Eliza Ann Wootton Walker, Trinidad, May 31, 1908, to F. W. Cragin, EFWN IX-33.

²¹Mrs. Felipe Ledoux, Las Vegas, N. M., Feb. 13, 1908, to F. W. Cragin, EFWN VII-14. Alexander Barclay, who was living at Hardscrabble when the murder occurred, calls “Whittlesey” Wells. (Unpublished information, State Historian’s office, Denver.)

²²Tom Autobees, Nov. 7, 1907, EFWN II-25.

²³At least the murder did not occur as early as 1853. On April 8, 1863, Juan Trujillo and Manuel Trujillo were indicted for murder at Taos. This was eight months after Juan had been killed by the Autobees at Pueblo. On Sept. 8, Manuel alone was the defendant, and the case was continued until on April 11, 1864, the case was stricken from the docket. Taos Co. (N. M.) Records, Book AA (District Court, 1863-1877), 6, 33, 38.

²⁴Conard, *op. cit.*, 296-7; Tom Autobees, Nov. 7, 1907, EFWN II-24, Nov. 10, 1907, EFWN X-40. Cragin Collection; Pedro Sandoval, June 12, 1908, EFWN III-48f; *The Pueblo People*, March 20, 1872, clipping in Randall Scrapbook VI, 5, Western History, Denver Public Library; “Claims for Indian Depredations in New Mexico,” *H. Exec. Doc. 123*, 35th Cong., 1st Sess. (Ser. 959), 61f.

In several outbuildings lived other men and their families who worked either for Baca or at the old fort.²⁵

Across the Fountain from Baca was the Pueblo, freshly rebuilt and whitewashed inside, housing about twenty Mexicans from Taos and Mora who had come up with Doyle and Simpson. They eked out a small living by growing corn near the fort, grazing a few animals on the bluffs back of the fort, and trading with the Indians. At the head of these men (“*com-mandante del fuerte*”) was Benito Sandoval who intended to move down to the Huerfano village after Christmas, 1854.²⁶

By the fall of 1854 Wootton, Doyle and Simpson had brought their wives and children up from New Mexico. Only Charles Autobees appeared to distrust the temper of the Indians, for he kept his family in the relative security of Rio Colorado, N. M.²⁷

The temper of the Indians was indeed not to be trusted. In October, 1854, Chico Velasquez and his Muache Utes met with the Indian Superintendent for a talk at Abiquiu, N. M. During the talk the Superintendent gave the head men some blankets as a sign of friendship. On their way back to their village in the San Luis valley, smallpox broke out among the chiefs and they all died, including Chico Velasquez. The Indians believed that the Superintendent had deliberately infected his gift blankets with the deadly pox, and with Tierra Blanco, or simply Blanco, at their head, they joined the Jicarilla Apaches in war on the white men.²⁸ And they wreaked their vengeance upon Fort Pueblo, with whose inhabitants they had traded in peace not so long before.

The story of the massacre has been told many times, usually with some flourishes regarding a shooting match and a drunken feast held at the fort with the Indians preliminary to the slaughter—details added originally by George Simpson, a man of imagination. The account that follows is copied from a torn newspaper clipping in a scrapbook, from *The Pueblo People*, March 30, 1872, and Charles Autobees is given credit for most of the material. After describing the Arkansas settlements, the article continues:

These settlements were in a state of [fancied] security until the morning of Christmas day, 1854. On that morning a party of Ute Indians made their appearance at Marcellino Baca’s ranch on [the] Fontaine, apparently as friendly as [in the]

²⁵Miguel Guterrez, Pueblo, Colo., Oct. 17, 1907, to F. W. Cragin, EFWN III-72; Elena Baca Autobees, Salt Creek, Colo., Oct. 31, 1907, to F. W. Cragin, EFWN III-98. In the summer of 1853 D. B. Ward, an emigrant, described what must have been Baca’s first attempt at settlement in the old fort itself: “We left the Arkansas River at old Pueblo, a settlement of people,—half-breed Mexicans and Indians who had located on that river near where Boiling or Turkey Creek empties into it.” *Across the Plains in 1853* (1911), p. 25.

²⁶Pedro Sandoval, June 12, 1908, EFWN IX-54f.

²⁷Tom Autobees, July 29, 1908, EFWN IV-8.

²⁸*Kit Carson’s Own Story*, ed. Blanche C. Grant, (Taos, 1926), p. 116.

period before. But as they rode [up to the] house, the quick eye of one [old man] caught a sight of Baca's [horse among the Indians. He at once [knew they] meant mischief, and gave [the alarm.] The house was closed at [once, and the] means of defense were so [strong the] Indians saw that an attack would be fruitless. They then rode rapidly to the Old Fort, the Pueblo proper, and there their treacherous pretensions of friendship were accepted as genuine. They were admitted without hesitation, and each one seized a hand of one of the inmates in a grasp of simulated friendship just before dealing a fatal blow. The party were slaughtered without warning and without time to think of organizing any resistance. Three fell dead within the walls of the post, two found in the neighborhood who had made desperate but unavailing efforts to escape. All who were actually in the Fort were killed or made a temporary escape mortally wounded. Benito Sandoval, an uncle of Mrs. J. B. Doyle, ——— Pacheco, and ——— Trujique, fell on the spot, as well as two more whose names are unknown. Romaldo Cordova was mortally wounded and died a short time afterwards at Autobees ranch. The news of this massacre reached the Huerfano the same day and in the night following Charley Autobees accompanied by Charley Carson, a nephew of the famous Kit Carson, started for the scene of the massacre. On arriving at the St. Charles they tried to induce a party of Americans there to accompany them to the Pueblo, which request they refused to grant, but a Frenchman volunteered to accompany them, and the three came together, found five bodies of the slain and buried them in one grave just in front of the fort. The river has since encroached upon this spot and now runs over the site of their common grave.²⁹

At the time this was done the adjoining bluffs "were alive with Indians" to use the language of one of our informants, and they were obliged to leave without making much search for the remains of others. Eight days later the bodies of four more persons, three of them Americans and one Mexican, were found on the north side of the Arkansas river, about one and one-half miles above the mouth of the St. Charles. The whole number who fell victims to the first attack and those which succeeded it were eighteen or nineteen, of whom four were Americans and the remainder Mexicans. The bodies of some were found afterwards and it was some time, even months, before it was certainly known how destructive had been the treacherous attack of the red skins.

The old Pueblo was never afterwards occupied for any purpose and its site was deserted until the discovery of gold gave an impetus to immigration when the permanent settlement of Pueblo began.

We are mainly indebted to Charley Autobees, one of the last remaining veterans of the olden times, for the facts which we here record. . . .³⁰

²⁹Sometime in the 1870's Charles Autobees was at the house of Pueblo's first schoolteacher, G. W. Bilby, for dinner. Bilby's house was near the site of old Fort Pueblo, and after dinner Charley walked out and showed Bilby where he had buried the massacre victims. (Bilby to F. W. Cragin, Pueblo, Colo., Oct. 15, 1907, EFVN III-62.) Late in the century the skeletons of some of these victims were dug up ten feet below street level, during the laying of pipe in front of the Fariss Hotel (now gone) in Pueblo. (Elliott Coues, *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, N. Y., 1895, Vol. II, 453-4, note 45.)

³⁰Randall Scrapbook VI, 5, Western History Dept., Denver Public Library. Another brief account naming Charles Autobees as its source may be found in Frank Hall, *History of Colorado* (Chicago, 1889), I, 168, who copied it from R. M. Stevenson's account of Pueblo County in *History of the Arkansas Valley, Colorado* (1881), p. 765. A detailed account based solely on interviews of F. W. Cragin with survivors and eye-witnesses is Janet Lecompte's "Pueblo Massacre." *Denver Westerner's Brand Book*, 1954, pp. 30-48.

J. W. Atwood of the St. Charles settlement was near the fort at the time of the massacre and saw the Utes driving off the stock. When they had gone, Atwood helped bury the victims, and then immediately he set out for New Mexico, to report the massacre and to seek help from the troops there. While Atwood was on his way over the Sangre de Cristo pass, on December 27 the Utes attacked again, and this time it was the St. Charles settlement. They killed two Americans (hired hands of Steele and "Tortez"), two Mexicans they found on the road between Pueblo and the St. Charles (one of whom was Benito Baca, Marcelino's brother),³¹ and they ran off forty head of Levin Mitchell's cattle.³²

On January 7, 1855, J. W. Atwood arrived at Camp Burgwin near Taos, told his appalling story, and was sent on to Fort Marcy, army headquarters at Santa Fe. He said that in the attack on the Pueblo the Utes had numbered about a hundred, that fourteen men had been killed, two wounded, and one woman and two children captured, along with two hundred head of cattle. The commanders of Fort Union, Fort Massachusetts and camps at Taos and Albuquerque were ordered to make preparations, with the greatest secrecy, for a final, devastating campaign against the Utes and their allies.³³

Letters and dispatches flew back and forth between headquarters at Fort Marcy and troops at Fort Union, but the clumsy army of retribution had not been organized before the Utes once more galloped down the Arkansas. By this time no one was living at the mouth of the Fountain, for all the occupants of the old fort had been murdered or captured, and Marcelino Baca had moved his entire household and goods to the St. Charles village. Some of the frightened St. Charles people were planning to leave the Indian country altogether, and had their belongings already loaded onto wagons in charge of nine Cherokee teamsters, moving slowly down the river towards the Huerfano, and the States. On January 19, 1855, the same band of Indians caught up with the wagons on the road between the St. Charles and the Huerfano, killed the nine Cherokee teamsters, and burned the wagons.³⁴ The de-

³¹Elena Baca Autobees, Pueblo, Colo., Oct. 31, 1907, EFVN III-2; Pedro Sandoval, June 12, 1908, EFVN IX-54.

³²*H. Exec. Doc.* 123, 35th Cong., 1st Sess. (Ser. 959) 62. Mitchell valued his cattle at \$1,470; the affidavits of Samuel Harrison, "represented to be a man of bad character," and "others" not named, were presented to confirm Mitchell's claim.

³³Gen. W. A. Nichols, Santa Fe, Jan. 11, 1855, to Col. T. T. Fautleroy, Fort Union; Nichols to Maj. G. A. H. Blake, Cant. Burgwin, Jan. 13, 1855; Nichols, Jan. 12, 1855, to Lt. Col. H. Brooks, Fort Massachusetts; Nichols to Maj. J. H. Carleton, Albuquerque, Jan. 13, 1855, Records of the War Dept., Dept. of N. M., Orders, Vol. IX, 265f, RG 98, National Archives, copies in possession of James W. Arrott, Sapello, N. M., who has kindly allowed me to see parts of his fine collection of documents relating to Fort Union.

³⁴Conard, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

fenses at the St. Charles village held, but the Indians managed to get away with 117 *fanegas* (double bushels) of Marcelino Baca's corn.³⁵

The Indians intended to make a clean sweep of the Arkansas settlements, as the settlers could see all too clearly. Says Dick Wootton,

After killing the teamsters, the Indians came on down the river and passed the home of my neighbor two miles above me. This neighbor was Charles Auterby, a Frenchman, who had been in the country a long time, was a good Indian fighter, and had his place as well protected as mine. He had several men with him, all of whom were inside his fort, and ready to fight, with the exception of one. This one was outside the fort, digging a grave for poor old Charlefoix . . .³⁶

The grave was not for poor old Charlefoix, who lived for another fifteen years or more, but for a survivor of the Pueblo massacre, Romaldo Cordova. He was buried on the summit of a cobblestone-covered hill near Autobeas' house. The hill was known for years as "Romaldo's Grave Hill" and the Huerfano village was known sometimes to local posterity as "Romaldo's Grave Village."³⁷ As the Indians galloped up from the distance, the gravedigger had no time to get back to Autobeas' *placita*, so he dropped into the grave and the Indians passed by without seeing him.³⁸

The Autobeas *placita*, as Wootton remarks, was well-defended, and the Indians did not attack it. Instead, when they reached Autobeas' house they divided up into two parties, evidently for the purpose of rounding up the cattle. One of the two parties rode down the river to Doyle's and Wootton's. Joe Doyle was not there; he was trading with the Arapahoes at Bijou Basin on the Platte-Arkansas divide, but his wife and children had gathered at Wootton's house, as had most of the other people in the village. Wootton had piled sacks of corn around the edge of his roof, and behind these sacks crouched men with their rifles cocked.³⁹ When the Indians dashed past the *placita* a dozen men on horseback burst out the gate, the men behind the sacks began to fire, and the startled Indians fled.⁴⁰ The other party of Indians rode up the Huerfano looking for cattle. At Charley Autobeas' farm they surprised Maria, wife of Tom Whittlesey, and her two children. She jumped on a horse, put one child behind her, tied the other to her with her long *reboso*, and dashed off to the

³⁵H. Exec. Doc. 123, 35th Cong., 1st Sess. (Ser. 959), 62.

³⁶Conard, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

³⁷Tom Autobeas, Nov. 8, 1907, EFVN II-32; Pedro Sandoval, June 12, 1908, EFVN IX-47.

³⁸Conard, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

³⁹Eliza Ann Wootton Walker, Dec. 15, 1907, EFVN XI-16.

⁴⁰Conard, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

safety of the Huerfano village with the Utes close behind her.⁴¹

On this raid the Utes got 30 cows and 9 horses belonging to Tom Suaso, 7 horses and a wagon belonging to William Kroenig,⁴² but neither Autobeas nor Wootton lost anything, even though Wootton's cattle were ranging in full sight down along the Arkansas.⁴³ Some of the stolen animals and property were later recovered by the Arapahoes who, egged on by Wootton and Autobeas, followed the Utes as they made their leisurely way into the mountains near later Canon City. The Arapahoes attacked and defeated them on the trail, but their victory had evil consequences. Among the goods they recovered from the Utes were blankets infected with smallpox, and the Arapahoes suffered heavily from the disease.⁴⁴

By the end of February the military expedition against the Utes was organized and on the march, with orders to chase the Indians, rout them out of their mountain hideouts, meet them in pitched battles wherever they should be found. The most effective arm of this expedition of over five hundred soldiers, was five companies of volunteers under Lt. Col. Ceran St. Vrain, who had particular reason to wish the Utes chastised—for again they had disturbed the settlement of his grant. The campaign raged for six months through the mountains and on the eastern side of the mountains, with the Indians always on the move, starving because they could not make food, losing property with every attack. By June 30, General Garland wrote that the Utes were making peace overtures, and on August 8, a treaty was concluded with them at Abiquiu.⁴⁵

Although the Utes were whipped in the end, their attacks on the Arkansas settlements achieved the results they had wanted. In the spring of 1855 Joe Doyle, George Simpson, Ben Ryder, Tom Suaso and others took their families back to Fort Barclay.⁴⁶ Atwood and Tibbetts moved down the river to old Bent's Fort, partly in ruins, where they traded with the Cheyennes in a few rooms they had fitted up,⁴⁷ and Marcelino Baca, stripped of all his wealth, returned to Greenhorn. By the summer of 1855 the only men left on the Arkansas from the four settlements were Autobeas and Wootton and their employees, and Wootton probably would not have remained had

⁴¹Eliza Ann Wootton Walker, Dec. 15, 1907, EFVN XI-16; June 2, 1908, EFVN XI-33f.

⁴²H. Exec. Doc. 123, 35th Cong., 1st Sess. (Ser. 959), 62.

⁴³Conard, *op. cit.*, p. 302.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 304; *Denver Tribune*, Feb. 9, 1879, p. 4, c. 1.

⁴⁵S. Exec. Doc. 1, 34th Cong., 1st Sess. (Ser. 811), pp. 56-72.

⁴⁶Conard, *op. cit.*, p. 312; Tom Autobeas, Nov. 7, 1907, EFVN II-25f.

⁴⁷Jesse Nelson, Smith's Canon, Colo., July 9, 1908, to F. W. Cragin, EFVN VIII-53.

his wife Dolores not been far along in pregnancy. The Woottons had begged Chepita Ryder, a fine midwife, to attend at the birth, but the Ryders were too afraid of the Indians to stay on the Arkansas. On May 6, 1855, after giving birth to her fourth child, Dolores Wootton died at the Huerfano village and was buried at the base of Romaldo's Grave Hill.⁴⁸ Wootton took his children to their LaFevre grandparents in Taos, returned to the Arkansas and lived there until the early part of 1856. Then he too went back to New Mexico, with a new wife he had found among his customers, the California emigrants,⁴⁹ leaving Charles Autobees and a few of his friends and retainers alone again on the Huerfano. (To be continued.)

⁴⁸Eliza Ann Wootton Walker, Dec. 4, 1907, EFWN XI-3.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, and Conard, *op. cit.*, p. 312f.