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## Journal of a Fifty-Niner

By ROBERT M. WARNER\*

Joshua Manwaring of Lapeer County, Michigan, was among the adventurers who in 1859 followed the lure of gold to Colorado. Thirty-five years old, married, financially established, Manwaring nonetheless joined the westward trek, carrying on a tradition of pioneering in his family. Manwaring's father had moved his family in 1836 from their New Jersey home to Oakland County, Michigan. At twenty-one, Manwaring himself went to the undeveloped region of Montcalm County, Michigan, to help clear land for the settlement of Greenville. After two years of sawing and rafting lumber in Montcalm County, he moved to Lapeer County, Michigan, where he continued lumbering and later branched out into the mercantile business.

Manwaring's 1859 junket to the Colorado gold fields interrupted his Michigan lumbering and business activities only slightly. Like many others who went west in 1859, he found adventure but little gold. Disillusioned, business and lumbering soon claimed his attention again. Later he became a successful politician. In 1882 he was elected to the State Senate as the candidate of the combined Democratic-Greenback ticket and won re-election in 1884. Manwaring died on August 29, 1903, at the substantial age of nearly seventy-nine.<sup>1</sup>

Joshua Manwaring kept a day-by-day account of his 1859 trip to Colorado. In 1869 this diary was copied by Manwaring's sixteen-year-old son, George. The original diary has disappeared, but George's very fine copy has been preserved in the Joshua Manwaring Papers located in the Michigan Historical Collections of The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Manwaring's account is a well written record of his experiences of one hundred years ago, covering his trip from Michigan to the gold fields, his experiences and travels in the mining region, and his return home. Because the diary is lengthy, the portions covering his trip from Michigan to Fort Laramie and his

\* Robert M. Warner, son of Dr. Mark T. Warner of Denver and Lake City, Colo., received a Ph.D. degree in American History at the University of Michigan. He is at present Field Representative of the Michigan Historical Collections at that institution. An article on "The Death of Zebulon M. Pike," by Dr. Robert M. Warner, appeared in *The Colorado Magazine*, April, 1955.—*Editor*.

<sup>1</sup> The biographical data about Manwaring was taken from newspaper clippings in the Manwaring scrapbook, Joshua Manwaring Papers, Michigan Historical Collections of The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and *Legislative Manual and Official Directory of the State of Michigan for the Year 1885* (Lansing, 1885), p. 555. Manwaring was born October 2, 1824, in Burlington County, New Jersey.



journey home have been summarized. The rest of the diary is presented as copied by the young George, except for minor changes in punctuation and capitalization.

Manwaring left home on April 2, 1859. He traveled to Iowa City where he and several friends gathered supplies for the trip west. Their purchases included a yoke of oxen which cost \$75.00, as well as all the cooking and camping equipment they thought they might need. On the afternoon of April 9, Manwaring and his friends set out for the gold fields.

His route across Iowa was not unusual. He traveled almost straight west from Iowa City through Newton to Council Bluffs on a road which closely parallels the present Federal highway 6. Manwaring was very favorably impressed with the rolling Iowa countryside. The soil, he said, was "the best I ever saw." Except for rains and cold weather, the trip was pleasant.

The night of April 13, however, was an unusually unpleasant one for the travelers. It was exceptionally windy and cold, and they could find no wood for their campfire. Adding to their discomfort was the unfortunate location of their camp—right on the open prairie near a frog pond. It was indeed an "awful night," Manwaring noted. "Obliged to sleep on wet blankets amidst the eternal din of hundreds of frogs singing Pikes Peak, Pikes Peak; go it; go it; Gold, Gold, until morning

came to our relief. I really thought that if I were home Pikes Peak might go to the De[v]il."

This miserable night spent on the prairie convinced the Pikes Peakers they had started too early in the year and should delay travel until the weather improved. The party found shelter at a pleasant farm near Brooklyn, Iowa, where they were able to rest for a few days.

By April 18, Manwaring and his friends were ready to start out again. Their twelve-day trip to Council Bluffs was uneventful. Council Bluffs, they found, was an attractive city of "fine brick blocks . . . [and] very handsome dwellings," bustling with business activity since "a great number of Pikes Peak teams" were assembling there.

On May 4, a steam ferry took Manwaring's group across the Missouri to Omaha, another "fine town . . . beautifully situated." Manwaring took time to visit the still unfinished "state house" and to climb to the top to view the surrounding country and river. The route the party took from Omaha followed along the Platte River through Fremont, Grand Island, and Fort Kearny.<sup>2</sup> At the junction of the North and South Platte Rivers, they went north toward Fort Laramie instead of dropping south into Colorado. The reason for taking this more northerly route was to give the group an opportunity to prospect along the Medicine Bow River, a stream southwest of Fort Laramie in Wyoming. This project, however, never materialized.

The trip across Nebraska was much more difficult than through Iowa but held more unusual sights. Manwaring took special interest in describing the Indians who appeared with increasing frequency as his party traveled westward. After a visit of a group of Pawnees, Manwaring wrote they were "good specimens of the American Indians with heads shaved except a comb on the top. They are a thieving set often stealing the horses & cows of the emigrants. We are obliged to keep two men on guard every night. Today 3 horses were stolen by them. The men losing [the horses] followed them to the Indian town and took 3 of their ponies. They follow up trains and eat up the cattle that die on the road, eating guts and all."

More discouraging, however, than Indian thievery, bad weather conditions, difficult roads, and quicksand river bottoms were the reports which reached the group of disappointed gold seekers. Despite this discouraging news of Pikes Peakers who "busted," Manwaring and his friends "determined to go on to the mines."

Manwaring's group traveled up the North Fork of the Platte past Chimney Rock and the famous Scott's Bluff to a

<sup>2</sup> For an excellent diary covering this route see the E. H. N. Patterson account published in LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., *Overland Routes to the Gold Fields, 1859, from Contemporary Diaries (The Southwest Historical Series, Vol. XI, Glendale, California, 1942), 57-197. Volumes IX, X and XI in this series cover various aspects of the gold rush of 1859.*

point immediately across the river from Fort Laramie. It was only after great difficulty that the group was able to cross the river, which was running very high at the time. Fort Laramie was filled with activity. One hundred teams daily, Manwaring said, were passing through on their way to Salt Lake City and California. He estimated that there were about six hundred soldiers in the fort plus some traders and many Indians.

On Wednesday morning, June 15, Manwaring and his friends "bid farewell to N Platt River [at Fort Laramie] and struck out for Cherry Creek."

Thursday June 16th 1859. Fine morning. Serenaded last night by Coyotes. Visited by Indians on Mexican Mustangs. Started early. For 5 miles nothing but prairie covered with Wild Barley. Immense rocks over 100 feet high rise here and there. We now passed over large, high steep Bluffs and entered another plain larger than the first covered with similar two feet high. On this plain immense rocks rise up at intervals. Near one I found the leg bone of a Mammoth, partly petrified, measuring 7 inches in diameter, wasted away some. It must have been at least 8 or 9 in. At 3 P.M. came to a small Creek where we camped. Went out hunting. Saw only one deer. Passed on to rocks bordering on the Plain. Here rise up (the rocks) 4 or 500 feet. Red cedar in the ravines! Got deceived in the distance. Was six miles from camp. Did not get in till after dark. Tired & hungry.

Friday June 17th 1859. Fine morning came off warm. Traveled 17 miles and camped on a small creek. Remained there 3 hours, during which time the creek sank entirely in the sand. It will run again night and morning. We are now about to cross some high bluffs, the rocks of which rise up about 200 feet, in all manner of shapes and forms. We camped on a fine creek where we found some of the finest spring water in Nebraska.<sup>3</sup>

Saturday June 18th 1859. Fine morning. Traveled 4 miles came to Small Creek. There the road descends for ½ mile to the creek. The earth looks as though it was burnt—apparently fertile. At 12 came to Horse Creek<sup>4</sup> where we took dinner. At two came to South Fork of Horse Creek where we saw lots of Beaver Dams. Proceeded 3 miles and Camped for the night having traveled 16 miles.

Sunday June 19th 1859. Clear Cool morning. Proceeded on 3 miles and came to the head of S. fork of Horse Creek. We now came to an immense Rolling plain and for 15 miles no water. The day came off very warm. Sand hot enough to roast eggs. Saw any amount of antelopes feeding on this plain. At 4 came to Lodge Pole Creek.<sup>5</sup> Here we found a fine Horse lying dead on the bank also a harness. Here we killed an antelope. The stream here is about 2 rods wide. Traveled this day 18 miles. Saw Longs peak covered with snow.

Monday June 20th 1859. Cloudy morning. Rained last night! Left the military road and went up Pole Creek due west, on the finest level Land I ever saw. Very high. Saw hundreds of antelopes and killed one. Halted to feed and get dinner. At 2 proceeded on, saw a lot of Wild Horses on opposite side of creek. Black Hills<sup>6</sup> in sight again opposite

<sup>3</sup> All of southern Wyoming as well as northeastern Colorado was part of Nebraska Territory at this time. Present day east central Colorado was then in Kansas Territory. For boundary lines see "Map of the Gold Region" in LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., *Colorado Gold Rush; Contemporary Letters and Reports, 1858-1859 (The Southwest Historical Series, Vol. X, Glendale, California, 1942), 389.*

<sup>4</sup> A stream in southeastern Wyoming flowing into the North Platte River.

<sup>5</sup> A stream in southern Wyoming flowing eastward into the South Platte River at Ovid, Colorado.

<sup>6</sup> The Laramie Range in Wyoming.

Cheyenne Trail.<sup>7</sup> At 5 came to Barren, Wild sage land, at 7 P.M. camped for the night near some Cheyenne Indians. I was obliged to put on my overcoat. It was so cold. Awful cold night. The longest day of the year. We are now about 46 miles from Cache le Poudre where the gold diggings are. Traveled 20 miles this day. Had a severe gale of wind at 3 P.M.

Tuesday June 21st 1859. Cool morning. Longs peak in sight way south covered with snow. Followed up Pole creek. Saw antelopes in any quantity. At noon to dinner on bank of creek. While resting an antelope came down near our camp. Found dead after receiving 3 shots. Country becoming more hilly. At night came to the Black Hills and camped on Pole Creek which rises in the hills! Traveled today 20 miles. Heavy frost at night. All hands with their overcoats on; at noon it was very hot.

Wednesday June 22nd 1859. Cool morning. Proceeded on Journey. Making for *Black Hills*. At 10 reached Cheyenne Pass,<sup>8</sup> where there is houses and fort, for U.S. troops but now deserted. Here we found one of the finest Springs I ever saw. One company of Soldiers wintered here last winter. At 1 P.M. proceeded on to Crow Creek Branch, where we camped having traveled 15 miles. The Black hills are entirely of volcanic origin.

Thursday June 23rd 1859. Frost this morning. Cold and Clear. Proceeded on at 10 was astonished to see a lot of Sheyenne Indians galloping across the plains on horseback. They immediately surrounded us; all had guns. They wanted this thing and that. We gave them some antelope meat and some tea, etc. and still they followed us some distance. Our men had gone out prospecting leaving only 9 men and 4 wagons. They however left us soon. We saw the squaws coming with the luggage, a string about ½ mile long dragging it on lodge poles. Here we crossed quite a brook and proceeded on. At 12 came to Crow Creek<sup>9</sup> where we intended to stay over night. Traveled 8 miles today. Here I saw Horrace Greeley<sup>10</sup> and shook hands with him. He had been to the Gold Diggings near Denver City. He told us the prospects were good. "Go, on!" He was going on to California by express.

Friday June 24th 1859. Fine morning. Proceeded on the road. It is now very rough for 10 miles up hill and down. Saw lots of antelope. At 10 AM came to an immense ravine which we followed down. The mountains rising on either side to a great height. At 12 came to a fine spring of water where we took dinner. Saw many Broken wagons today. Proceeded on 10 miles came to Box Elder Creek<sup>11</sup> where we camped for the night. Longs Peak towers high above our heads covered with snow. Last night I shot an antelope wounding him badly. Traveled this day 20 miles.

Saturday June 25th 1859. Remained in camp all day. In the afternoon took my gun and started for the mountains 5 miles distant. Saw some wolves and shot at them. Climb to the top of the highest moun-

<sup>7</sup> "The well known trail . . . from the Arkansas [River in Colorado] to the Laramie Plains [in Wyoming]." Henry Villard, *The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Regions*. Reprinted from the 1860 edition with notes by LeRoy R. Hafen (Princeton, N. J., 1932), p. 4. (This trail took its name from Cheyenne Pass.—A.W.S.)

<sup>8</sup> A pass located near the headwaters of Lodge Pole Creek on one of the routes to California. See endpiece map in Villard, *Pike's Peak Gold Regions*, *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Evidently a branch (Howard's fork?) of this stream.

<sup>10</sup> Horace Greeley described this meeting in *An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859* (New York, 1860), p. 175. "After leaving Box Elder [Creek], our road gradually ascended . . . until it descends a long hill to a fork of Howard's Creek, twenty miles from Box Elder. Here we stopped for dinner at 3, P.M., beside two or three wagons of Pike's Peakers, from whom we obtained a generous supply of fresh bread and another antelope ham, very much to the improvement of our edible resources."

<sup>11</sup> A tributary of the Cache la Poudre River, which in turn flows into the South Platte River near Greeley.

tain near. I could see as far as the eye could reach. Could see Crow Creek. Quite a fine view! I started large rocks rolling down the mountain for  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile, tumbling down, setting other rocks rolling down the declivity. Prospected for gold but found none. Did not get back to camp till after supper.

Sunday June 26th 1859. Proceeded on. Warm morning. At 11 arrived at Cache le Poudre, a large stream very swift, and camped for the night having traveled 15 miles today.

Monday June 27th 1859. Fine morning. Engaged John Morey to accompany us on a prospecting tour in the mountains. At 8 P.M. started nine of us. John agreeing to follow in the afternoon. Proceeded up Cherokee Pass<sup>12</sup> 3 miles. This pass takes the travel of most of the Southern States to California. At 12 took dinner. Here John the mountaineer overtook us in company with one yankee, 2 half Breeds. One called Black Hawk and the other Jo. Black Hawk was half Mexican and half Indian, also 5 Ponies, 2 mules and One Squaw. Proceeded on 2 miles across an immense mountain at the foot of which runs the N. Fork of Cache le Poudre about 6 rods wide, very rocky and rapid. Come very near taking me down the stream. After dinner proceeded 6 miles, arrived at another brook. Here we encamped for the night. The mosquitos awful. Here we prospected: found signs of gold in the pan. The night cold. Rolled up in my blanket with boots for pillow. Remembered sleeping all night. Waked up in the morning nearly froze. Traveled today 21 miles.

Tuesday June 28th 1859. Followed down this brook some distance. Thence some canyons. Arrived at a small brook which we followed some distance at the foot of the mountains. Some of them 1000 feet in height. Leaving this we ascended a high ridge which we crossed and came to a dry lake where we took lunch and proceeded on. We now found it pretty rough work climbing mountains of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  mile accent, and very steep at that in places. At 5 P.M. came in sight of the Cache le Poudre. We stood on a mountain 2000 feet high and the river looked as though it was at our feet and that we could step across it. We now proceeded to descend. Morey's mules and ponies would go where it would make my head swim. It took nearly an hour to descend. We arrived at the river where we camped for the night at the foot of rocks 3 or 4 hundred feet high, nearly perpendicular. This day we traveled about 12 miles. Killed an antelope which we eat up.

Wednesday June 29th 1859. This night the ponies all stampeded getting frightened at something. John our guide made us put out our Camp fire saying "Indians see to shoot us and we not see them." All prepared for battle and lay down to sleep and in the morning proceeded to prospect. Sunk two large holes in the bottoms. Did not succeed in finding any. I killed a Mountain Sheep which we eat. Our bread growing short. We came to one biscuit per meal, the Balance being meat. Camped at night in the Same place as last night.

Note [Evidently added later]

Morey's ponies were stampeded by the Snake Indians, Morey being a Frenchman. He had married two squaws of the Snake Tribe. And a few days after we left, the Indians came down on John and Causing him to fly for his life to Fort Laramie. He regained his ponies by following them which took him about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Days.

Thursday June 30th 1859. Proceeded on following up a large canyon nearly west! Traveled 4 miles. Came to the top of the mountain. Saw Long's Peak before us. Cooling breeze from Longs Peak. I killed a grouse and very good eating it was to! At 12 came to Cache le Poudre again. Here we prospected found gold color. I rode John's mule across

<sup>12</sup>This reference probably refers to a point on the Cherokee Trail, which followed the Cache la Poudre for a time and ran in a general north-south course through Colorado. Hafen, "Map of the Gold Region," *Colorado Gold Rush, op. cit.*, p. 389.

the stream, which was very swift. All forded but one, he turned back. Sent a mule across and got him. Stopped for Dinner. Saw 2 mountain sheep on the side of the mountain. I went out and killed one old Buck; good eating. At one P.M. proceeded to prospect; found gold color. At 2 proceeded on through handsome bottoms. The mountain rising 2 or 3 thousand feet on either side. Also fine mountain streams of pure water. Came to difficult traveling. Turned about and went back 2 miles & camped having traveled 24 miles.

Friday July 1st 1859. Traveled down the river prospecting as we went. Did not find any gold in paying quantities. Took dinner at our old camp at 1 P.M. And arrived at our camp tired and hungry. Nothing but wild meat scarcely to eat. Lay down for the night having traveled 24 miles across mountains, etc. We are camped on a creek running through Dry Lake.

Saturday July 2nd 1859. Eat our last grub this morning and started for our train, where the wagons were, 20 miles off, over mountains awful to look upon. At 12 came in sight of N. Fork of Cache le Poudre river, which we forded without difficulty and lay down on opposite Bank to rest. Here we took dinner on coffee which John gratuitously furnished us and a little dry meat. I eating grounds and all. Some 3 of our men did not come in having struck across the mountain for home. At 2 P.M. went on not having but one mountain to cross. This we did in less than an hour. Soon struck the creek. Followed down the flats home to Camp. The boys had dinner ready which we soon devoured and lay down to rest. Traveled 20 miles.

Sunday July 3rd 1859. Cleaned up nice to rest but in the afternoon some of the boys got anxious to cross the river which we did. We tied a long rope around the end of the tongue and all led the way Water up to middle. Very swift. We all succeeded in getting over safely. The horseteam went down stream. Got them out with some difficulty. Traveled on 5 miles to Spring Brook where we camped for the night. Saw great droves of cattle and lots of emigrants bound for California. Heard that 3 men were killed and scalped near the Gregory Diggings by the Yute [Ute] Indians from the other side of the mountains.<sup>13</sup> They came to make war on the Snakes who are moving to Fort Larimie.

Monday July 4th 1859. Clear as Crystal. Glorious Fourth. We fired a morning salute of 10 guns and proceeded on our journey. Traveled 10 miles through fine rich land at the foot of mountains & arrived at Thompsons Creek,<sup>14</sup> where we camped for the night and lay around celebrating the fourth, in various ways. It being a very warm day our boys thought they would have a swim. So they stripped off and ran and jumped into the creek which was about 6 rods wide. Well the way they got out of that was a caution to stragglers. The water was as cold as ice (about) having just come off from the mountains. One camp raised the U.S. Flag and gave 3 times 3 cheers. No rain has fallen here for 6 or 8 weeks of any consequence. Some little excitement is manifested in regard to Indians.

Tuesday July 5th 1859. Fine morning. Left Thompsons Creek early. This stream is about 8 rods wide. Very rapid. Proceeded on 10 miles over fine level country at the foot of mountains; immense ranges of mountains rise in the West covered with snow. Among the rest Longs Peak is prominent. At 11 A.M. arrived at S. branch of Thompsons Creek,<sup>15</sup> a small stream. At 1 P.M. the sun beat down so hot we could scarcely handle our chains actually burning our fingers. I never saw any hotter weather in my life. Proceeded on to another creek 6 miles

<sup>13</sup>For 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.

<sup>14</sup>The Big Thompson River flows into the South Platte south of Greeley.

<sup>15</sup>The Little Thompson, which is a tributary of the Big Thompson.



GREGORY DIGGINGS

From an old lantern slide made from a photograph taken by the grandfather of F. E. Youngs of Wilkinsburg, Pa. Prints of a number of his photographs were sent to an artist at Grand Rapids, Mich., who made slides from them. The State Historical Society owns a set of these slides.

distant, and camped for the night. Many teams are camped here having men in the mountains prospecting Longs Creeks! Traveled this day 16 miles. Saw the grave of a young man killed by lightning in 1854 on his way to California.

Wednesday July 6th 1859. Proceeded on our journey about 4 miles. Came to N. Branch of Boulder Creek. Here I began to feel as if I was going to be sick. After dinner proceeded on to Boulder City<sup>16</sup> 8 miles where we camped. Here are lots of people; looks like a Camp meeting. We are now getting into the Gold Diggings. This city contains about 25 log houses some of which are not yet finished. Here are some traders who get considerable of dust from the mines above. Mr. Tarbox established himself here. We came a long way on the road in company with him. Our boys are preparing to start out prospecting in the morning.

Thursday July 7th 1859. Taken today with Billious fever. Sent for Dr. Atkins who gave me large portions of Calomel Pills. The fever had got fast hold of me, for I had felt it for a number of days. And now I must suffer a long time. Possibly die away from my family! These thoughts make me feel bad!

July 8 [through] 16th 1859. Was suffering with billious fever.

<sup>16</sup>The "city" has since been dropped from the name of this town located on North Boulder Creek. It was laid out in February, 1859. See John L. Buell's letter to the *Missouri Democrat*, April 2, 1859, published in Hafen, ed., *Colorado Gold Rush*, p. 241.

Dr. Atkins done all he could for me and after a while succeeded in breaking it up. It left me in a very debilitated condition. I could neither stand nor walk. The ends of my fingers were getting cold. Dr. Atkins fixed me some stimulants which helped along pretty fast.

Sunday July 17th 1859. We now left Boulder city for Beaver Creek 5 miles over a rough stony road. I thought it would prove my last journey. But I made out to ride it out alive. Here we camped for the night. This is a fine mountain stream. Some men are at work turning it to find Gold.

Monday July 18th 1859. Three of our men left today for the mountains to find claims so we can get to work. I am gaining slowly.

Tuesday July 19th 1859. This was a very warm day which brought on me some fever. In the afternoon had heavy thunder and lightning and some rain which cooled the atmosphere.

Wednesday July 20th 1859. Clear morning. Prospect of being a warm day. I feel some better this morning but there is no telling what the heat of the day may bring on. I am taking quinine to keep the fever off.

Thursday July 21st 1859. Cloudy morning. Some rain fell last night. At 10 A.M. began to clear off. Sent down stream for some butter. Paid \$1.00 per pound. (It tasted good to.) I am gaining strength. Today the boys returned from the mountains. They have found some claims and we shall move tomorrow. The boys killed some antelopes today.

Friday July 22nd 1859. Fine morning. Left Beaver Creek for the mountains by way of Gregory Diggings. Traveled over the roughest stoniest road I ever saw. I thought it would shake the day lights out of me. At night camped in a canyon at foot of mountains. Traveled 16 miles today. The boys killed one antelope today.

Saturday July 23rd 1859. Cloudy foggy morning. Obligated to set one of our wagon hoops which gave us a late start. After dinner proceeded on entering a rocky Canyon which we followed 8 miles. The mountains rising at great heights on both sides. Proceeding 8 miles we came to 3 or 4 saloons. A fine spring of water gushes out of the rock here. We now came to a hill which we found it *was impossible* for our 3 yoke of oxen to draw our wagon up. 5 yoke more were put on and it was all they could do to, although we only had on about 150 lbs weight.

Sunday July 24th 1859. The road is lined with teams, and Pack mules. Yesterday we met about a dozen Mexican Asses laden with flour the funniest sight I ever saw in my life. The loads were larger than the animals. We proceeded on our Journey over the most *horrible* road I ever saw. It seemed almost impossible to keep the wagon right side up. We made ten miles and it was the hardest days drive we ever had. We camped for night near a fine mountain spring. We met today hundreds of teams, some were returning home but mostly going out to Denver for supplies. They were all in good spirits, evidence that they had done well. It is now raining.

Monday July 25th 1859. Proceeded on our Journey. Roads rough, rocky and hilly. Rained some in the course of the day. We traveled about 10 miles, camped near the big springs. Plenty wood, water and grass. It rained nearly all night. I preferred to sleep in the wagon on account of the damp.

Tuesday July 26th 1859. Proceeded on following up the canyon to the Big Springs. Here is a sort of Tavern and store. Missed the Jefferson Road and went within 4 miles of Gregorys Diggings. Turned around and corrected. At noon arrived at Jeffersons Diggings.<sup>17</sup> Here are several hundred men at work. Some are getting rich and some are getting poor. After dinner proceeded on. Staked out some claims

<sup>17</sup>Located above Boulder on a branch of North Boulder Creek. Hafen, ed., "Map of the Gold Region," *Colorado Gold Rush*, p. 389.

above Jefferson's in gulch. Don't know whether they will pay or not. Went on until within 4 miles of Deadwood<sup>18</sup> and camped for the night.

Wednesday July 27th 1859. Remained in camp. 3 of the boys went down to see if our claims on Deadwood would pay. We have one quartz lead and some River *Claims*. If they pay we shall move down as soon as possible. If not return to Gregory's.

Thursday July 28th 1859. Remained in Camp all day. Our men returned from Deadwood and reported our claims worthless. 3 of the men went down today to try and purchase some claims that would pay. I am getting along quite fast with my fever. Gaining strength every day.

Friday July 29th 1859. Remained in camp all day. 2 of our men went down to Deadwood to try and sell our Claims. I went to Gregory's Diggings to get the news from Colorado Diggings.<sup>19</sup> They say they can get a pound of gold per Day *there*. I am getting stout pretty fast.

Saturday July 30th 1859. Remained in camp all day. Nothing of any importance occurred. The Snow mountains<sup>20</sup> are looking down upon us covered with snow.

Sunday July 31st 1859. Remained in camp all day. Done up some washing and *mending*. Our men returned from Deadwood.

Monday August 1st 1859. Loaded up and started for Gregory's Diggings in hopes of better luck! Passed through the Jefferson Diggings. They were not paying very well. At night camped within 5 miles of our place of Destination near a fine spring. The next day I and 3 of our men went up to the diggings to ascertain what could be done. Found a gulch claim which we bought, paying 200 Dollars and One yoke of Oxen. We paid 70 cents per hundred feet for our *lumber* for our *sluices*. The gulch is about 3 miles long with houses the whole length of it.

Tuesday August 2nd 1859. The men returned for our teams, and arrived at the mines next day. We are making preparations to go to mining.

Wednesday August 3rd 1859. All hands sick with Diarrhoea. Looks rather dull. Two of us are going to Platte Diggings<sup>21</sup> to prospect as many are leaving here for that place.

Thursday August 4th 1859. Got our lumber down for our sluices which we carried for a mile. Got them made today.

Friday August 5th 1859. All hand complaining with Diarrhoea.

Saturday August 6th 1859. Preparing to start for the Platte Diggings. Rigged ½ of our wagon into a cart for the purpose. Leaving it long enough to sleep in. I am getting quite stout although I have been troubled lately with the Mexican Diarrhoea. We shall go with one yoke of oxen.

Sunday August 7th 1859. No account.

Monday August 8th 1859. Started on our journey to North Platte<sup>22</sup> where we can get rich in a week. More than one hundred teams have

<sup>18</sup> "Deadwood or Deadwood Diggings, Gilpin County. In January, 1859, B. F. Langley discovered rich gold placers in a gulch on South Boulder Creek. The gulch was strewn with fallen timber, and the name Deadwood Diggings was given to the camp that soon sprang up; later it was known as Gamble Gulch." *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XVII, No. 5 (September, 1940), 190.

<sup>19</sup> Perhaps Manwaring is referring to the area of the upper South Platte. [At this time the mines on the Blue were supposed to be on the Colorado river. —Editor.]

<sup>20</sup> Snow Mountains or Snowy Range were common terms for the central range of the Colorado Rocky Mountains. See for example map in Villard, *Pike's Peak Gold Regions*, opposite p. 28.

<sup>21</sup> These diggings were located in the various headwaters of the South Platte River in South Park.

<sup>22</sup> Manwaring must mean [North branch] South Platte. Since he sometimes used inaccurate terms and mileages in describing his route in this area around present-day Colorado Springs and South Park, it is difficult to trace Manwaring's

left Gregory's and Mountain City<sup>23</sup> daily for the last five days. So we shall have plenty of Company and no fear of Indians. They attacked 3 white men a short time since and killed 2 of them, the 3rd escaping by hiding himself. He is here in Mountain City. Proceeded on 20 miles & Camped for the night.

Tuesday August 9th 1859. Yesterday I thought my time had come. I was obliged to climb the mountains. The team could not draw me and the load. I lay down twice not caring whether I ever rose again or not. This morning I feel good deal better having had a good night's rest. At 11 A.M. arrived at Golden City where I bought some tea. Proceeded on five miles and took dinner at Sturgis Ranche. He is from Michigan. Proceeded on to Denver where we camped for the night. Next morning bought our supplies for our Journey paying \$12.50 for flour.

Wednesday August 10th 1859. Proceeded on, saw some of the most picturesque rocks imaginable. At 8 A.M. came to a Circular sawmill where they sold lumber at \$65 per Thousand. At night camped on a small brook at the foot of the mountain. Traveled today 25 miles.

Thursday August 11th 1859. Proceeded on followed up one of the most beautiful valleys I ever saw. It being covered with flowers and streams of water. Made 22 miles.

Friday August 12th 1859. Proceeded on. Attacked by the mountain fever. Expect to cure it in a few days. Traveled today 20 miles.

Saturday August 13th 1859. Fine morning. At 10 entered the mountains followed up a large gulch. The mountains here are 3 or 4 thousand feet high. We soon came to an awful mountainous road. At noon came to a large brook where we took dinner. At 1 proceeded on following up the creek. P.P. [Pikes Peak] looms high over our heads here and there patches of snow. At 4 P.M. came to a long hill 1½ miles long. So steep one yoke of oxen could not draw our cart. Backed down and upset our whole *institution*. We gathered up with the help of those in company and proceeded on. At night camped on the South Platte having traveled 18 miles.

Sunday August 14th 1859. Proceeded on our journey. After traveling 6 miles came to forks in the road. Took the wrong one in company with about 30 other teams. Returned and arrived at North [South?] Platte at night, where we camped in company with some 500 men. Cold night. P.P. right over our heads covered with snow. Traveled 22 miles.

Monday August 15th 1859. Proceeded on. Roads very rough and mountainous. Struck the North Branch of South Platte River<sup>24</sup> which we followed, down very good road most of the way. Camped for night on the River. Traveled 22 miles.

Tuesday August 16th 1859. Proceeded on. Came in sight of Snow Range 100 miles distant. At noon could not find water and traveled till 3 o'clock, when we came to a fine Mountain Spring. In the afternoon came near upsetting 2 or 3 times and I was so sick I could scarcely

route in detail. It is not surprising that he made errors since the area was only roughly mapped. Describing this rush to the South Platte, the *Rocky Mountain News* of August 13, 1859, reported that on August 8 "the rush began for the South Park; ever since a continual stream of miners have passed through our [Denver] streets. Wagons, carts, pack animals and footmen—all heading one way; all bound for the same destination." Manwaring probably took the easiest and most common route to the South Platte diggings, traveling through Golden into Denver and south toward the base of Pike's Peak. Here he probably followed a route closely paralleling the present-day automobile road from Colorado Springs over Ute Pass to South Park. See footnotes and text, Villard, *Pike's Peak Gold Regions*, p. 69. From August 23 to August 30, Manwaring's party traveled in South Park in the area of the headwaters of the South Platte and some of the tributaries of the Arkansas River.

<sup>23</sup> According to Dr. LeRoy R. Hafen, "Central City and Black Hawk soon replaced Mountain City as names for the towns near Gregory Gulch." Footnote 89, Villard, *Pike's Peak Gold Regions*, p. 138.

<sup>24</sup> This may have been Tarryall Creek in South Park.



AURARIA (WEST DENVER) IN LATE SUMMER, 1859  
From an old lantern slide owned by the State Historical Society of Colorado.

get out of the cart and help hold it up. At night camped on a small mountain stream of water having traveled 20 miles.

Wednesday August 17th 1859. Came in sight of the park and traveled on in high spirits. Saw some yellow pine trees turned to stone. At noon took dinner near a spring and proceeded on. Reached North Platte Diggings a little before sunset. And heard it pronounced a Humbug which we to our sorrow soon found out to be a fact. But about dark news came of good diggings 15 miles off over the mountains. Determined to go there *also*. News also heard from the Indians. They killed some white men and some horses on the road to Colorado. Traveled about 24 miles.

Thursday August 18th 1859. This morning Quartermass and 2 men in company with us started for North Branch of Arkansas to get hold of some claims. I think we are elected for 400 miles traveled for nothing.

Friday August 19th 20th 21st. Remained in Camp. Went raspberry-ing got  $\frac{1}{2}$  pail full. Fine Sauce. The men returned from the Arkansas. Did not find anything. Got to make back 200 miles. Got to Gregorys Sunday morning. Very cool. Traveled 75 [15?] miles.

Monday August 22nd 1859. Proceeded on our journey. Met a great many teams going to the great Humbug. At night camped on the Platte having traveled about 22 miles.

Tuesday August 23rd 1859. Saw a large buffalo Bull running up the side of the mountain. Our hunters pursued but did not overtake him. At night camped on the Platte having traveled 20 miles.

Wednesday August 24th 1859. Proceeded on. Had to climb some very high mountains. P.P. in sight.

Thursday August 25th 1859. Traveled over some fine parks, high mountains, etc. Our boys went 5 miles off of the road to get some stone from a petrified tree. The largest is 12 feet in Diameter and 12 foot high. This one was a stump having been broken off. There were some smaller ones lying around. Solid stone. Curious indeed? Traveled 18 miles.

Friday August 26th 1859. Proceeded on. At noon came to Red Rock City where we took dinner. Went on 8 miles following the Arkansas.<sup>25</sup> At night camped on a small brook. It rained tremendously all night.

Saturday August 27th 1859. Proceeded on keeping in sight of the mountains. The clouds drifting over their tops hid them from our view. At night camped in a gulch near a pond of water. Had good feed for our cattle which surely was a luxury.

Sunday August 28th 29th 30th 31st. Remained in camp waiting for the boys that are out prospecting. Boys came in today. Say that they can make nothing mining. Started for Denver. Arrived about night. Then resolved to go home. Camped tonight on the Platte. Rained hard all night.

Thursday, Friday September 1st 2nd. Remained in Camp these days. Concluded to sell our oxen and wagons and return by water. After a great deal of trouble we succeeded in making sale of them. Also let go all of our traps not wishing to be bothered with them.

Saturday September 3rd 1859. Set about getting our stuff for our boat we paid \$100.00 per thousand feet for our Lumber and 30 cts per pound for nails. Carried it all to the river  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile distant. The lumber was of Yellow pine.

Sunday September 4th 1859. Quiet day. Raining here and we can see it snowing in the mountains, which are now covered with snow, looking rather singular.

Monday September 5th 1859. This day finished our boat. All ready for Launching. All hands ready and anxious to start home.

Tuesday September 6th 1859. Set her afloat and loaded our plunder at 12 o'clock. All bid farewell to Denver, and Arizona forever "And if forever fare thee well". Set sail for Dryden, Lapeer Co. Michigan.

Manwaring was much too optimistic in his expectation of sailing down the Platte, particularly at a time of year when the river was low. "Sick of playing horse . . ." Manwaring wrote on September 12, "we now very deeply regret our selling our teams."

On September 14 Manwaring gave up his travel by boat, left his companions, and set out across the prairie. He traveled on foot and by hiring rides in the wagons of other disappointed Pikes Peakers going home. His difficult traveling ended at Omaha, where he was able to find regular transportation on a steamboat running to St. Joseph, Missouri. From there he traveled by rail to Michigan.

On October 2, 1859, the day he reached Omaha, Joshua Manwaring wrote in his diary: "I was 35 today. Just came from P.P. and am going home satisfied with Bumming, and think I shall stay at home in the future."

<sup>25</sup>This may have been Fountain Creek, a branch of the Arkansas River. Red Rock City was on the site of present Roswell—a siding of the Rock Island Railroad approximately two miles north of Colorado Springs.

# Colorado and the Advent of the Civil War

*Opinions Expressed in Colorado Newspapers on the Coming Civil War*

By WILLIAM H. WROTEN, JR.\*

Previous to the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, the inhabitants of the Pikes Peak region showed little interest in the controversy over slavery taking place in the States. Their main interest was in the prospect of having a territorial government established by Congress. With this in mind, men had been elected as unofficial representatives to Congress as early as 1859.

Although two bills were introduced in Congress providing for temporary government in the territory, it took about two and a half years of constant effort before the Organic Act for Colorado was finally passed and signed on February 28, 1861. The most bitter fight in Congress, in regard to the organizing of Colorado, had been waged over the question of slavery.<sup>1</sup> The opposition of slave states and some eastern states to the creation of Colorado Territory probably had much to do with the general attitude expressed by Coloradoans on national affairs and slavery in particular.

The newspapers of the Pikes Peak region often reflected the sentiments of their readers towards affairs in the States. The *Western Mountaineer*<sup>2</sup> of Golden, in June, 1860, although disturbed because Congress had adjourned without granting territorial status to the region, presented a Pollyanna attitude:

On the whole we have no regrets for the neglect; but are rather thankful that the National Legislature had granted us the poor boon of being let alone. Living without law, even for a brief period, is unquestionably an evil; but Territorial organizations for the last few years have become a positive nuisance. It has been the policy of the government to impose a hungry horde of broken down politicians and desperate adventurers upon the unfortunate inhabitants of the Territories, in the shape of Governors, Judges, and United States Marshals—until, in the presence of such officials, honest men begin to feel an instinctive inclina-

tion to look out for their pocketbooks. If this region continues its present rate of development, it will be ready for admission into the Union as a sovereign State, before the close of another session of Congress; and in the meantime, from all Territorial officers appointed by this or any other Federal Administration, may the Lord in his mercy deliver us.<sup>3</sup>

The toasts given during Fourth of July celebrations at Gold Hill and Golden shed further light upon the feelings of the citizens. One of the best from Gold Hill was on political strife in the States:

Whilst, in the States, the Democrats are trying to mend their party breaches, the Republicans mauling a few unfortunate rails . . . we, the denizens of the Rocky Mountains, removed from the scene of political turmoil, are free from party strife as the breezes that float our banners, and meet as a band of brothers, rallying only under the flag of the Constitution and the Union.<sup>4</sup>

At Golden, they toasted the territory as "independent of all sectional strife, dependent only on the patriotism, the industry and morality of her citizens."<sup>5</sup>

The editors of the *Canon Times*<sup>6</sup> of Canon City, in October, 1860, echoed the same general sentiments with regard to the coming presidential election:

With us it matters little who wins the race, for our law makers appear to know hardly of our existence, and what knowledge they do have is forgotten amid their anxiety for themselves. Let the work go on, before long we shall be able to give an imperative knock for our own admission into the Union.<sup>7</sup>

The only paper in the territory at this time which came out definitely for or against certain political parties in the States was the *Rocky Mountain Herald*,<sup>8</sup> a highly partisan Republican journal. To its editors the Democratic party was an instrument of the Devil whose defeat would be a blessing from Heaven. In an editorial called "The End of Democracy," the following opinion was expressed:

The reign of the most corrupt party ever organized is drawing to a close. The days of the Democratic Party are well nigh numbered. The vile organization has kept together by the worship of the Eternal Negro, and the Negro has now fastened itself upon the back of Democracy, and sticks like that "Body of Death" named in the scriptures. On to death and hell, the Negro now urges its victims. Our advice to them is to act the part of Christian philosophers, and prepare for the last solemn moment.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Western Mountaineer*, June 28, 1860. Also see July 12, 1860.

<sup>2</sup> *Western Mountaineer*, July 12, 1860.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> "Established September 8, 1860, by [A. C.] Chandler, Chambers and [H. S.] Millet, with the last named as editor. . . . An issue dated Monday, October 7, 1861 . . . is the last recorded," McMurtrie and Allen, p. 229.

<sup>5</sup> *Canon Times*, October 6, 1860.

<sup>6</sup> "The first daily newspaper in Colorado, established May 1, 1860, by Thomas Gibson, who had been one of the founders of the *Rocky Mountain News* and later in 1859 publisher of the *Rocky Mountain Gold Reporter* at Mountain City. On May 5, 1860, a weekly edition of the *Herald* was begun. On May 25, 1861, with the beginning of the second volume, the title was changed to *Colorado Republican and Rocky Mountain Herald*," McMurtrie and Allen, p. 245.

<sup>7</sup> *Rocky Mountain Herald*, November 10, 1860.

\*William H. Wroten, Jr., holds a Ph.D. degree in American history from the University of Colorado, 1956. He has had articles published in the *Maryland Historical Magazine*, the *Georgia Historical Quarterly* and the *Cross Tie Bulletin*. He also has written book reviews for the *Baltimore Evening Sun*. Dr. Wroten has taught at St. Helena Extension of the College of William and Mary and at West Georgia College. He is now Professor of History at Maryland State Teachers College, Salisbury, Maryland.—*Editor*.

<sup>1</sup> Percy Fritz, *Colorado, The Centennial State* (N. Y., 1941), pp. 193-196.

<sup>2</sup> "Established December 7, but actually appeared first on December 4, 1859. . . . Owned by the Boston Company, founders of Golden, and edited by George West. . . . On December 20 [1860] the editor announced the sale of the establishment . . . because of a 'deficiency in the bank account.'" D. C. McMurtrie and A. H. Allen, *Early Printing in Colorado* (Hirschfeld Press, Denver, 1935), p. 271.



A leading *Rocky Mountain Herald* editorial entitled "Tomorrow," averred that the West hailed with great satisfaction the coming election of a Republican administration because under the administration of James Buchanan the people of Colorado had in vain made known their wants—wants to which as American citizens they had a right—but that they had been treated with contempt. The reason for this, said the editors, was obvious—being on the side of freedom, the people of Colorado would add nothing to the slave power. Readers were urged to rejoice for a Republican victory which would signal their deliverance from anarchy and confusion, and which would bring territorial organization and a Pacific railroad, thereby hastening the development of the region.<sup>10</sup>

From the election of Lincoln until May, 1861, there was both an increased interest and a changing of opinion throughout the territory. The various newspapers, which had steered a middle of the road course, began to be more definite in their defense of the Union. Editors still did not try to weigh the virtues or evils of the South, but stood by the Union hoping almost to the last for a saving compromise and avoidance of a civil war. Faith in the Union was so strong, it was not thought possible that the Southern States would secede. It was felt that such states as South Carolina were only bluffing. The more conservative papers, when warned by the *Daily Denver Mountaineer*<sup>11</sup> that secession was truly coming, accused that paper of extreme sensationalism. The *Rocky Mountain News*,<sup>12</sup> probably the most important and influential paper in the territory, failed to interpret correctly the signs of the times in regard to the problem of secession.

The news of Lincoln's election, however, spurred groups and individuals to take an interest in the affairs which were leading to secession. In Denver, on November 12, about three hundred people had a "jollification" over the election of "Old Abe." "Bonfires were kindled, flags were run up, the *Herald* office was illuminated, guns were fired, and whiskey was imbibed."<sup>13</sup> The crowd would have been much larger, said the

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> "On August 25th [1860], James T. Coleman and James C. Moore (then mayor of Denver City) began the publication of the *Daily Mountaineer*. . . . This paper was in part an outgrowth of the rivalry of the two communities separated by Cherry Creek. [W. N.] Byers, with his [*Rocky Mountain News*], had finally taken a neutral position in the bed of the stream, so as to be neither in Auraria nor in Denver. But the people of Denver wanted a paper all their own. Ten town lots were donated by the Denver Town Company to Coleman and Moore, to encourage a newspaper on the east bank of the creek, and the *Mountaineer* came into being. This paper, however, soon became an out-and-out secession journal. In May, 1861, Coleman, then its publisher, sold the plant to the *News* and left Colorado to enlist in the Confederate army." McMurtrie and Allen, p. 30.

<sup>12</sup> "Established April 23, 1859, at 'Cherry Creek, K. T.' by William Newton Byers, John L. Dailey, and Thomas Gibson. . . . The *Rocky Mountain News*, the oldest newspaper in Colorado, is still being published. . . ." McMurtrie and Allen, pp. 240-241.

<sup>13</sup> *Western Mountaineer*, November 15, 1860.

*Rocky Mountain News*, if the movement had not been sponsored by the *Herald*, thus discouraging many very excellent Republicans who declined participating on that account.<sup>14</sup>

The *Western Mountaineer* thought Lincoln "a conservative, straightforward man, not at all imbued with the ultra-sectionalism of so many of his supporters. It is thought his policy will be satisfactory to all candid men of both parties."<sup>15</sup> The *Daily Denver Mountaineer*, though, saw the Republican victory as the preview of some great and impending calamity.<sup>16</sup> It was exceedingly saddened about "the insult and degradation that had been put upon the South," and further stated: "There is a settled conviction, that to remain in the Union under a Republican Administration is unworthy of freemen, and would in reality amount to nothing less than a dishonorable submission to political vassalage."<sup>17</sup> The *Daily Denver Mountaineer* was at times as pro-southern as any paper in the deep South. A good example of this was its defense of slavery in the issue of May 7, 1861.

Neither the *Western Mountaineer* nor the *Rocky Mountain News* accepted seriously the threats of secession. The editors said it was really a great deal more fuss and feathers than the merits of the case demanded.<sup>18</sup> The *News* suggested that the South consider the growing power and wealth of the North before attempting to take the "Northern bull by the horns." The editorial closed in that vein of hope which was to characterize the *Rocky Mountain News*' policy for several weeks to come:

But to treat this matter with much seriousness is to convert a farce into a melodrama. We have an abiding faith in the justness of that great democratic principle which acknowledges that the will of the majority shall govern, and we know that the ranting and scolding of Southern secessionists and disunionists will in no wise interrupt the wheels of government, or interfere with its harmonious action.<sup>19</sup>

The *Western Mountaineer* argued that this was a democracy where the people ruled, and that if the Democrats, who were legally defeated in 1860, resisted, it would be treason for which they would receive punishment that would have been awarded the Republicans in the event of a rebellion on their part four years earlier.

There may be a row, if the South keeps its word [about secession] there will be a row, but we think plenty of men could be found who would contract to keep those bellicose states in order,

<sup>14</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, November 13, 1860.

<sup>15</sup> *Western Mountaineer*, November 15, 1860.

<sup>16</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, November 13, 1860.

<sup>17</sup> *Western Mountaineer*, November 15, 1860.

<sup>18</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, November 13, 1860.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, November 16, 1860.

at very low figures, and possibly would give a respectable premium for the sake of securing the job.<sup>20</sup>

The paper also stated that in case the South did secede the North would not shed many tears at the loss, and that quite likely the Republicans would feel no sorrow.

The *Rocky Mountain News*, on November 17, 1860, turned to a matter which they considered more important to "Pike's Peakers" than any of the affairs in the States, namely, territorial government. This editorial probably expressed the feeling of the majority of the people in the region at this time:

It is a matter of very little consequence to us here what shape political matters may assume in the Atlantic States for the next three or four years. Threats of secession, disunion, or alliance with foreign powers, are of no more consequence to us than the sports of a juvenile playground. But we do want that recognition and support from the general government which has ever been accorded to every young territory of like consequence as our own, and we shall press our claims upon the rulers of the land zealously and persistently, until we secure the relief we are entitled to. We claim nothing from the Democratic or Republican parties, as such. We are not attached to any political organization in this country, and we shall scold either one or both, as we are led to believe they are neglecting us or treating us shabbily. Our efforts here are for the general good, and no dust of partisanship will blind us to the real interests of those who have, with us, made this new country their home.<sup>21</sup>

Let the abolitionist *Rocky Mountain Herald* rave about the evils of the Democratic party and the sins of slavery, or the pro-Southern *Daily Denver Mountaineer* preach against Black Republicans and the glories of the Southern institutions; it made little difference at this time to the majority of frontiersmen. These issues were in the main abstractions to which they had little time to devote their energies. These problems were over a thousand miles away; vital to them were the affairs that directly affected their lives and manner of living. Westerners could not understand why the people in the States let the Northern fanatics and the Southern fire-eaters work themselves up over such things as Black Republicanism and secession. This mining region believed that conservative leaders on both sides would prevent any serious difficulties. It was thought that if such states as South Carolina and Georgia carried out threats of disunion, sister Southern States would bring them to their senses.

The editorials and letters to the editors in the leading papers of the territory, *Canon Times*, *Western Mountaineer* and *Rocky Mountain News*, in November and December of 1860 supported these views. The news dispatches concerning the talk of secession did not satisfy the editors that the South had any serious intention of carrying through the threats, for

<sup>20</sup> *Western Mountaineer*, November 15, 1860.

<sup>21</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, November 17, 1860.

they would not let themselves believe that secession was the real expression of Southern feeling. The editors of the *Rocky Mountain News*, however, finally did have some doubts about South Carolina and Georgia, who might in their estimation really desire disunion; "But," they said, "beyond the limits of those states there is an atmosphere of moderation and good sense, which will prove far more powerful than frothy declamations and treasonable resolutions."<sup>22</sup> Such states as Virginia, Kentucky, Missouri and even Mississippi, they believed, would put a stop to any attempt by the fire-eaters to precipitate a civil war. It was stated that the South failed to recognize the length the North would go to resist further attempts at intimidation, and that even the tens of thousands who had opposed Lincoln at the polls would rally to support him in his rights and defend him in the position he had been called to occupy. This editorial of November 19, 1860, went on to declare: "We do not believe that throughout the entire South a respectable force could possibly be raised who would be willing publicly to array themselves against Mr. Lincoln's administration." On the other hand the *Rocky Mountain News* was firmly convinced that there were enough Southern men who would crush out at once any hostile demonstration that might be attempted in their midst, without the necessity of interference on the part of the North. Again the paper closed upon the familiar note, that disunion demonstrations and their leaders were being given more importance than deserved.<sup>23</sup>

The *Western Mountaineer* of Golden also followed the general view and policy stressed by its friend, the *Rocky Mountain News* of Denver. It voiced little fear of any attempt by South Carolina and Georgia to carry out "braggart threats," for those states had too much at stake. It assured its readers that the best policy to pursue was to let them go, for in less than six months they would be suing to rejoin the Union.<sup>24</sup>

The *Daily Denver Mountaineer*, which continued to predict and speculate on the forthcoming secession, not only stood alone, but was accused of trying to inspire old women and young children with ghostly fears. To the editors of the *Rocky Mountain News* the bitterness in the South was waning. If, however, the *Daily Denver Mountaineer* wished them to face the ghost of secession, they would do so, but they wrote on December 1: "If its ridiculous appearance and lack of substance disturbs our gravity and provokes mirthfulness, we do not wish to be held accountable."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, November 19, 1860.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Western Mountaineer*, November 22, 1860.

<sup>25</sup> See also *Rocky Mountain News*, November 27 and December 18, 19, 1860.

The *Canon Times* in two December editorials also voiced the opinion that threats to the Union would be stopped by level-headed Union men on both sides. It sounded a practical note by saying that there being a democratic majority in both houses no bill could pass either house which impaired or disrupted the rights of the South unless some of its own men allowed it.<sup>26</sup> To the *Canon Times* there was no oppression of Southerners' rights and no indications or threats by the North to invade the South or to disturb the relations of master and slave. If Lincoln and his administration violated or impaired the rights of any state or citizen, then would be the time to act. In view of all considerations the editors stated:

... we do not feel willing to "be precipitated into revolution." We are as willing to enter the lists to defend any invasion of our rights, our property as the warmest disunionists in the south, but until the necessity arises and exists, we are for going on in the even tenor of our way.<sup>27</sup>

The *Western Mountaineer* hit hard at the South in its December 13 issue, when it wrote that South Carolina would not pay its bills to Northern merchants. "Here," it said, "is southern chivalry with a vengeance: Ye Gods, what Christian magnanimity!" When discussing the panic which the East was experiencing because of the South's reaction to Lincoln's election, it voiced the opinion that whatever the results, there would be a larger migration to the Pikes Peak region during the coming season, and of a class of people which would be highly beneficial to the territory. With its last issue<sup>28</sup> on December 20, the *Western Mountaineer* closed with a sound of regret over the secession problem, and with hope that the Union would survive the storm.

When reports reached Denver that South Carolina had finally made good its threats of secession, the *Rocky Mountain News* no longer thought of disunion as a "ghost," nor could it any longer ridicule the *Daily Denver Mountaineer's* predictions. The editors admitted on December 27 that along with a majority of the people in the territory they had thought these threats would not be realized. They finally reached the conclusion that the nation was facing a crisis, the like of which had not been experienced since the trying days of 1776. They still did not take a bitter attitude or side too strongly with either the North or South. But the *Rocky Mountain News* now recognized the prospect of war and earnestly hoped that some compromise would be made to avert the impending national calamity. The editors did not wish the Republic to end with strife and civil war "like our sister republics that

have risen, flourished and fallen in Central and South America. God forbid."

During this period letters were printed in the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Western Mountaineer* showing what some readers thought about the situation. One letter proposed a plan for a general convention to form a new Constitution which would annul the representatives of the country, provide for a new president, senators, representatives, governors and legislators, and grant justice to the South.<sup>29</sup>

A man who signed his name "Bullwhacker" wrote that the secession movement created quite a sensation around Mountain City; bets upon the results of it were freely offered and taken; and knots of interested miners from different sections of the Union talked over the matter with all the earnestness of congressmen. But "Bullwhacker" came to about the same conclusion as the editors of the *Western Mountaineer* and the *Rocky Mountain News*, in that the day was far distant when the Union would be broken up.<sup>30</sup>

"Sniktau"<sup>31</sup> of Gold Hill attempted an objective assessment of the secession problem. He believed that Northern fanaticism was based on an ignorance of Southern institutions, and that the actions of Southern fire-eaters could be traced to an insane fear of this Northern fanaticism. While he left no doubt that he had favored the election of Breckinridge, thus indicating his sympathy for the South, he did not look upon the election of Lincoln as a matter to be so deeply deplored as it had been by the *Daily Denver Mountaineer*. He believed that Lincoln, although not elected by a majority of the American people, was still constitutionally elected. "Besides . . . he is personally an honest, honorable, capable and conservative man."<sup>32</sup>

From a Georgian, who had gone back home for the season, the *Rocky Mountain News* got the impression that the South would not secede. The letter is interesting also for what a Colorado miner from Georgia, in Georgia during the height of this early movement, thought about the Union, secession, the wrongs suffered by the South and the ability of Lincoln.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, December 22, 1860, and January 29, 1861.

<sup>27</sup> Letter dated November 23, 1860, and printed in the *Western Mountaineer*, November 29, 1860.

<sup>28</sup> See: Frances Higgins, "Sniktau," *Pioneer Journalist*, *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. V, No. 3 (June, 1928), 102-108. This is a sketch of the life of E. H. N. Patterson.

<sup>29</sup> *Western Mountaineer*, November 29, 1860.

<sup>30</sup> Letter dated December 3, 1860, printed in *Rocky Mountain News*, January 2, 1861. See also: William H. Wroten, Jr. (edited), "A Voice From The South," *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XL, No. 4 (December, 1956), 407-410.

<sup>26</sup> *Canon Times*, December 1, 1860.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, December 15, 1860.

<sup>28</sup> The editors at this time sold the presses to the *Canon Times*.

Dr. George M. Willing<sup>34</sup> stated in a letter from St. Louis that the dissolution of the Union was inevitable, for the culminating point of the greatness of the Republic had been reached, and now it was tottering and reeling under the damning influence of sectional feeling. Congress, because of the secession problem, would have little time to consider the organization of the territory around Pikes Peak, he claimed, and so the territory, since it was under no obligation to the United States Congress, should attach its destiny to a Pacific Confederacy. He further said, "Let not our progress be retarded; open up this new field of enterprise to the thousands that will flock to us from all quarters when it is understood that law and order dwells among us. . . ." <sup>35</sup> Although the *Western Mountaineer* thought Dr. Willing had his head in the clouds, his novel idea was to be given serious thought as the secession movement in the South gained momentum.

It is easy to see from these letters that it was generally believed the grievances were due mainly to misunderstandings by both sides; that the fires of disunion were fed by fanatics and fire-eaters; and that if wise counsel and clear, honest thinking had prevailed, neither the election of Lincoln nor the issue of slavery would have brought about the problem of secession.

The *Rocky Mountain News* pessimistically admitted on January 4, 1861, that the situation in the States was cause for fear. The editors wrote that ruin of the glorious republic was inevitable, and fast approaching, and that civil war would ensue. They called upon the people of Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah to think of the forthcoming times and prospects, and be ready to act.

The *Canon Times* quoted the *Rocky Mountain News* verbatim and together they frankly confessed that their previous views had been overly optimistic. They questioned whether it would be better to side with the North, the South, or expand as a separate commonwealth along the great mineral belt of the Rocky Mountains.<sup>36</sup>

Undoubtedly much of the gloom expressed in these editorials was caused by a published letter to Judge G. W. Purkins from B. D. Williams, delegate to Congress from Colorado. Williams, originally from the South, expressed the opinion that the Union would be severed and concluded with

a question as to whether it would be better to be tacked on the tail of a northern republic or to set up an independent state in the West.<sup>37</sup>

In the ensuing weeks, the editors of the *Rocky Mountain News* doubted whether any reasonable concessions would halt the secession movement. Although they hoped that compromise would save the Union, the editors wondered whether, from a financial point of view, the slave states might not better the Union by retiring from it. Eventually, they took the stand that the principles of national integrity and honor should be paramount, and that the republic which had been held up before the world as an example of the triumphant success of democratic institutions must be preserved. Several times during January, 1861, the papers criticized President Buchanan for his indecision and wished for another Andrew Jackson.<sup>38</sup>

When on January 23 and 25 the *Daily Denver Mountaineer* came out in favor of an immediate independent government because the Union had gone to pieces, the *Rocky Mountain News* took an opposing stand, forgetting some of its own editorials, and claimed that the Union was not really dissolved, and that there was still hope. As to the matter of an independent state, the editors thought it unwise to act hastily, although they agreed that Colorado's interests had been neglected by the national government.<sup>39</sup>

In late January, a writer who dubbed himself "Optic," in a very interesting letter from Missouri City, gave a picture of that mining district's reaction to the situation:

The question has been much discussed here, as to what policy and interest would prompt us to do in the event of a dissolution of the Union. Should we unite our fortunes with those of either the dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union, or should we throw a new and independent flag to the breeze, and under its golden folds, toil and struggle for a higher and better civilization, than that whose light is now flickering in the socket? I believe that the sentiment here is in favor of a separate and independent sovereignty. We have an abiding faith in our own resources, if the alternative is presented to us of uniting with a *section* of the Union or setting up for ourselves.

Yet, Messrs. Editors, if the torch of civil war is lighted, and the tramp of armies hurrying to the conflict is heard over the land, many a "Pike's Peaker" will give up his hopes of fortune here, and hasten home to join him to the fray. They will go to the granite hills of the East, and to the Palmetto groves of the South. They will part as friends to meet on the field of death. And for what? Ah! the heart sickens to think that the glorious fabric of this government is hastening to its fall, through the

<sup>34</sup> Frederick L. Paxton, "The Territory of Colorado," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. XII, 59-64. R. P. Bieber, "Diary of a Journey to the Pike's Peak Gold Mines in 1859," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. XIV, No. 3 (December, 1927), 360-378. *Rocky Mountain News*, September 29, October 20, 1859, April 18, August 22, 1860. See also letter from "Eustace" in St. Louis, dated November 23, 1860, and printed in the *Rocky Mountain Herald*, December 22, 1860.

<sup>35</sup> *Western Mountaineer*, December 20, 1860.

<sup>36</sup> *Canon Times*, January 19 and February 9, 1861.

<sup>37</sup> Letter dated December 13, 1860, printed in *Rocky Mountain News* on January 4, 1861. See also, Blanche V. Adams, "Colorado In The Civil War" (Master's Thesis, University of Colorado, 1930), pp. 23-26.

<sup>38</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, January 5, 7, 8, 14, 15 and 21, 1861.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, January 23, 25, 31, 1861.

ambition of leaders, whose strife and quarrels is after all an abstraction. Practically, how are we affected by slavery in the South? How can they ever force its growth in a land where soil, climate and interest say it shall never come? And this is all that is at issue. Would to God that the masses of the American people would realize the grandeur and greatness of that which is imperiled, and the littleness of the cause. It seems that then, their voices would be heard as the voice of many waters sounding the death knell of faction and swearing "By the Eternal: The Union must and shall be preserved."<sup>40</sup>

The *Rocky Mountain News* in February<sup>41</sup> reasoned that although the people of Colorado were more or less isolated from the States, and thus could not feel the same intense excitement and fear that the East felt, they did hope and pray for the preservation of the Union. But the paper hoped that if compromise was not successful and the Union had to be severed, it would be a peaceful dissolution, that the pride and glory of the American people would not be stained with fratricidal blood, and that if separation was inevitable the divorce would be one which would reflect mutual honor and dignity upon those whose unhappy differences had seemed to demand the steps. But on February 21, when the *Daily Denver Mountaineer* came out with an article commending the prompt and vigorous actions of the seceding states, the *News* scoffed at such a stand.

During March and April, 1861, the *Canon Times* and *Rocky Mountain News*<sup>42</sup> reflected the growing Union sentiments which were developing, although from some localities there still were indications of pro-southern sympathies. The *Daily Denver Mountaineer*, however, still had little praise for Lincoln. It accused the *News* of being coercionist, and on March 24 published an editorial in defense of its stand on the secession problem. A citizen's group meeting in Empire City expressed the opinion that the *Daily Denver Mountaineer* was taking a stand on secession that was offensive to them, and, as the paper breathed forth blood, thunder and destruction against the Union, the citizens would not patronize it.<sup>43</sup>

After the news of the firing on Fort Sumter, the *Rocky Mountain News* on April 20 said that it was useless to hope any longer for preservation of the Union. The South had refused the olive branch, and were there no principle involved, it could heartily wish them out of the Union and God-speed in their independence efforts. Three days later the editors labeled Southern action as the greatest outrage ever

<sup>40</sup> Letter written January 27, 1861, and printed in the *Rocky Mountain News* of January 30, 1861.

<sup>41</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, February 3, 11, 19, 25, 1861.

<sup>42</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, March 2, 4, 12, 16, 23, 25, 27, April 10, 19, 20, 22, 24, 25; *Canon Times*, March 2, 9, 23, 1861.

<sup>43</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, March 25, April 25, 1861.

committed against the Republic, including the treason of Benedict Arnold. On April 24, when a group hoisted the rebel flag above the store of Wallington and Murphy in Denver, the *Rocky Mountain News* reported that aside from bad taste the event was of no importance. The next day a group called upon the editors and offered to stop running up the rebel flag if the paper stopped supporting the Union so strongly, but the *News* refused, and said that if those people thought it proper to unfurl the "rattlesnake banner," to make the most of it for "19/20ths of the people of the region would side with the *News*."<sup>44</sup>

Numerous letters from people in such places as Nevada City, Golden City, Denver, Central City, Payne Bar, Fall River City, Gold Hill, Jackson District, Boulder, Downieville, Empire City, Georgia Gulch and Canon City soon were being printed in support of the stand of the *Rocky Mountain News*.<sup>45</sup>

The *News*, having such a wide circulation, undoubtedly did much to promote Unionism and anti-Southern sentiment. Neither the definitely Democratic and pro-Southern *Daily Denver Mountaineer*<sup>46</sup> nor the *Canon Times*,<sup>47</sup> which at times sympathized with the South, had the circulation or the influence of the *Rocky Mountain News*.

On April 25, 1861, there appeared the following editorial in the *News*:

#### WHO WILL KEEP STEP TO THE MUSIC OF THE UNION?

All patriots! all who love our common country! all who are in favor of maintaining its laws and constitution will rally under the STARS AND STRIPES—our national banner—the pride and glory of every American citizen—are invited and requested, without respect to party, to meet in front of Tremont House, on Thursday, April 25th, under the stars and stripes to give utterance to their feeling in the present crisis. . . .

An announcement signed by seventy men stated that there would be a meeting of Unionites, and over one thousand assembled for the occasion. Resolutions were adopted to the effect that they would follow the Union, would sustain the government "even unto death," and that they would attempt to maintain peace among themselves.<sup>48</sup> This meeting did much to strengthen the Union side in Colorado.<sup>49</sup>

Not only did the mass meeting in Denver influence the people of that city, but its example was followed in other settlements throughout the territory. Enthusiastic reports of

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, April 24, April 25, 1861.

<sup>45</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, April 23, 25, 27, May 2, 8, 9, 10, 20, 21, 22, 31; *Canon Times*, May 4, July 1, 1861.

<sup>46</sup> *Daily Denver Mountaineer*, March 12, 24, May 3, 7, 1861.

<sup>47</sup> Adams, *op. cit.*, Chapter I, *passim*.

<sup>48</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, April 26, 1861.

<sup>49</sup> Frank Hall, *History of Colorado* (Chicago, 1889), Vol. I, 265.

these gatherings came from Boulder, Nevada City, Spanish Bar, Gold Hill and Empire City. And out of these mass meetings came ideas for a Union Party with the *Rocky Mountain News* as champion.

Just as the Unionists had demonstrated their feelings by flag raising, so did the Secessionists. Besides the affair in Denver, a Confederate flag was found waving over a store on Thompson Creek, and when troops from Fort Laramie returned and found this flag flying again, they pulled it down and looted the grocery store.<sup>50</sup> In Central City threats were made that flags would be raised, but action was not carried out.<sup>51</sup>

This was the situation when Colorado's new Governor, William Gilpin, arrived on May 27, 1861, to take over the territorial government and to secure Colorado's loyalty to the Union. The Unionist element was able, despite the fact that approximately one-third of the territorial population was from the South (and there were some Southern sympathizers who had never been on Southern soil), to keep Colorado within the Union.<sup>52</sup> This Southern group must have been relatively strong for it was able to organize two separate military units, and many left the area to fight for the South.<sup>53</sup> However, the stronger Union views, presented in the local newspapers, probably did more than anything to keep Confederate activities at a minimum in this area both before and during the great struggle.

<sup>50</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, May 22, 1861.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, April 30, 1861.

<sup>52</sup> William C. Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers In The Civil War* (Denver, 1906), p. 26. Also, Wilbur F. Stone, *History of Colorado* (Chicago, 1918), Vol. I, 701-702.

<sup>53</sup> Adams, *op. cit.* This thesis contains an account of Colorado's loyalty and participation in the Civil War.

# The Gunnison River Diversion Project

By RICHARD G. BEIDLEMAN\*

In the excitement of a Centennial year, it is easy to forget historic events of only a half-century ago. But in the Uncompahgre Valley on September 23, 1959, there will be some, at least, who will remember a moment fifty years earlier when the valley traded its desert for an Eden. At the touch of a President's hand, the head gates of a new tunnel, the longest in the West, had swung open, releasing the turbulent waters of the Gunnison River from the forbidding chasm of Black Canyon into what William Howard Taft called the "incomparable valley with the unpronounceable name."<sup>1</sup>

The Gunnison River Diversion Project was one of the first reclamation projects to be undertaken by the United States Reclamation Service. Long before the grandiose endeavor became a reality, it had been a dream in the minds of many western Coloradans. In this article there has been an attempt to portray both the dream and the reality. This, like the story of Colorado's first gold rush, is an account of men against the elements, especially here the elements of water and earth. The sources are scattered, the facts at variance with each other. Local newspapers of the time probably represent the best reflection of what took place with respect to exploration of the river; the annual reports of the U. S. Geological Survey and the U. S. Reclamation Service portray in detail the saga of tunnel construction.

This consideration of the Gunnison River Diversion Project was prepared as a portion of the museum prospectus for the proposed visitor center at Black Canyon National Monument, under Mission 66. The author is indebted to the National Park Service for permission to present this compilation in published form.—*The Author.*

## EXPLORATION OF THE BLACK CANYON

It took more than the mere quest for adventure to entice the first white men down the churning white waters of the Gunnison River where it rushed through Black Canyon!

In the decades before the turn of the century, so one story goes, there was a French settler, F. C. Lauzon, living in the Uncompahgre Valley.<sup>2</sup> His holdings comprised forty barren acres which were watered by a dribble from the fluctuating Uncompahgre River and by erratic downpourings from short-lived storms. Lauzon knew of the Gunnison River, entrenched in its rock-walled canyon to the north, and after long cogitation he became convinced that its bountiful waters could be diverted into the arid Uncompahgre Valley by means of a judiciously placed tunnel and system of connecting canals.

Probably many of the local ranchers and farmers, including

\* Dr. Richard G. Beidleman, of the Zoology Department, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado, has taught at Colorado State University and at the University of Colorado. Recipient of a large grant from the Ford Foundation, several years ago, Dr. and Mrs. Beidleman followed many of the routes of early Western explorers, in a search for zoological data. He has written numerous articles for *Colorado Wonderland*, *Colorado Outdoors* and other Western publications.—*Editor.*

<sup>1</sup> Lillian R. Brigham, *Colorado Travelers* (Denver, 1938), p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> C. H. Forbes-Lindsey, "Exploring the Gunnison Canon," *World's Work*, Vol. 14 (1907), No. 5, 9376; A. W. Rolker and Day A. Willey, "The Heroes of the Gunnison Tunnel," *Everybody's Magazine*, Vol. 21 (1909), No. 4, 506-508.

Lauzon, had come to view the waters of the near-by but inaccessible Gunnison River with proprietary anticipation in the late nineteenth century. Irrigation had come into vogue in the Uncompahgre Valley about 1875, the first crop being hay for shipment to the southwestern Colorado mines.<sup>3</sup> Availability of water by irrigation ditches, starting about 1884, made possible the raising of other crops and fruit trees. However, water resources of the valley soon proved inadequate under the increased demand. Much of the agricultural land was abandoned and many a valuable house was deserted. Those settlers who remained naturally began toying with the idea of diverting the greater flow of the Gunnison into their own valley by means of tunnels and canals.

If a tunnel were to be constructed, it was imperative that the canyon be surveyed to ascertain the best location for such a project. Up to 1882 the Black Canyon had generally been considered as impassable, and little specific information was available about it. The local Utes occasionally crossed the river within the present national monument area, especially at Red Rock Canyon, but reputedly felt that anyone going downstream would never come out alive.<sup>4</sup> Gunnison had avoided the canyon in 1853, by-passing it to the south and west as had Escalante before him in 1776. In 1874 the Middle Division of the Hayden Survey skirted the north rim of the canyon throughout its length, establishing several survey stations within the present extent of the Monument. Someone with this party reportedly gazed into the gorge and declared it inaccessible.<sup>5</sup> At one time an unidentified geologist who had been lowered 1000 feet into the chasm commented that "no man could go farther and live."<sup>6</sup>

The winter of 1882-83 saw the first successful, though partial, survey carried out within the canyon.<sup>7</sup> By this time the Denver and Rio Grande Railway had completed its line from Gunnison into the Black Canyon to Cimarron, the first passenger train passing to the end of the tracks on the morning of August 13, 1882.<sup>8</sup> One hundred twenty-one tickets had been

<sup>3</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *First Annual Report of the Reclamation Service from June 17 to December 1, 1902* (1903), p. 133.

<sup>4</sup> Forbes-Lindsey, *op. cit.*, 9377.

<sup>5</sup> A. L. Fellows, "The Gunnison Tunnel," *Forestry and Irrigation*, Vol. 9 (November, 1903), 530.

<sup>6</sup> Rolker and Willey, *op. cit.*, 508.

<sup>7</sup> The account of this trip given here is based upon the following sources: Byron H. Bryant, MSS XI-26, Library, State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver. This is a typed copy of a letter written to Bryant's brother, Dr. Emory A. Bryant; Byron H. Bryant, "Exploration of the Black Canyon," *The Trail*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1919), 5-10. This is a published copy of the letter cited above; J. Fred Hunter, "Pre-Cambrian Rocks of Gunnison River, Colorado," *U. S. Geol. Surv. Bull.*, No. 777 (1925), 3-1. Bryant's trip is sometimes incorrectly dated as having taken place in 1881-1882 or even 1881-1883.

<sup>8</sup> George A. Root, "Gunnison in the Early 'Eighties," *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. IX, No. 6 (Nov., 1932), 208. So difficult had railroad workers found access to the upper Black Canyon that they had had to use ladders from boats or hang suspended in rope cradles from the cliffs above to put in their black powder charges for blasting out the railroad bed. Brigham, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

sold for the opening run of the fifteen-mile stretch of canyon, good publicity having been insured by giving free tickets to members of the press. The Gunnison Boys' Band accompanied the excursionists, making the canyon walls echo with its music. The last mile of tracks, costing more than the entire line through the Royal Gorge, had taken a year to build. The terminus, Cimarron, was nothing more than a tent city at this time, with only one log house on the townsite.

Early in December, 1882, Byron H. Bryant, in charge of construction for the Uncompahgre Extension of the Denver and Rio Grande, received a telegram from the line's chief engineer, J. A. McMurtrie, asking him to undertake an exploration of the Black Canyon from Cimarron at the end of the road downstream to Delta. Immediately Bryant organized a surveying crew with C. E. Telvirer of Aspen in charge, and including H. C. Wright, transitman, James Robinson, levelman, Gunder, topographer, McDermott as rodman, Usher as head chainman, and a pack train outfit headed by Charles Hall.

The party left Grand Junction on December 12, and proceeded up the north rim of the Black Canyon to Crystal River, about five miles downstream from Cimarron, where it encamped high above the river. A few days later the men started their line downstream from Cimarron, spending their first night with an old frontiersman and contemporary of Kit Carson and Jim Bridger, Captain Cline, who had a home up the Cimarron and who claimed to have run the Gunnison in a canoe some years before, a most unlikely feat.

Bryant expected to make the survey through the canyon in some twenty days, and the party was provisioned for that period. As it developed, the work took from sixty-five to sixty-eight days, about ten days of which were spent in moving from the north to the south side of the canyon when further movement along the north side became impossible because of steep walls and open water.

Every morning the workmen would leave their rim camp and clamber down into the chasm depths, returning to the rim that evening. This arduous procedure left little time for actual surveying, as one might judge from Bryant's account of the daily routine:

One of our camps was made on precipitous side of the range, 500 feet below top, and daily task consisted of climb of 500 feet to top of range, a climb down a much more precipitous slope 2600 feet to river, a scramble up or down river to our work, when we would do such work as time would permit, and then climb up 2600 feet and down 500 back to our camp.

This type of activity was wearing on the men. When the transfer was made from the north to the south rim, all but three of the crew quit. These three, Gunder, Robinson, and Wright, with Bryant, completed the survey while Charles Hall



continued to take care of the camp and pack train. The party had to go downstream from Grizzly Gulch (within the present Monument area, said by some to be a corruption of "Griswell's Gulch") on the North Rim to Delta, then back up the South Rim until the Grizzly Gulch portion of the canyon was again reached.

For about forty days the four ran the transit, the level, both ends of the chain, carried the leveling rod, and took the topography. The river was partially frozen, and the men would have to jump back and forth from ice fringes across swirling, frigid water. Some of the ice bridges which spanned the river would raise the water level from five to eight feet above the downstream side.

Robinson was good at working on the ice, so fearless that he often had to be restrained from taking chances. Gunder was good at the wall climbing. After a hard day in the canyon, Wright would often talk in his sleep about imaginary hazards. "Sometimes it was the safety of his transit that troubled him, and sometimes he would dream he had met with an accident and broken an arm or a leg and would give us minute instructions as to how to care for him."

The survey was finally completed early in the spring of 1883. From the results, it was evident that use of the canyon downstream from Cimarron for a railway line was impractical. However, this first survey might have suggested to some that water diversion was a feasible idea, and that the canyon could be conquered.

Preliminary irrigation investigations, except on a minor scale, were too expensive to be supported by local subscription, despite some interest. In 1894 a man named Richard Whinnerah made a survey for a tunnel along what today is the present line of the Gunnison Tunnel.<sup>9</sup> The next year, Lauzon promoted an election to secure funds for a diversion tunnel from the Gunnison River, but the vote was against the proposition.<sup>10</sup> During this period attempts were made to interest the Colorado legislature in supporting a diversion project, but to no avail.<sup>11</sup> Independent surveyors were very naïve about the cost of such a project, one estimating that \$75,000 would pay for seven miles

<sup>9</sup> *Souvenir Booklet, Montrose County, Colorado* (Montrose, 1905). Copy in the Montrose Public Library. Another account, in part inaccurate, stated that "Whinnerah" and another civil engineer, Walter Fleming (see Footnote No. 14), started out on August 27, 1904 (obviously the wrong year) to run level lines from the Uncompahgre Valley to the Gunnison River to see if a ditch could be taken out from the canyon and how much of the valley could be covered by the water so obtained. Later the men decided that a tunnel was the only answer for diversion and surveyed for one. Barton W. Marsh, *The Uncompahgre Valley and the Gunnison Tunnel* (Montrose, 1905), pp. 77-78. In the *Montrose Enterprise* for October 20, 1900, Fleming suggested that the data on the Gunnison tunnel site "made some six or seven years ago" be republicitized. His comment appears to verify the activity of Fleming and Whinnerah in 1894.

<sup>10</sup> *Souvenir Booklet, Montrose County, Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Fellows, "The Gunnison Tunnel," *op. cit.*, 531.

of tunnel, a mile of heavy cut, and a hundred-foot dam across the Gunnison River.<sup>12</sup>

Around the turn of the century, two men made special examinations which proved of value. In August of 1900, Delta County Surveyor John A. Curtis took a survey crew up to Red Rock Canyon "to ascertain just the condition which exists with regard to getting water from the Gunnison into this valley."<sup>13</sup> Also, a surveyor from Montrose, W. H. Fleming, had run level lines across the divide between the Gunnison and Uncompahgre Valleys at chosen points.<sup>14</sup>

In order to obtain funds to support a tunnel project, an appeal had been made to the Twelfth Session of the Colorado legislature which met in 1899. On January 28, Senator W. S. Buckley introduced Senate Bill No. 310, "for an act to construct, maintain, and operate a state tunnel in Montrose County, Colorado, and for the use of unemployed convicts in constructing the same and making appropriations therefor."<sup>15</sup> This bill was referred to the Committee on Labor. On March 1, the bill was tabled "for the reason that there are no funds available for such purpose and that the enterprise is deemed to be impracticable."<sup>16</sup> Buckley objected strenuously to the pessimistic suggestion of the latter phrase, and it was finally struck from the record.<sup>17</sup>

Sponsors of the water diversion project were only momentarily set back by the defeat of the request for legislative support. The *Montrose Enterprise* urged "each citizen to put in a good word when he can."<sup>18</sup> In late June of 1900, John Masters, an Idaho capitalist, arrived in Montrose to investigate the possibility of putting a dam and power plant near Red Rock Canyon which would furnish power for the mines of Ouray. With respect to the project, Masters told local officials that "his company must have at least a quarter of a million dollar investment in prospect to take hold of it in earnest."<sup>19</sup> This investment never proved forthcoming.

Western Congressmen were busy pushing the local irrigation and diversion project, especially Representatives Shafroth and Bell, and Senator E. O. Wolcott. The latter promised to introduce a bill into the United States Senate to build the

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

<sup>13</sup> *Montrose Enterprise*, August 18, 1900.

<sup>14</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *First Annual Report, op. cit.*, p. 135. Fleming probably made his survey in conjunction with Whinnerah's survey, presumably in 1894 (see Footnote No. 9). No date is given in the Reclamation Service recapitulation and an obviously incorrect date (1904) is given in Marsh, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>15</sup> *Senate Journal of the General Assembly of the State of Colorado*, 12th Session (1899), p. 271.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 597.

<sup>17</sup> "Upon request of Senator Buckley the words 'and that the enterprise is deemed to be impracticable' were stricken out of the report and as amended it was adopted," *Ibid.*, p. 609.

<sup>18</sup> "It looks now as though every effort of our people should be turned toward government or state aid in building the tunnel . . ." *Montrose Enterprise*, August 4, 1900.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, July 7, 1900.

tunnel and canals, at the instigation of a local farmer, John E. Pelton. There was some thought at the time that this would be construed primarily as a political move, since Wolcott was coming up for re-election.<sup>20</sup>

Late in the summer of 1900, a party of five volunteers decided to tackle a survey of the Black Canyon to see if water diversion would actually be feasible.<sup>21</sup> The leader, William W. Torrence, later to be called the "Father of the Gunnison Tunnel," was at the time superintendent of the Montrose Electric Light and Power Company. His companions included John E. Pelton, a Montrose farmer and local lake resort proprietor, J. A. Curtis, the Delta County Surveyor and civil engineer, M. F. Hovey, Montrose farmer and one-time miner, and E. B. Anderson, a Delta rancher. All except Torrence were married and had children. Hovey, the oldest, was fifty-five.

In September of 1900 these men were ready to tackle the river. Headed by Pelton, they took the train for the mouth of Cimarron Creek, the railroad company transporting them free. Going down-river from there, the men planned to reach Red Rock Canyon within four or five days. If they had experienced too rough a journey by this time, they would climb out there, leaving the boats to drift downstream to the North Fork; otherwise they would accompany the boats through the entire length of the canyon.

Their equipment included two



TORRENCE

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, September 22, 1900. "They [Bell and Shafroth] have been at work in season and out of season to push the work in the various committees, and can be depended on to keep it going. The democratic party has declared for help for the irrigation enterprises of the West, and this of itself shows the growth of sentiment. Our congressmen are doing all any men can." *Montrose Enterprise*, August 18, 1900.

<sup>21</sup> There have been a number of published accounts of this 1900 trip. In magazines, newspapers, and books. Unfortunately, the various accounts differ in details. The résumé presented here is primarily based upon the following sources, with particular dependence upon the newspaper reports: *Souvenir Booklet, Montrose County*, op. cit.; Fanny E. Coe, *Heroes of Everyday Life* (Boston, 1911), pp. 40-61; Fellows, op. cit., 530-537; Hunter, loc. cit.; Marsh, op. cit., pp. 89-96; *Montrose Enterprise*, September-October, 1900; Rolker and Willey, op. cit., 508-514; John Henry Shaw, "Exploring the Black Canon of the Gunnison River," *World To-Day*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (1909), 1139-1146; and Wilson Rockwell, *Sunset Slope* (Denver, 1956), pp. 279-284. In their survey the men were interested in the possibility of running a ditch downstream in the canyon to Red Rock and into a tunnel from there to the Uncompahgre Valley. *Montrose Enterprise*, September 8, 1900.

boats, *City of Montrose* and *John C. Bell* (after Congressman Bell), of stout oak frames, bound with iron and covered with canvas. The boats were supplied by John Pelton from his private lake. They had tins of meat, vegetables, and hard tack sufficient for a month's trip. Cameras, surveying instruments, including an aneroid barometer, pocket compass, and surveyor's chain, and notebooks were protected in waterproof tins. On September 5, at 10 o'clock, after all was packed, they signaled by revolver shots to watchers above that the expedition was underway.

On the first day, the men had to carry boats and provisions on their shoulders past many bad stretches of the river, and by evening had journeyed only three-quarters of a mile. Next



PORTAGE AROUND ONE OF FALLS

day, about two miles from the starting place, the *John C. Bell* parted its line, struck a rock and sank, carrying with it many provisions and equipment, including Torrence's field glasses. Only the blankets, which floated, were saved.

That night the men found refuge in a cave above the water, where they cooked their evening meal over a driftwood fire.

Next day they continued in the one remaining boat. About eleven miles down the canyon, wet from the rain and river water, they rendezvoused with a party under Mr. Denniston who came down from the rim. After a long respite, the men returned to the canyon on September 25 to continue the trip. It was optimistically conjectured that "the rest of the trip which is not so rough will probably be made in a few days."<sup>22</sup>

Periodically during the course of the trip, friends had been watching for the party from the canyon rim above. When they finally spied them for the first time, the watchers shouted and fired shots to attract the attention of the five men, but the roar of the river drowned out the salutations. At last, they sent a cascade of rocks down the canyon slope which did alert

<sup>22</sup> *Montrose Enterprise*, September 15, 1900. It was during this prolonged delay of the trip that Pelton went to Denver and successfully encouraged E. O. Wolcott to introduce a bill into the U. S. Senate for appropriation of money to construct the proposed diversion tunnel and ditch.

the men below. Excitedly the voyagers looked up and waved, then collapsed on the shore for half-an-hour, glancing up occasionally and waving at their well-wishers.

About four weeks from the date when they first entered the canyon, the men gave up the venture. They had come only some fifteen miles, the last four in five days, had been without adequate provisions, and now the men were confronted with what appeared to be an impassable cascade blocking their passage. The canyon had narrowed to about thirty feet, the chasm walls rose perpendicularly 2,000 feet overhead, and the river was cascading over falls after falls.



LEAVING THE LAST BOAT

Anderson and Hovey tried to go downstream a ways to survey, but their boat nearly swamped and they narrowly missed being propelled over a cascade. To proceed farther, the men all agreed, would result in almost instant death. Disheartened, Torrence wrote in his notebook "With our present equipment we can go no farther. The Black Canon is *not* impenetrable. If I get out of this scrape alive, I shall come back."<sup>23</sup>

Scouting around, Torrence located a steep ravine which seemed to give access to the north rim in the vicinity of the present Narrows. The men rested, and that evening they ate up the remaining food. Next morning at eight they left the "Falls of Sorrow," as they named the rocky cascade upstream from the Narrows (now known as Torrence Falls), and started the long scramble up-



TOP OF FALLS OF SORROW

<sup>23</sup> Rolker and Willey, *op. cit.*, 512.

ward. They roped together and, using the spike-shod transit tripod legs as alpenstocks, they slowly made their precarious way, one after another, up the canyon wall. By noon they had scaled a thousand feet. In the afternoon one of the company could hardly be restrained from jumping into the chasm. Finally, at 3:30 in the afternoon the rim was reached. The men were exhausted, covered with dust, parched, hands cut, lips swollen, eyes bloodshot. Even then, they were still in wild, uninhabited country and had to hike fifteen miles before they encountered William McMillen's ranch on the Muddy, where they could procure food. From there McMillen transported them to a place where they could make connections for Montrose, which they reached on October 1.<sup>24</sup>

During these days of exploration, friends and relatives of the five men had maintained a vigil on the rim, hoping for an occasional glimpse of the intrepid river-runners. Towards the end of September, not having seen the explorers for some time, the watchers finally feared the worst and were making preparations to screen the river where it left the canyon to the northeast to recover the bodies, when the men were reported safe.

This partial exploration of the canyon by river served to bolster the interest in irrigation possibilities of the region. In 1901, Meade Hammond, State Representative from Delta, introduced a new Gunnison Tunnel bill (House Bill No. 195) into the Colorado legislature, Thirteenth Session, "a bill for an act to construct, maintain and operate State Canal No. 3, in Montrose and Delta counties; the creation of a board of control; the use of convict labor in constructing the same; the issuance of certificates of indebtedness; providing for the sale of water, and making an appropriation for construction."<sup>25</sup> The request for funds was in the amount of \$50,000. The bill was referred to the Finance Committee. On April 11, the bill was approved but with the amendment that only \$25,000 would be authorized to support the project.<sup>26</sup> This bill had been pushed not only by Senator Hammond but by Senators W. S. Buckley, Montgomery, Rewalt, and others as well. Indeed, Buckley felt so strongly about the measure that, despite having been confined to a hospital bed in the last throes of tubercu-

<sup>24</sup> *Montrose Enterprise*, October 6, 1900. They probably made their ascent from the canyon on September 30. The only specific terminal date given in accounts is for their arrival back in Montrose, October 1. Several of the popular accounts (Marsh, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96; Rolker and Willey, *op. cit.*, 513; and others) report that the men didn't reach the rim until 9:30 p.m. The seemingly more accurate story in the *Montrose Enterprise* for October 6 gave the 3:30 time.

<sup>25</sup> *Senate Journal of the General Assembly of the State of Colorado*, 13th Session (1901), p. 902. This bill is presented in detail in *Session Laws of Colorado*, 13th Session (1901), pp. 369-374.

<sup>26</sup> Sidney Jocknick, *Early Days on the Western Slope of Colorado* (Denver, 1913), p. 282.

losis, he was carried to the Senate chamber to vote in favor of the bill.<sup>27</sup>

Against this background of state action and local interest, the U. S. Geological Survey authorized the expenditure of \$4,000 for a preliminary examination of the canyon to determine the geological structure of the area through which a tunnel might pass, the construction difficulties to be anticipated, and the probable cost of the work.<sup>28</sup> According to popular accounts, the Chief Engineer of the new Reclamation Service in Washington sent a wire to the Denver office, reading "Advise me if it is possible to divert Gunnison to Uncompahgre Valley by tunnel under Vernal Mesa?"<sup>29</sup>

The wire was relayed to A. Lincoln Fellows, irrigation engineer and resident hydrographer of the U. S. Geological Survey at Montrose, who replied "Immediate preparations will be made for the exploration of the Gunnison Cañon at the earliest possible date."<sup>30</sup>

In the summer of 1901, cooperating with C. H. Fitch, topographer and consulting engineer, Fellows commenced a survey which would show, by means of contours, the country dividing the Gunnison and Uncompahgre Valleys, so that the shortest and most suitable route for a tunnel could be determined.<sup>31</sup>

The Geological Survey placed a party of six men in the field in June, with headquarters on Vernal Mesa. The topographic mapping, under the supervision of Jeremiah Ahern, was completed by September 30.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile, Fellows, in charge of engineering features, had run three level lines across the mesa to the water's edge, in an attempt to find a suitable wagon route.<sup>33</sup> More exciting proved to be Fellows' decision to run the river from upstream, making a close-at-hand examination of the canyon from its floor.<sup>34</sup>

Fellows asked for a volunteer—young, healthy, temperate, unmarried, able to swim, and familiar with the country—to accompany him on this new assault of the Black Canyon by

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* Also, *Session Laws*, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

<sup>28</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *First Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.

<sup>29</sup> Forbes-Lindsey, *op. cit.*, 9376.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 9377.

<sup>31</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *First Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*; *Montrose Enterprise*, September 26, 1901. On September 23, Fellows and others had visited the canyon to inspect the proposed site for the tunnel portal, "some two miles below Jones cabin and below the narrows in the river."

<sup>34</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *First Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, p. 137. There have been a number of published accounts of this 1901 trip, in magazines, newspapers, and books. Unfortunately, as with the 1900 trip, the various accounts differ in details. The résumé presented here is primarily based upon the following sources, with, again, particular dependence upon the newspaper reports: Coe, *loc. cit.*; Forbes-Lindsey, *op. cit.*, 9376-9378; Marsh, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-108; *Montrose Enterprise*, August-September, 1901; Rolker and Willey, *op. cit.*, 514-516; and Shaw, *op. cit.*, 1146-1148.



TORRENCE AND FELLOWS

water. It is not surprising that Torrence, of the earlier expedition, should hastily make his services available.<sup>35</sup>

Planning for this trip was influenced heavily by the lessons of the last expedition. Instead of wooden boats, Torrence and Fellows decided to use a 4' x 6' rubber air mattress, subdivided into several air-tight compartments. There were attached ropes to use as lashings and to hang onto. Oil-skin covered notebooks, Kodaks, film bags, blankets, and provisions were fitted into two

sealable rubber pockets, these packs weighing about thirty-five pounds apiece. Two 600-foot silk life lines, life preservers, hunting knives, belts, and wading boots which sealed tight about the legs were included in the equipment.

Departure date was selected as August 6, 1901, by which time in the summer the water temperature should be about as warm as it would ever get and the water level would be down somewhat. On August 12 the two men finally left for the surveyor's camp on Vernal Mesa. The water in the river below was still higher than desirable.

The plan to proceed right over the rim to the Narrows, where the first party had given up, was changed at the last minute, and instead the men took the train up to Cimarron and on to the Gunnison River, like their predecessors. The train tarried, its passengers hoping to see the debarkation, but Fellows and Torrence were in no hurry and waited until the train moved on before they began their river trip.

They started down the river on Monday afternoon, August 12, and by Wednesday night had reached "Boat Landing" at the mouth of Nyswonger Gulch, their provisions exhausted.

<sup>35</sup> George Creel, "A. Lincoln Fellows," *American Magazine*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (1911), 54.



FELLOWS SWIMMING DOWNSTREAM  
WITH RUBBER MATTRESS

Here they were met by Dillon, who brought additional provisions and a new pair of shoes for Torrence, whose old ones had completely worn out.

The men had a good meal that night, then were up the next morning and on their way downstream to Beaver Camp, about half a mile above the Narrows, where they camped overnight. Next day near the Narrows they came upon a cache of fruit left the previous summer: "We opened cans enough to satisfy our hunger and went on."<sup>36</sup>

Where the first expedition had given up at the Falls of Sorrow, Torrence and Fellows jumped into the swirling waters, shouting "Goodbye" to each other, and went over the falls, both coming out alive but exhausted on a projecting rock in the calmer waters below. They lay there for hours, recovering their strength and senses.

Next came the run through the Narrows, described by Torrence in the *Montrose Enterprise*:<sup>37</sup>

At the "Narrows" the fun began. The Cañon is full of great boulders, which form bridges across the stream. Over these we must scramble, one getting on top and pulling the other up. These rocks were slick as grease, and hard to climb. We spent a day in going a quarter of a mile. The walls are almost perpendicular in many places and some 2,000 feet or more to the top.

They finally reached Red Rock Canyon, on Monday evening, August 19, where they rested and received more food supplies. On Tuesday, over a week after they had gone into the canyon, they left Red Rock for the last leg of their journey, with nothing but a lunch in waterproof wrappings. The canyon walls were not as high here, but the river completely filled the bottom of the gorge, and the men had to swim most of the way. This delayed their trip, and they weren't able to get more food until nine o'clock the next day. At that time they came upon the camp of some hay makers who gave them a feast of cold oatmeal and pie. They were able to hire someone there to

<sup>36</sup> *Montrose Enterprise*, August 29, 1901.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

take them to Delta, and thence they went back to Montrose.

The foregoing account of the men's departure from the canyon is based upon a story by Will Torrence which appeared in the *Montrose Enterprise* for August 29, 1901. The following account, with variations, appeared in several popular periodicals of the day,<sup>38</sup> was probably edited to increase the excitement, and may have confused the first and second expeditions. According to this version, several days after getting below the Narrows, the men found an inviting side canyon, opposite the mouth of Smith's Fork, northwest of the present western boundary of the Monument, and decided to forsake the river. They had gone thirty miles along its bed, swimming it 72 times.



FELLOWS SWIMMING WHERE  
WALLS COULD NOT BE SCALED

They scrambled 2000 feet up the Devil's Slide to the rim, where Fellows encouraged, "Come along Bill! There's beefsteak, and bacey, and a bed at the end of the road."<sup>39</sup> Off they hiked, fourteen miles to the ranch house of the McMillens (or MacMillan) back of the rim, guided by a light in a window. The McMillens gave them a hearty meal, bundled them into a wagon, and that night drove them to Hotchkiss and on to Delta. There they boarded the train to Montrose, where a crowd of 300 people had gathered at the station to greet them.

It is difficult for one, looking down from the rim, to visualize the immensity of the hazards these surveyors encountered. They had many portages over slippery rocks, bumped down many a rough rapid. Through this forbidding gorge they had gone, by luck without any mishaps, half-swimming, half-wading, hanging onto their raft, sometimes even lashed to it, pushing and pulling it as the occasion demanded, traveling as little as 20 yards in five hours. At night they would seek out a dry ledge above the water, sometimes so narrow they had to take turns

<sup>38</sup> Especially Forbes-Lindsey, *op. cit.*, 9378, Rockwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-287, and Shaw, *op. cit.*, 1147.

<sup>39</sup> Forbes-Lindsey, *op. cit.*, 9378.



WHERE RIVER DISAPPEARED INTO ROCKS

later by Torrence and the raft. When Torrence came into view below the slide, Fellows pulled him out by the collar onto a rock. The men hysterically locked arms, laughing, and Fellows cried "Who says the Black Canon is impassable!"<sup>40</sup>

On another occasion, below the Narrows, the two ran out of food, like members of the 1900 expedition. They went for



CATCHING A MOUNTAIN SHEEP

sixteen hours without a mouthful, then divided the last spoonful of baked beans and prayed for the best. Luck was with them. They came upon a pair of big-horn sheep, the first living things they had encountered in the canyon. One bighorn darted between two rocks and was cornered by Torrence who sprang to the opening. The sheep rushed out, right into Tor-

sleeping on it, using their mattress to cushion their repose.

At one point they encountered a rock-slide tunnel into which the river disappeared. Solemnly they shook hands, then jumped into the maelstrom, Fellows first, followed ten minutes

later by Torrence and the raft. When Torrence came into view below the slide, Fellows pulled him out by the collar onto a rock. The men hysterically locked arms, laughing, and Fellows cried "Who says the Black Canon is impassable!"<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Rolker and Willey, *op. cit.*, 516.

rence's arms. The two wrestled together until Torrence was able to get his hunting knife into the animal, killing it. Upon this meat the men lived until they were able to procure more provisions.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the hazards, they kept notes on the conditions of the canyon, made survey sightings, and Torrence made many photographs. The trip, which covered about 33 miles, took nine days. It was a rugged journey, and Torrence lost 13 pounds in weight during the days out. Most of the equipment had been lost or abandoned in the river chasm,<sup>42</sup> but among things saved was Fellows' black, cloth-bound engineering record book containing valuable records which would facilitate the future construction of a water diversion tunnel. The men had been able to survey for a side hill ditch, had seen the shape of the canyon walls, and had been able to determine the amount of fall within the gorge, all observations of great future value.

It should be re-emphasized here that the popular published accounts of the 1900 and 1901 trips through the Black Canyon were highly exaggerated, edited, and embellished.

Even today, however, the Black Canyon remains a dangerous adversary. In 1916 the Kolb Brothers of Grand Canyon fame attempted to run the river during the summer, were wrecked, and only saved their lives by scaling 1700-foot cliffs.<sup>43</sup> Low water in 1934 permitted several intrepid adventurers, including some eastern college students using inner tubes, to make a successful river descent.<sup>44</sup> About 1936 a U. S. Geological Survey team went in at Red Rock Canyon and came out at Cimarron, traveling over the river ice the entire distance.<sup>45</sup> In late summer of 1940 Parton Meek of Crawford led a party through the canyon which included the first two women to make the conquest.<sup>46</sup> Today (1959), Ed Nelson, secretary of the Montrose Chamber of Commerce, holds title to being the river's most active runner.<sup>47</sup> But the Gunnison continues to be conquered by relatively few. No visitor to the Black Canyon can escape the feeling of great wilderness solitude, unbroken by human traffic, which emanates from the chasm's narrow depths.

(To be concluded)

<sup>41</sup> Marsh, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-105; Shaw, *op. cit.*, 1147. Apparently Torrence was unarmed when rushed by the sheep. Fellows slipped him a knife with which he eventually killed the bighorn.

<sup>42</sup> The men apparently did not feel too optimistic about their own survival and consequently had strapped to their bodies the message "The Gunnison tunnel is feasible. We know it, and they shall know it!" Forbes-Lindsey, *op. cit.*, 9377. Above the narrows they found the relic of the abandoned "John C. Bell" from the first expedition. *Montrose Enterprise*, August 29, 1901.

<sup>43</sup> H. A. Giddings, "Blue River of Colorado," *Outing*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (1917), 160.

<sup>44</sup> Personal interview with Ed Nelson in Montrose, September, 1958.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Montrose Daily Press*, Aug. 23, 1940. The women in the party were Elizabeth Benson and Hope Pearsall of Boston, Mass.

<sup>47</sup> Don Johnson, "Ed Nelson—Conqueror of the White Waters," *Colorado Wonderland*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1954), 8-9.

# Charles Autobees

By JANET LECOMPTE\*

## CHAPTER XI

(Continued from January, 1959. *The Colorado Magazine*)

A year after passage of the Congressional Act of February 25, 1869, which provided for a public survey of the whole 4,000,000 acre St. Vrain grant, over 800 settler and derivative claims had been filed in the Denver office of the Surveyor General, most of them incomprehensible because the public survey had not been completed, and claims were described not by sections and townships but by meanders of rivers and locations of corrals and tree stumps. On April 28, 1870, Congress approved a Joint Resolution extending the time for both the survey and the presentation of claims.<sup>1</sup> Charley's original attorney, Allen A. Bradford, had been elected to Congress, so Charley turned the matter over to Wilbur F. Stone. On February 20, 1872, four days before the Surveyor General gave notice that the surveys were complete, and that claimants must present their claims within the coming year, Wilbur Stone filed with the Pueblo land office five papers as proof of Charley's right to the land: (1) a petition claiming 1,240 acres of land by virtue of settlement in 1847 at the request of St. Vrain—

... in the year 1847, the said Ceran St. Vrain, in consideration that your petitioner should settle upon said grant of lands and improve the same promised to make a title by good and sufficient deed to your petitioner to such portion of lands upon said grant not then occupied. In consideration of said promise . . . your petitioner in said year 1847 made a settlement upon said Grant in the valley of the Huerfano river just above its confluence with the Arkansas River, taking with him thereon a large number of persons—peons, tenants, servants and employees of your petitioner, as well as his own family and relatives, mexicans and halfbreed Indians and has continued to occupy and cultivate said lands to this date, except when temporarily driven off by hostile Indians. Your petitioner further represents that he has always claimed a tract of land in said locality three miles in length up from the mouth of the said Huerfano from bluff to bluff on either side of the stream.

Your petitioner further shows that on the fifth day of December AD 1865, the said Ceran St. Vrain, well knowing the settlement your petitioner had made, and the services he had rendered in times of Indian hostilities, being himself of Indian and French half-breed blood, caused a deed for the land claimed to be made to him, which said Deed was executed by William Craig as attorney in fact for said St. Vrain, but that by inadvertance, oversight or mistake, the said deed is indefinite, vague and incorrect as to the exact location, boundary and extent of the land claimed by your petitioner under said prior promises, and that said deed is in other

respects informal . . . Your petitioner also produces and files herewith a plat of surveys of the land. . . .

(2) A deed from St. Vrain per William Craig to Charles Autubis, dated December 5, 1865 (see Chap. IX); (3) A plat of survey made by H. M. Fosdick in December, 1870, with a schedule of locations, showing Charley's land extending from the mouth of the Huerfano to three miles above it, on both sides of the river; (4) An affidavit of Albert G. Boone dated May 1, 1871, to the effect that Boone had known Charley for 25 years, that Charley had lived 12 years on his ranch within Boone's personal knowledge, and that Ceran St. Vrain had often promised Charley title to his land in Boone's presence; and (5) A newspaper clipping stating Charley's intention of proving his right to his land, and a certification by Wilbur Stone, owner of *The People*, a Pueblo weekly, that this "Land Notice" had appeared in his paper for five successive weeks during January and February, 1872.<sup>2</sup>

Charley's case was continued until March 25, 1872, again until May 23, and again until October 31. On the latter date, P. K. Dotson, Charles Davidson, Josiah F. Smith and Wilbur Stone were examined, each testifying that St. Vrain had promised Autobees his land, and that Charley had lived continuously upon the land. On January 22, 1873, Henry M.

<sup>2</sup> "Correspondence, 1868-1874," Colo. Private Land Claim No. 17, Records, General Land Office, National Archives.

<sup>3</sup> *Peter K. Dotson*, 49, Pueblo County farmer, testified that Charley was living on his ranch when Dotson came to this part of the country in 1860, and had lived there ever since. In 1861 Dotson had a conversation with Joseph B. Doyle, during which Doyle stated that Autobees' claim was genuine and that Autobees had bought and paid for the land. Captain William Craig and Colonel A. G. Boone, both St. Vrain's agents at times, said the same thing as Doyle.

*Charles Davidson*, 41, Pueblo County bridge-tender, stated that he had known Autobees since 1853 and was at his house in 1855. He lived at Autobees' ranch from March, 1863, until March, 1864, and off and on until 1871. He accompanied H. M. Fosdick when he made his survey in the fall and winter of 1870. "Mr. Autobees has built two adobe houses some fifteen or twenty houses and cabins around on different parts of the ranche for the use of himself and tenants, has cultivated about two hundred acres of said land and constructed about nine miles of acequia for irrigating the land, he has raised crops every year since the year 1855. I was present at a conversation between Charles Autobees and Joseph B. Doyle I think in the year 1863. They were talking about an Indian war and Doyle said to Autobees, 'St. Vrain and Vigil have given you a mile and a half of land here in consideration of your services in making settlement here on the Grant and remaining here and protecting the settlements from the Indians.' Doyle was at that time agent for St. Vrain."

*Josiah F. Smith*, 42, Pueblo County stockraiser, had known Charles Autobees since 1858, had lived on his ranche in the winter of 1858, and had known him ever since. He stated that Autobees had cultivated the land more or less every year since 1858.

*John M. Francisco*, 52, Huerfano County farmer, stated that he had known Charles Autobees for 21 years, had met him in 1857 in New Mexico, and first saw him at his ranch in 1859. "I know from conversations had with Col. Ceran St. Vrain that he [St. Vrain] intended Autobees should have title to his claim. St. Vrain spoke of Autobees as being one of the first settlers on the Grant and entitled to his land."

*Wilbur F. Stone*, 38, attorney. "I have known Charles Autobees intimately since the year 1861 and have been familiar with his Ranche since about that time. I was well acquainted with Col. Ceran St. Vrain for several, about eight, years previous to his death and was his attorney with reference to the St. Vrain Grant, during the winter of 1869 and 1870. I had a conversation with Ceran St. Vrain in reference to the title of Charles Autobees to his claim at the mouth of the Huerfano. St. Vrain told me that Mr. Autobees was one of the first settlers of the Grant in the Arkansas valley, that he made that settlement at the instance of him [St. Vrain], that he told Autobees if he would go up from New Mexico

Fosdick was examined as to his survey, and then the testimony was closed.<sup>3</sup>

On February 23, 1873, a total of 68 derivative claims totaling 281,885 acres had been filed at the Pueblo land office. During the year to follow, the Register and Receiver of the land office had to decide which claims should be allowed in full, or in part, or rejected altogether, so that the total land awarded should not exceed 97,650.96 acres, or 22 square leagues.<sup>4</sup> When the Pueblo land office opened in 1870 it was manned by two honest local gentlemen, Ezra Wheeler and Mark Blunt. But honest men could not last long at a salary of \$1,500 with absolute power over 97,650.96 acres of land, now doubly valuable because of the railroad that would traverse it. In 1871 Wheeler and Blunt were succeeded by a pair of corruptibles from out of town—as Register the elegant Irving W. Stanton, and as Receiver the uncouth Charles A. Cook.<sup>5</sup> As their clerk, Stanton and Cook engaged Charles H. Williams, who could sign any number of dummy pre-emption certificates with the names of fictitious men, so that no two signatures looked alike—an indispensable talent in the Pueblo land office.

There is an abundance of evidence that Stanton and Cook were planted as Register and Receiver for the express purpose of obtaining land for the town of West Las Animas (now Las Animas, Colorado), a depot of the Arkansas Valley Railroad which would run along the northern boundary of the Las Animas grant between West Las Animas and Nepesta, Colo-

and settle on the Grant with as many settlers as he could take with him, that he would give him his choice of what land he wanted on the grant. That Autopees made his settlement where he now lives I think he said in 1853 that he had remained there ever since and that he and Kit Carson together who were two of the best Indian men on the borders had done great service in protecting the settlements in the Arkansas valley from Indian depredations, and that he intended that Autopees should have a title to his Rancho since he deserved it more than almost any other settler, and that he had instructed William Craig as his agent and attorney in fact to make him a title by deed whenever Autopees called for it.<sup>6</sup>

Henry M. Fosdick, 45, civil engineer, Pueblo County, had resided 14 years in the territory, 10 in Pueblo County. He examined the plat, and stated that he made the survey and plat according to lines pointed out by Mr. Autopees about December, 1870, and that the plat agreed with the description in the deed. [But of course Fosdick is mistaken here. His survey includes the land at the mouth of the Huerfano, but the deed does not.] *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "A History of the Facts and Proceedings in the Matter of the Derivation Claims under Vigil and St. Vrain, as Shown by the Record of the General Land Office." *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Report of M. B. Robinson, Denver, January 6, 1874, to Hon. Willis Drummond. *Ibid.* This report was published in part in the *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), February 5, 1874, p. 2, c. 4-5. Robinson describes Cook's character and habits as "notorious throughout Colorado," and noted that he "was at one time partner of Mr. Moffat and Hon. Jerome B. Chaffee in the banking business in Denver, where it is now currently reported that he [Cook] owed these parties \$8000 at the time of his appointment as receiver." But of Stanton, Robinson said, "The personal habits of the Register are unexceptionable; he is a gentleman who stands, as near as I can ascertain, high with all classes where he is personally known." So impressed was Robinson with Stanton that he tried to absolve him from any connection with the fraud, but Stanton was guilty, as events proved. Stanton also was closely connected with Moffat and Chaffee, having been employed by Moffat in his stores at Denver and Buckskin Joe in the sixties, and having received his appointment as Register at Central City through Chaffee's influence. After the death of Ezra Wheeler in the summer of 1871, Chaffee obtained for Stanton his appointment at Pueblo. (Irving W. Stanton, *Sixty Years in Colorado*, Denver, 1922, pp. 137-142.)

rado. The method of getting the land depended upon a General Land Office ruling that the Register and Receiver must refuse homestead and pre-emption filings on land covered by a derivative claim, even if the derivative claim was filed without a particle of proof accompanying it. With this ruling in mind, Wilbur F. Stone, a director of the railroad, filed two completely unsupported derivative claims covering land needed by the town-builders in February, 1873—one in his own name, and one in the name of David W. Hughes. Three months later Stone filed relinquishments of both these claims. When hopeful pre-emptors came to the Pueblo land office to file entries on this land, Stanton and Cook solemnly showed them the notice of the derivative claim that estopped them from entering the land, without showing them the subsequent relinquishment, and thus the land was held against all honest pre-emptors.<sup>6</sup>

In the meantime, Charles H. Williams was busy making out twenty-seven pre-emption certificates in the names of twenty-seven non-existent men, filing entry on 4,320 acres of Arkansas bottom land formerly covered by the derivative claims of Wilbur Stone and David Hughes, and now covered by the town of Las Animas, Colorado. The pre-emption certificates were sent to David H. Moffat, cashier of the First National Bank of Denver and director of the Arkansas Valley Railroad, who mailed them to his close friend Jerome B. Chaffee, president of the First National Bank, delegate to Congress, with a letter asking Chaffee to expedite patents for the land, on which Moffat hoped to establish a town.<sup>7</sup> When some of the patents were returned to Moffat, the fictitious pre-emptors "conveyed" their land to Moffat, who conveyed a half-interest in the same land to Robert E. Carr, president of the Kansas Pacific Railroad. Then Moffat sent a man to East Las Animas, established in 1869 by William Craig as Bent County seat and now defunct, with a package of deeds and patents to have recorded in the court house. But East Las Animas was a very small town, and everyone in it with eyes or ears soon knew what Moffat's courier was up to. The contents of the deeds became common knowledge, and the people of East Las Animas knew very well that neither the pre-emptors nor their stated improvements on the land existed. At the end of 1873 an investigator from the General Land Office in Washington was sent out, who in a short time uncovered enough chicanery to force the resignation of Stanton, the dismissal of Cook, and to pave the way

<sup>6</sup> Report of M. B. Robinson, *loc. cit.*; Willis Drummond, Commissioner of the General Land Office, to Hon. Columbus Delano, Secretary of the Interior, Washington, D. C., January 27, 1874; Drummond to I. W. Stanton, February 26, 1867, *Transcript of Record, Craig vs. Leitensdorfer*, U. S. Supreme Court, No. 48, Oct., 1885, p. 187 f.; Wilbur Stone, Notice of Derivative Claim and Relinquishment; David W. Hughes, Notice of Derivative Claim and Relinquishment, Colo. Private Land Claim No. 17, *op. cit.*

<sup>7</sup> Testimony of Jerome B. Chaffee, July 28, 1877, Denver, Colo., U. S. vs. David H. Moffat, Jr., Colo. Circuit Court No. 9.



for federal suits against Moffat and Carr as well as Stanton and Cook.<sup>8</sup>

Weeks before the Register and Receiver announced their awards, the "land grab" in Bent County had been thoroughly aired in the newspapers, and Stanton and Cook exposed for the crooks they were.<sup>9</sup> Still, it did not prepare the claimants of the Las Animas grant for the shock to come—the award, made public on February 24, 1874, of 73,000 acres, or over three-quarters of the 22 square leagues, to William Craig. The next largest awards went to two of Craig's army friends who had bought the land from Craig in 1869 and 1870 and were not really derivative claimants at all. *Bona fide* claimants, with deeds from St. Vrain antedating Craig's, with proof of long occupancy and extensive improvements, were ignored or awarded only a fraction of their claims on the flimsiest of pretexts.<sup>10</sup> Obviously, Craig had bribed the land officers, and the unsuccessful claimants soon had evidence to prove it.<sup>11</sup>

Charles Autobeas, whose claim was No. 1, who had lived longer than anyone else on his land, who had proof of extensive improvements, to whom St. Vrain had promised land ("as much land as he wanted") in 1853, who had a deed from St. Vrain dated 1865—whose claim, in short, could hardly be stronger, was awarded 686.17 acres, about half of what he claimed, and almost all that Stanton and Cook could allow him, since part of his claim was on the Fort Reynolds Military Reservation and beyond the jurisdiction of the land officers. But, in their typically illogical and malicious way, the Register and Receiver pared down even Charley's claim, a section here, a lot there. In their six-page handwritten decision, they admitted that St. Vrain had promised Charley land, but how much land? they asked. The testimony of Charles Davidson stating that he heard Doyle say Autobeas was entitled to one and a half miles from bluff to bluff they vehemently dismissed as "wholly incompetent . . . cannot be tolerated . . ." They even discounted the description of Charley's land contained

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*: U. S. vs. Irving W. Stanton et al., Colo. Circuit Court No. 10. See Frank Hall, *History of Colorado*, Vol. II, 162 f, 176 f, for an incomplete account of the whole affair, blandly denying any fraud whatever.

<sup>9</sup> *Denver Daily Tribune*, January 14, 1874; *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), February 5, 1874, p. 2, c. 4-5.

<sup>10</sup> Decisions of the Register and Receiver, Pueblo Land Office, in the matter of the Derivative Claims of the Las Animas Grant, Colo. Private Land Claim No. 17, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> In the Pueblo Land Office on the day before the announcement of the awards, Craig deeded 750 acres of land to Wilbur F. Stone for \$5,000, who on the same day conveyed a half interest in the same land to Charles A. Cook for \$3,000—and Charles A. Cook, as the lawyers later went to great trouble to prove, was insolvent. The other half of the 750 acres did not end up in Stanton's hands until 1878, and under circumstances that might not have been connected with the bribe. Pueblo County Records, Book 10, p. 1118; Book 17, p. 473; Book 18, p. 143. Craig also conveyed a good deal of land to Philip Golding, insolvent bartender of the Senate Saloon in Denver. Golding conveyed the same to Moffat, for the use and benefit, as was alleged, of Stanton and Cook. Pueblo County Records, Book 5, p. 126; Book 10, p. 6; Book 11, p. 656, etc. These deeds are all recited and certified copies produced in *Leitensdorfer vs. Craig*, Circuit Court No. 79, District of Colorado.

in the deed of December 5, 1865, because "the power of Craig as atty for St. Vrain to make this particular deed is not shown. That power should be shown and that it extended so far as to authorize Craig to convey specially to Autobeas." This was, of course, absurd, since the power of attorney from St. Vrain to Craig was ample for the purpose and was repeatedly produced and accepted without question by the land officers in other cases. In conclusion, the officers dismissed the deed entirely and said Charley's claim was based instead upon the promise of St. Vrain, whose purpose was, they declared confidently, to give Charley "enough to cover all his improvements completely and this we are satisfied should be allowed to him with such other portions as are necessary absolutely in our opinion to the full enjoyment of that which he has improved. This is as far as under the evidence we feel willing to go, and it is far enough."<sup>12</sup>

The right of appeal from the dishonest awards of bribed officials would seem to be a matter of course—but appeal was denied. That the awards should be allowed to stand from that time until the present, is past belief—but such is the case. Directly after the awards were made known, and Stanton and Cook removed from office, appeals flooded the Pueblo land office, the Colorado Surveyor General's office, and the General Land Office in Washington. Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano reviewed the case in minute detail and rendered his opinion in a letter dated October 27, 1874, that the Commissioner of the General Land Office should hear appeals from the decisions of the Register and Receiver.<sup>13</sup> Immediately William Craig demanded a review of the Secretary's opinion, and on January 23, 1875, Delano rendered the same decision as before.<sup>14</sup> This might have been the end of the matter—the appeals might have been allowed, the Register and Receiver decisions thrown out, and the whole thing cleared up. But Craig happened to be in Washington at this time, defending himself against charges of corruption in freight contracts during the Civil War.<sup>15</sup> Representing him was Benjamin F. Butler, a dynamic lawyer and a politician with powerful influence over President Grant. About May 25, 1875, Butler talked informally to the President about Craig's desire to have the Register's and Receiver's decisions declared final. Grant informally referred the business to his Attorney General, Edwards Pierrepont. The Attorney General delivered an opinion on May 15, 1876,

<sup>12</sup> "Claim of Charles Autobeas . . . Opinion of the Register and Receiver of the United States Land Office at Pueblo, Colorado Territory, under the provisions of an Act of Congress approved February 25, 1869." Colo. Private Land Claim No. 17, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> *Leitensdorfer vs. Craig*, Circuit Court No. 79, District of Colo.; Colo. Private Land Claim No. 17, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), February 25, 1875, p. 2, c. 4-7; Colo. Private Land Claim No. 17, *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), March 23, 1876, p. 3, c. 5.

that the awards of the Register and Receiver were final, that no appeal should be entertained, and that the President should direct the Commissioner of the General Land Office to order the Colorado Surveyor General to deliver the approved plats of survey to the award winners, as evidence of their title. Then, in spite of the opinion of the Commissioner of the General Land Office and other officials that appeals should be heard, in spite of the *ex parte* and casual manner in which William Craig's request was made known to him, in spite of the fact that the President's action was probably beyond his executive powers, on March 2, 1877 the President ordered the Commissioner of the General Land Office to issue the plats. On October 27, 1877, the plats were delivered to Charles Autobees, William Craig and the other successful claimants. In a test case a rejected claimant, Thomas Leitensdorfer, sued Craig and obtained annulment of Craig's plat, but the annulment was later set aside, and the awards made by Stanton and Cook remained, and still remain, valid.<sup>16</sup>

In the last effort to retain for Charley the land he claimed at the mouth of the Huerfano, Wilbur F. Stone wrote the following letter to the Commissioner of the General Land Office:

Pueblo, Colorado, Mar 5, 1874

Hon. Willis Drummond  
Com'r Gen L O  
Washington D C

Dear Sir

I have been furnished by Hon. J .B. Chaffee, Delegate from Colorado, with printed copy of a Bill providing for a sale of the lands in Pueblo, Colorado included within the Fort Reynolds Reservation.

I desire to call your attention to the fact that this Reservation is within the bounds of the Las Animas or Vigil & St. Vrain private land grant from Mexico, and at the time this military post was established this "Reservation" was created simply by a *lease* of the land from St. Vrain to the United States, and hence, upon abandonment for military purposes the land would revert to the proper owners. In marking the boundaries, by some mistake, the eastern end was made to include about 500 acres of the Ranch of Charles Autobees in the valley of the Huerfano river near its mouth. This land of Mr. Autobees he holds under a derivative title from St. Vrain, and is the oldest settler on the whole grant who was promised land upon condition of settlement. Autobees is half Indian himself, and settled here at the instance of St. Vrain and Kit Carson for the express purpose of preventing the hostile indian tribes from interfering with settlements on the Grant. This Ranch has been settled upon and cultivated by Mr. Autobees ever since 1854, and the portion included in the "Reservation" lines had for many years previously been a cultivated and irrigated cornfield. When, however, Mr. Autobees came to file his derivative claim in the Pueblo Land office he was not permitted to include any of the

<sup>16</sup> *Federal Cases*, Vol. XV, 270-273.

"Fort Reynolds Military Reservation," and he therefore has been prevented from having this portion set apart to him in the adjustment of his derivative claim. I desire therefore on behalf of Mr. Autobees, to ask that when you make an order for the sale of the Fort Reynolds land under this act of Congress, that you will reserve from sale the portion *owned* by Autobees and allow him title therefore as a part of his derivative claim, as by reference to the plat of survey and evidence in his case recently forwarded you by the Pueblo Land officers, you will see he is entitled to have.

This lease of the Ft. Reynolds land was made on the part of the United States by the negotiations of Gen. Marcy who was on the grounds at the time and knows personally Mr. Autobees as an old scout in the frequent employ of the Government in the Indian service on the plains, and by reference to Gen. Marcy you will ascertain the truth of the statements I have made.

I have also a disclaimer from the War department of any intention to disturb Mr. Autobees in his possession, which disclaimer is contained in correspondence on this subject in 1868, and which I can furnish you if desired.

Very truly yours,  
Wilbur F. Stone.<sup>17</sup>

The letter had no effect whatever upon the repossession of Charley's lost lands. On June 19, 1874, Congress approved an act providing for the sale of the Fort Reynolds Military Reservation in tracts of not more than 80 acres each for not less than \$1.25 an acre—and that was the end of the matter.<sup>18</sup>

Charley spent the last of his long life living in poverty on the Huerfano ranch he no longer owned. On January 30, 1875, he mortgaged his ranch for \$1,200 to Isaac W. Hill and Thomas M. Field, South Pueblo merchants, and on December 21, 1877, Hill and Field bought the ranch to secure the mortgage,<sup>19</sup> but they allowed Charley to stay there, perhaps as tenant-farmer, until his death. By 1876 times were so bad, and Charley was so poor that when one of his sons accidentally wounded himself with a gun, the Pueblo doctor would not come to the ranch until he was paid \$20 in advance.<sup>20</sup> In 1879 Allen A. Bradford and others tried to get the old man a pension for his services to his country.<sup>21</sup> The Colorado General Assembly passed a Joint Resolution granting the pension, and on February 8, 1879, Governor Pitkin signed it,<sup>22</sup> but how much the pension was to be, or for what specific services cannot be determined. Inexplicably, the bill was not printed with the General Laws (although ordered so to be printed), and a search for it among the State Archives has proved ineffectual. On May 26, 1882,

<sup>17</sup> Fort Reynolds Abandoned Military Reservation File, Records, General Land Office, National Archives.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Pueblo County Records, Book 12, p. 156.

<sup>20</sup> *Pueblo Chieftain*, Nov. 30, 1876, p. 3, c. 4.

<sup>21</sup> *Denver Tribune*, Feb. 9, 1879, p. 1, c. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Colorado General Assembly, 2nd Sess., 1879; *House Journal*, p. 220; *Senate Journal*, p. 576.

G. M. Chilcott of Colorado introduced in the United States Senate a bill (S. 1930) granting Charles Autobees a pension. The bill was sent to the Committee on Pensions, but before any recommendation was made, Charley died.<sup>23</sup> He did, however, benefit during his lifetime from his Mexican war service. On April 17, 1858, "Charles Antibees" was issued bounty land warrant No. 79651 for 160 acres. The National Archives reports that no pension application was ever filed in his name with the pension office.<sup>24</sup>

Rich or poor, Charley never lacked for wives. Serafina Avila Autobees died on November 21, 1871, of a "dropsical condition" and was buried in the graveyard near the plaza.<sup>25</sup> Charley then took a Navajo squaw called Estefana who bore him three children, Alejandro, Luisa and Enriques. When the Navajo woman died, he took a Sioux squaw. In 1877 he married a 17-year-old widow named Juanita Gomez, by whom he had no issue. Juanita moved up the river to Doyle's ranch after Charley's death, and the post office with the printer's-error name of Juniata was supposed to have been named for her.<sup>26</sup> Another woman said to have belonged to old Charley is probably the product of a desperate columnist's imagination. She was a Ute named Maria:

Maria learned to talk French and developed into a fine woman. Her old Indian associates were always dropping in for a visit but she wearied of their savage ways and was always scolding them for their misbehaviour. One day she caught some squaws picking the lice from the head of a youngster and made a great fuss about it. "Well," replied a squaw, "they eat us and why should we not eat them," and then they went on gathering mouthfuls of the

vermin which cracked like walnuts as their teeth closed in on them.<sup>27</sup>

Occasionally during his last years Charley came to Pueblo, and his visits were written up in the *Colorado Chieftain* with gentle irony:

Old Charley Autobees, the pioneer of this country, the right hand bower of Kit Carson, and the hero of Indian fights innumerable, was upon the streets Tuesday. He is hale and fresh as ever.<sup>28</sup>

Miscellaneous items in the *Chieftain* mention some of Charley's activities. In September, 1873, a band of 250 Cheyennes was in the neighborhood, and "Old Charley Autobees was in town yesterday gathering arms, and a few Cheyennes may be lost out of the band now in Southeastern Colorado if their chief is not careful."<sup>29</sup> In July, 1874, the county commissioners authorized payment of \$150 to Charley for repairing a bridge over the Huerfano,<sup>30</sup> and in June, 1876, the *Chieftain* noted a rumor that Charley was going to take a troupe of Indians to the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, "to show the rites and customs of the Pueblo Indians,"<sup>31</sup> but there is no more mention of this project.

Charley died at the age of seventy, on Saturday, June 17, 1882, at his plaza, after a painful illness of several weeks. He was buried on Sunday in the little graveyard near the plaza. The cause of death was said by the *Chieftain* to have been "rheumatism,"<sup>32</sup> although another source (that same desperate columnist) said that death was due to a running sore of several years' duration, caused by a bullet wound in the groin.<sup>33</sup> Newspapers all over the state ran obituaries reviewing Charley's life and exploits, many of them copying the *Chieftain's* inaccurate account.<sup>34</sup> He was survived by his four legitimate children by Serafina—Mariano, Joseph, Frances and Tom—and by numerous other offspring who were not his heirs. He left no will and his entire estate consisted of the still unpaid claim against the government for the Indian depredations of 1861 and 1864. In 1872 the Indian Department had allowed \$1,650 of the \$3,390 claimed by Charley, but Congress never made the appropriation. It was not until 1892 that the U. S. Court of Claims rendered a judgment for \$2,080 in final settlement. By this time Frances and Mariano had died, Frances leaving her husband Victor Montaner and three children, John, Louis and Alexander, and Mariano leaving his widow "Ellen"

<sup>23</sup> "Frontier Sketches," *Field & Farm*, Denver, May 18, 1912, Dawson Scrapbook VIII, p. 29, Library, State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver.

<sup>24</sup> March 14, 1872, p. 3, c. 4.

<sup>25</sup> September 25, 1873, p. 3, c. 2 (Weekly).

<sup>26</sup> July 23, 1874, p. 3, c. 2.

<sup>27</sup> June 22, 1876, p. 4, c. 1.

<sup>28</sup> June 22, 1882, p. 4, c. 2 (Weekly).

<sup>29</sup> "Frontier Sketches," *loc. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> *Pueblo Chieftain* (Weekly), June 22, 1882, p. 4, c. 2. The *Colorado Chieftain* was the daily and the *Pueblo Chieftain* the weekly edition of this paper.

<sup>23</sup> *Senate Journal*, 47th Cong., 1st Sess. (Ser. 1984), p. 764; *S. Misc. Doc.* 266, 52nd Cong., 2nd Sess. (Ser. 3175), Vol. 1, 111.

<sup>24</sup> "Report on Search . . ." August 20, 1958, National Archives, Washington, D. C. Papers filed with Charley's claim include an affidavit dated February 7, 1857, Probate Court, Taos Co., N. M., that "he is the identical Charles Autobees who was a member of Captain Ceran St. Vrain's Company of Volunteers in the Mexican war, that he volunteered on or about the 24 day of January 1847, was attached to the army under command of Colonel Sterling Price, Mo. Volunteers, and was actually engaged in the battle of Pueblo de Taos New Mexico, Feby 4, 1847 against the enemy. He makes this declaration for the purpose of receiving the bounty land to which he may be entitled . . . He also declares that he has never received a warrant for bounty land . . . nor made any other application therefor." The application is signed "Charles Antibees" in an educated hand that certainly did not belong to Charley, and is certified by Ceran St. Vrain and Peter Joseph of Taos, "that we know him to be the identical person he represents himself to be by reason of our having been of the same company and engaged in the same battle." On the same day Charles Antibees (signed "his mark") addressed the Commissioner of Pensions requesting that if the claim were allowed, the warrant be forwarded to John Mastin of Taos. Dale L. Morgan, who has been arranging the Kit Carson papers at the Bancroft Library, University of California, writes that among Carson's bounty claim papers is a form letter from the Commissioner of the Pension Office dated May 15, 1857, addressed to John Mastin of Taos, stating that the pension applications of Charles Antibees (or Antibus) and William LeBlanc have been received, but that no roster of this company is on file, and that better proof of service must be furnished. Such proof must have been later furnished, for both Charley and William LeBlanc received their warrants.

<sup>25</sup> *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), November 23, 1871, p. 3, c. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Encarnacion Avila, October 17, 1907, Pueblo, Colo., to F. W. Cragin, EPWN III-69, Cragin Collection, Pioneer Museum, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

(Elena) and four children, Charles, Kate, Millie and Antonio.<sup>35</sup> Nothing is known of Joseph, his marriage or his children, but Tom Autobeas married Teodora Trujillo who gave him ten children, nine of whom married, adding to the hundreds of Autobeas' descendants living around Pueblo—people named Finn, Sierra, Jaques, Autobeas, Ortivis, Baca and Olguin.<sup>36</sup>

By 1893, when Charley's estate was finally settled, the pie had to be cut in very small wedges. Wilbur Stone claimed \$2,000 of it, for taxes he had paid on Charley's property in 1868, 1869 and 1871 (he produced receipts for the court); for legal services connected with Charley's land; for prosecuting Charley's claim against the government arising from the Indian depredations of 1861 and 1864; and for defending Charley in civil and criminal cases from 1870 to 1877. But in the end Judge Stone, who was now one of Colorado's most respected jurists with a national reputation, accepted \$500 in full payment. Three other lawyers settled for \$100 each, and then the remainder was split four ways, among Joseph, Thomas, the heirs of Mariano and the heirs of Frances.<sup>37</sup>

The little graveyard where Charley was buried is unkempt and overgrown with weeds, although many of the graves are still honored with wreaths and jars of garden flowers on Memorial Day. The marker on Charley's grave has disappeared, or the lettering has weathered off. His plaza washed into the Huerfano during a flood long ago.<sup>38</sup> There is nothing left that belonged to Charley, except perhaps his Hawken rifle, last heard of in possession of Daniel Costello, an old-timer of

<sup>35</sup> Administration papers, estate of Charles Autobeas, County Court, Pueblo, Colorado. Mariano was pronounced dead by the court, but actually his whereabouts was a mystery. His half-Pawnee wife Elena Baca Autobeas indicated to F. W. Cragin in 1907 that Mariano had deserted her; she described herself as "former wife of Mariano Autobeas (who may be alive or dead)." (Pueblo, October 31, 1907, EFVN III-96, Cragin Collection.) O. H. P. Baxter said, "Marianna got into trouble & left the country; was a bad man. His wife, whom he deserted, still lives in or near Pueblo County." (Pueblo, July 17, 1903, EFVN XVII-1, Cragin Collection.) Mariano owned a ranch of about 160 acres five miles up the Huerfano from its mouth, which he and Elena ("Maria Madalena Autobeas") sold to Isaac Bullock and George Overturf in 1868 for \$900. (Pueblo County Records, Book 1, p. 535.) On March 11, 1873, he mortgaged ten span of mules and their accoutrements and three wagons (*Ibid.*, p. 541), perhaps to pay his taxes in which he was consistently delinquent. (*Colorado Chieftain*, March 30, 1870, p. 2, c. 6; February 23, 1871, p. 3, c. 4; February 22, 1872, p. 3, c. 3.) His youngest child, Antonio, was born in 1873, and Mariano disappeared for good in 1876 (Elena Baca Autobeas, *loc. cit.*).

<sup>36</sup> Letter of Rev. John A. Sierra, S. F., Pueblo, November 12, 1956, to writer, after an interview with Joseph Autobeas, a direct descendant of Charley, and with George Baca, a descendant of Charley through John Finn, who married one of Tom Autobeas' girls. Father Sierra's research brought to light a "Stefana" born to Charley and Serafina, and eliminated the "Manuelita" mentioned by Tom Autobeas. The Autobeas descendants interviewed by Father Sierra believe that Serafina was born Serafina Medina, married a man named Avila by whom she had three children, Juan Bautista, Julian and Narcisco. Jack Templeton also says Serafina was a widow when Charley married her. (Denver, August 27, 1903, to F. W. Cragin, EFVN XVII-24-28, Cragin Collection.) I suspect that her first husband was Medina, and that the marriage was not solemnized (for her father's name on the marriage records was Avila, and she was not designated "viuda," or widow, as she would otherwise have been). See Chapter I, p. 172.

<sup>37</sup> Administration papers, estate of Charles Autobeas, *loc. cit.*

<sup>38</sup> Tom Autobeas, Avondale, Colo., November 10, 1907, to F. W. Cragin, EFVN X-37, Cragin Collection.

Gardner, Colorado. Costello said the rifle was handmade in St. Louis, cost Charley \$1,000 in gold, and was "reputed to kill a buffalo at a mile distant."<sup>39</sup>

Even Charley's Arkansas valley is gone. A highway runs through the middle of the Fort Reynold's parade ground; original Fort Lyon is a heap of stones on a windy hill; Bent's Old Fort is only a low mud wall; and the battleground of Sand Creek is silent, its blood and bones washed away and all but forgotten. Charley is all but forgotten too, and that is not as it should be. The story of his life is an epitome of the early history of the Arkansas valley, for Charley, marvellously diverse in his abilities and activities, did everything there was to do here. Like the country he settled in, his limits were untested, and he tried trapping, trading, farming, town-building, ferry-operating, scouting—even bootlegging. He was unafraid, not only of physical danger, but of man-made traps like politics and the law. Illiteracy and ignorance did not prevent his serving as Justice of the Peace or county commissioner, at that time when there were no fences and no barriers of race or education.

Charles Autobeas and William Bent were the undoubted pioneers of the Arkansas valley—perhaps of all Colorado, each in his own way. Bent's contribution, incalculably important, was keeping the Indians peaceful while the white men first trickled, then poured into the country. Bent came twenty years earlier than Autobeas, but as a businessman in a foreign land, not as a settler. About the time Bent finally made a settlement near his forts and died there, people began calling Autobeas "old Charley," referring not to his age (for he was not yet sixty), but to his antiquity and long tenure; he was a heartening symbol of permanence to a new and uncertain population. *The pioneer they called Charley, and the pioneer he was.*

(Concluded)

<sup>39</sup> Letter of Daniel B. Costello, Gardner, Colo., October 19, 1932, to Fred Walters, Wetmore, Colo., copy courtesy of Mr. Walters.

## Early History of Sanford, Colorado

By FRED T. CHRISTENSEN\*

It was in the fall of 1877 that a number of Mormon converts from the Southern States, who had decided to move west, arrived in Pueblo, Colorado, under the direction of John Morgan, who was then President of the Southern States Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It being November and Church authority not having decided as to where these converts would be located in establishing a new colony, a decision was made that they should erect lumber barracks about one mile below the city of Pueblo on the Arkansas River.<sup>1</sup> Here they pooled their possessions and organized a United Order, a plan of community ownership. Several of the men found employment in Pueblo, and their earnings were used for the benefit of all.

In the spring of 1878 John Morgan returned to Pueblo where he was joined by James Z. Stewart of Salt Lake City, who had had experience in Mexico.<sup>2</sup> Taking with him three of the colonists from Pueblo, Mr. Stewart journeyed to the San Luis Valley. At that time the terminal of the narrow gauge railroad was Fort Garland, the road being extended to Alamosa during the summer of that year. These men leased and purchased some land from Spanish-American settlers who had arrived in the Valley as early as 1854, and they later developed lands near Los Cerritos (Little Hills).

During the summer of 1878 the colonists from Pueblo began to arrive, coming by rail to Fort Garland. Most of them walked from that point to Los Cerritos on the Conejos River, taking two or three days to make the journey. Mr. William Stewart<sup>3</sup> had a hand-made ferry boat on the Rio Grande River which was used by the colonists and freighters in crossing the river when the water was high.

Food was scarce as well as was clothing, but they got along. While waiting for food to arrive by ox team from Fort Garland, men, women and children lived for several days on nothing but a few small potatoes.

On Sunday, February 3, 1879, a decision was made to organize a town. This was done, and the place was named Manassa, honoring one of the sons of Joseph of ancient Israel. The location was on state land near the north branch of the Conejos

\*Fred T. Christensen, pioneer banker and agriculturalist of the San Luis Valley, and always a loyal supporter of the development of the Pike's Stockade area, has written the following account upon request.—*Editor*.

<sup>1</sup>Nicholas G. Morgan, "Mormon Colonization in the San Luis Valley," *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XXVII, No. 4 (October, 1950), 269-293.

<sup>2</sup>*Op. cit.*, 273.

<sup>3</sup>Father of William Stewart, Jr., who still (1959) lives on the old homestead.—*Author*.

River, north from two small hills. The Church, with headquarters in Salt Lake City, furnished some funds for the project.

With more converts arriving from the South, and experienced farmers and livestock men coming by appointment from Utah to assist in colonizing, it was decided to organize members at another townsite about four miles northeast of Manassa and to call the place Ephraim, honoring another of the sons of Joseph of Israel. This was in 1880.

To this location came others from the South and from Utah. A quarter section of land was purchased from the state, divided into ten-acre blocks and subdivided into four lots of two and one-half acres each, including streets. Lands surrounding the new towns were open for grazing of livestock, which was an attraction for stockmen-farmers. Here the settlers began life anew, erecting log houses, building ditches for irrigating, and fencing their small farms. Poles and logs were hauled from the mountains to the west, as barbed wire, fencing and other materials were not available at that time.

Three or four years after the settlement of Ephraim the townsite became wet and waterlogged from irrigation, and a decision was made to move the center of the Ephraim settlement to an elevated mesa about three miles to the north. Church authorities suggested that those who had settled at Richfield, a small community about one mile east of La Jara, join the Ephraim people and make a central location there. Some did this and the town was named Sanford, honoring the Stake or District President of the Church, Silas Sanford Smith.

This elevated land was composed of fertile soil covered with white sage and rabbit brush. Here the people of Ephraim moved their homes, some erecting new and more modern ones.

Travel was slow, buggies being used by those who could afford them. For this reason community centers were established for greater convenience to schools and churches, men going out from the village daily to do their farm work. S. C. Berthelson, an enterprising convert from Denmark, was chosen as the first Bishop of the Church in Sanford. To provide work for the unemployed, Mr. Berthelson and his brother, James C., erected a brick kiln where bricks were made for the erection of new homes and brick schoolhouses in Sanford, Richfield and Manassa, replacing the earlier structures made of logs. A school district had been organized in 1879, embracing the territory occupied by Ephraim, Manassa and Richfield.

Thor N. Peterson (also a convert from Denmark), using a surveyor's instrument of his own making, surveyed the Sanford townsite, an area covering one and one-half sections of land, laying it out in five-acre blocks divided into four lots with streets one hundred feet wide. Earlier Mr. Peterson

surveyed several irrigation ditches leading water from the Conejos River to their lands.

Before continuing with the narration of early life in Sanford, the writer would like to refer to a few experiences among those who made the settlement of Sanford possible.

A story in the *Durango Herald Democrat*, October 18, 1948, concerning the death of Jordan H. Bean, survivor of a famous Indian battle near Moab, Utah, on June 15, 1881, prompted Mrs. Mary A. Webb of Durango, Colorado, to recount her part in the incident. Peter Rasmussen, her father, had been called by Church authorities to move from Salina, Utah, and settle in the San Luis Valley in 1880. Before reaching Moab with his family in covered wagons, having lost one of his oxen, he was forced to yoke in a cow with an ox to continue his journey to Moab on the Colorado river. Upon reaching the river he was favorably impressed with the country and wrote Church authorities for permission to stay there. While awaiting a decision, he planted a crop in the spring of 1881.

Later, word came that Mr. Rasmussen and his family were expected to join other immigrants and proceed to the San Luis Valley at his earliest convenience. Mrs. Webb was twelve years of age at that time and lived with her parents a few miles north of Moab. She states that she read the *Herald Democrat* story supplied by Mr. and Mrs. Roy Willis and found it like a chapter out of the past.

Mr. Willis's father, Dave Willis, lost his life in the Indian battle. "I think he was the first man to be killed," Mrs. Webb recalled. A group of cowhands rode into the La Sal mountains that day to assist the white party and found Willis's body while the fight was going on. They buried it hurriedly and a few minutes later were attacked by the Indians. They fought them off from an aspen grove near where they had buried Willis.

This battle resulted in the murder of three white men and the theft of livestock by a band of marauding Utes. It was fought in the mountains at a place called Castle Valley. After a long ride, a pursuing group of whites finally overtook the raiding party and fought them for two days before driving the Indians out of the mountains and recovering the stolen stock.

Mrs. Webb said that at the time of the fight, which occurred not far from her father's farm, "We had just finished a horse shed which had not been used and it was the only place we had to shelter the men." She further stated that the wounded men were Bean, a man named Hall, and a third called Eskridge—an outlaw who was later killed somewhere in this country but who at that time was helping to fight the Indians. Mrs. Webb recalled, "I remember that they brought him in with a bad wound. His heel had been shot away and the wound was infected."

Mrs. Webb, her mother and three sisters cared for the wounded men, making poultices from prickly pears with the thorns burned away, until a party from old Fort Lewis arrived ten days later to take them to Durango.

"We were certainly busy caring for and feeding those men. Both Bean and Eskridge, the former shot in the head by an arrow, were in bad shape. Eskridge's leg was so badly infected that there was talk of cutting it off. But my Mother would not hear to such a thing. She took a clean pair of my Father's pants, sewed up one leg, filled it with hot yeast and put it on Eskridge's leg. Sure enough, his leg was saved by my Mother's care and he began to improve. There were no doctors for miles around in those days and the pioneer women used some crude but effective remedies. They had to." Mrs. Webb further recalled that after the arrow was removed from Bean's head, he improved rapidly.

Her account of the Indian battle is supplemented by an old story in the *Durango Herald* of July 8, 1881. The report related that after the three men were murdered at the ranch near Blue Mountain in Utah, the Indian band burned the ranch buildings, killed a great many cattle, ran off a large number of horses and shamefully mutilated others.

It was in the early fall of 1881 that Pete Rasmussen received word that his services were needed in making settlements in the San Luis Valley, and he began making preparations to move on. Learning of a group of Mormons from Sanpete County, Utah, headed that way, he prepared to join them. Preparations for the trip took a day or two longer than he anticipated; therefore, he was late in joining those on their way to Colorado. Leaving his wife Margaret, his elder sons and young daughters to gather the crops and follow later, he took his oldest daughter, Annie, in a covered wagon drawn by two horses, and hastened to join the caravan ahead.

The second day out from Moab, perhaps due to the urging of the driver, one of his horses died, leaving Rasmussen and Annie in the desolate country with no way of going on. There was no way other than to leave Annie with the wagon in the Indian-infested country, and return to the ranch for another horse. This Mr. Rasmussen did, after instructing her to hide as best she could, and agreeing upon signals which he would give upon his return. The imagination of the reader can only determine in part the loneliness and bravery of this young woman left alone under such conditions for nearly two days, and her gladness when her father returned and found her safe.

Blocking the wagon when the team could pull it but a few feet at a time up a steep hill, Annie helped her father as best she could. They finally overtook the wagons ahead, arriving in the San Luis Valley in September, 1881. Later others of the



## SANFORD CHOIR, 1899

*Standing, back row, left to right:* Ada Maloy, Lena Morris, Maud Johnson, Mary Cornum, Amy Whitney and Bessie Johnson. *Second row, standing:* Laura Morgan, Christine Frederikson, Dixie Faucette, Mattie Irvin, Mamie Whitney, Julia Coray, Emma White, A. B. Bailey, Jesse Mortensen, A. C. Faucette, Harvey Tims, W. T. Morris, conductor, George Rasmussen, Charles Bailey, Fred Christensen, W. O.

*Crowther, John Rasmussen and Holm A. Mortensen. Seated:* Julia Whitney, Golda Mortensen, Minnie Johnson, Birdie Faucette, Eli Funk, William Morris, Jr., Laurette Peterson, organist, Lars Mortensen, F. M. Mortensen, William Coray and M. O. Funk. *In doorway:* S. P. Luster, Arthur Jones, Husten Luster, little boy at left (unidentified), boy with white blouse, Willford Peterson.

family joined them, making their home in Ephraim where they lived until the village was abandoned. They then moved to Sanford, where they were active in civic and church affairs until they passed to their reward. Mrs. Rasmussen, or "Aunt Margaret" as she was commonly known, served as mid-wife on many occasions, and many are still living whom she assisted in coming into the world. The modernized ways of living make one wonder at the sterling qualities which these hardy pioneers possessed.

Another incident in the colonization of Ephraim and later Sanford, to this writer appears quite romantic. In the group of wagons which Mr. Rasmussen and his daughter Annie were late in overtaking was the Peter Poulson family, consisting at that time of his wife Margaret and four small sons. Some of the wagons were drawn by oxen.

On a certain hill, called "The Steps," the trail wagon in which the mother and two of her sons were riding became detached from the lead wagon and started down the hill, gaining momentum as it went. After proceeding for some distance, the wagon swerved from its course and struck the only cedar tree by the roadside, stopping without damage to occupants or wagon, although all were badly frightened. The wagon was pulled to the top of the hill, recoupled, and the journey continued.

Together they arrived at Ephraim on September 15, 1881. Here Mr. Poulson hurriedly erected a one-room log house, roofed with rough boards, covered with dirt. On September 29 a baby girl was born to the mother who had the unpleasant experience on the hill. There were no doctors available to care for the mother and her infant daughter, so the services of a Mexican woman living at Los Cerritos, a few miles away, were procured. This woman could not speak English and none of the family could speak her language.

The baby was but a day or two old when a heavy rainstorm occurred. A few helpful neighbors held dishpans and wash basins over the bed of the mother and her babe to keep them dry, and to catch the water leaking through the dirt roof.

Although living under these adverse conditions and having just ended a journey of five or six weeks, both mother and baby survived. The little girl grew to maturity much as other pioneer children did, and on June 4, 1902, she became Mrs. Fred Christensen [wife of the author].

The building of the railroad over Cumbres Pass, together with land developments and the construction of large canals to irrigate these lands in other parts of the Valley, attracted others from Utah and elsewhere. Among them were musicians, a number of so-called fiddlers and a few young women who could play the organ. Sunday Schools and Mutual Im-



MAY DAY CELEBRATION IN SANFORD, COLORADO.

On the Church Block, May, 1889. Morris Dancers, Jack-in-Green and Voco Phone Band. May Pole in center. Peter Mortensen and wife, Hannah Smith Mortensen in buggy at right rear. From left: Jessie Hutchins, Sherman Valentine, Nephi Hostette, James Jensen, Holm Mortensen (with Voco Phone), Francis Marion Mortensen (with Voco Phone), Hamner Mortensen (with Voco Phone), William Crowther (with Voco Phone), James White Beesum, Francis Mortensen, Jack-in-Green (with Phone), John White Beesum, Horace Mortensen (with Phone), Fredric Bentley (with Phone), William T. Morris, Voco Phone Leader, Chester Hostetter, James Hutchins, Wilton Faucette and Robert Dean.

provement Associations of the Church were organized for the training and entertainment of young and old, and it was not long until a theatrical group developed from local talent.

Independence Day, July 4, was always suitably recognized; also July 24, the latter commemorating the arrival of pioneers in Utah in 1847. Literary programs honoring these events were held in a large shed or bowery covered with green boughs of cottonwood cut from native trees not far away. A rostrum was erected in the shade where on July 4, the Declaration of Independence was read, orations and other suitable parts were rendered by local talent.

Providentially a number of skilled people were attracted to Sanford, such as stone masons, carpenters and bricklayers. The stone in the first church building in Sanford, which took almost twenty years to build, was taken from a quarry as many miles away, and hauled in the rough by horse teams to the church location where it was chiseled into shape, mostly by Jacob Piercy and S. B. Lloyd.

A co-op General Merchandising store was organized, and also a similar store was moved from Ephraim into a spacious building in Sanford by John Harrison, who began business in the early 1880's with less than \$50. The lower story of this building was used for a store and the upper, for a dance hall. Both stores did a thriving business for several years, issuing due bills or script for all sorts of farm produce brought in by their customers.

In those days grain sold from 50c to \$1.00 per cwt., hogs 5 to 6c per pound dressed. Cattle sold from \$15 to \$20 per head, sheep \$1.50, and chickens 10c per pound. Laboring men drew from \$1.00 to \$1.50 a day for ten hours work, without board; with board, \$15.00 to \$25.00 per month. People were happy and they got along. A Social Hall was erected by donated labor and material, and was used as a place for social gatherings and for a church until the stone church was completed in 1907.

Most, if not all, of these stalwart men and women have gone to their reward, leaving behind them a heritage for which their posterity can well be proud; for they were friendly, honest and reliable; giving service to their community, their fellowmen, to their country and to God. May their sterling qualities ever remain in the hearts of those who follow, and serve as an ideal for right living.

It was a number of years after the settlement of Sanford that the definite location was established of the place where Captain Zebulon Montgomery Pike and the men in his expedition came over the Sangre de Cristo range and erected a stockade for shelter and protection on the Conejos River during February, 1807. Pike and his men were seeking the headwaters of the Red River, and it was they who raised the Stars and



Stripes as a symbol of possession in the southwestern part of the United States. They did not know the area then was part of Mexico. The definite location where the flag raising took place and the stockade erected was not fully decided until about 1910.

The site is situated about six miles northeast of Sanford, the nearest village. In 1924 a bill introduced in the Legislature by Representative John W. Shawcroft of La Jara, provided for funds to purchase the site, including 120 acres of land on which it stands, from Mrs. Dorothy Cortez. The bill was passed and the funds provided.

It is quite well understood that Captain Pike believed that he had found the source of the Red River and that he was on United States Territory which was included in the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Before the winter was over he and his men were taken prisoners by the Spanish and marched to Santa Fe. Pike was later released and returned to the United States.

It was not long after the purchase of this land by the state that the late Luther A. Norland attempted to arouse interest in its importance and in its protection and improvement. Mr. Norland built stone piers and did rip-rapping at his own expense to prevent the river from washing away the site and even buried a part of a long lava stone on the ground to preserve its location.

In the early spring of 1933, this writer, who was then State Senator, and Allan F. Wright, a former State Representative, persuaded the United States Engineer Corps to send Captain Lane and two or three assistants to the San Luis Valley to obtain data and outline improvements, including a road to the top of Pike Hill nearby, with the hope of getting a group of men from a CCC camp then located in the Valley to accomplish the work of construction. This proposed project, however, failed to gain approval in Washington, D. C.

The La Jara Rotary Club took part in protecting the grounds from inroads of the Conejos River. Through the efforts of Sanford and La Jara citizens a new channel was excavated and the river diverted, thus protecting the river banks where the original stockade stood.

The late Edgar C. McMechen, Curator for the State Historical Society, was instrumental in procuring funds for the erection of a replica of the original stockade in 1952, and for the purchase of a few acres of additional land, with the view of bridging the river and building a road to the hilltop nearby, where a beautiful view of the Valley may be had. Maps were made and some landscaping accomplished, but Curator McMechen passed to his reward before all of his hopes for the stockade site could be accomplished.

## School Days in Leadville

By IVAN C. CRAWFORD\*

Early in 1879 Leadville was a city of some thirty thousand inhabitants and the goal of many newcomers, who envisioned, along with recent arrivals already settled in the Cloud City, an easily acquired fortune and a quick return to their old homes in the East. The mining excitement brought crowds of adventurers from that portion of the United States. In the late 1870's and early 1880's, many Canadians came from the Maritime provinces; English miners of Cornwall descent, together with the Irish, were followed by the Scandinavians. To work in the smelters of the town, in the late 1890's and the first decade of the present century, came the South Europeans.

The children of all these nationalities made up the school population at the turn of the century. In the late 1870's and early 1880's, however, the school population was, chiefly, children of natives from the eastern seaboard and middle west and of immigrants from the Canadian provinces of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

The record shows that "Leadville's first school was organized in a rough log cabin on Elm Street, in February, 1878. This school numbered thirty pupils and embraced the whole school population that were inclined to avail themselves of the opportunity of securing an education." This quote is from an historical sketch appearing in "Revised Course of Instruction and Regulations of the Public Schools of the City of Leadville, Colorado," as adopted by the School Board June 5, 1883.

Such a "take it or leave it" attitude toward education, as indicated by the small attendance, persisted among the population of Leadville until well after the turn of the century. As late as 1901, the enrollment in the High School was approximately only nine percent of the total enrollment in the school system. Generally, the boys in the High School were outnumbered on a two-to-one basis by the girl students, with the exception of years 1894, when forty-nine boys were in attendance and only thirty-six girls, and 1901, when the figures were one hundred and one girls and sixty-four boys.

Edward C. Elliott, superintendent from 1896 to 1903, stated

\*Colonel Ivan C. Crawford, Boulder, Colorado, who served five years (1953-1958), as Director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, and is a member of the State Legislature, was born and raised in Leadville. His father, Harvey Burton Crawford, walked into Leadville in 1879 and was one of twenty relatives—Nova Scotians—who were muleskinners in the Leadville area. Ivan C. Crawford attended grade school in Nova Scotia, High School in Leadville and holds the following degrees from the University of Colorado: B.S. Civil Engineering, C.E. and Honorary Doctor of Science. He served in the Colorado National Guard in World War I and is a retired Colonel of the Engineers, Army A of the United States. He has been Dean of Engineering at the Universities of Idaho, Kansas and Michigan, and Professor of Civil Engineering at the University of Colorado. He was appointed by President Eisenhower to the Board of Visitors of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point.—*Editor.*

in an annual report, "It is recognized that the local surroundings are not altogether favorable for a constant attendance of pupils. Community ideals do not tend to the fostering of an educational spirit." He also observed in this report, "No more powerful argument has ever been presented to me, calling for the necessity of an industrial education, than the knowledge of pupils leaving school so early in their course, either to assume the responsibilities of a life of breadwinning, or because the school does not supply that kind of training suitable for the adolescent boy or girl."

The 1901 graduating class of the Leadville High School counted fifteen girls and four boys; for 1902 the figure was eight girls and six boys; for 1903, fourteen girls and one male. In 1904 more boys were present, the figures being twelve to seven, while in 1905 the girls shot ahead again—sixteen to four. In the writer's class, that of 1906, there were eighteen girls and two boys. Boys left the High School before graduation, usually, to go to work in the mines and become breadwinners for their families. At that time, as the Superintendent so clearly and softly wrote, "Community ideals do not tend to the fostering of an educational spirit." This point is emphasized by the fact that from 1883 to 1894 there were only thirty-three graduates of the High School.

Especially significant is the fact that the Leadville High School was among the four Colorado high schools originally accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The date was 1904, and the other high schools were in Canon City, Trinidad, and Greeley.

### "Rustling"

Very early recollections of school days include some experiences at the Ninth Street School, which was about two blocks from my home, and a parochial school, Saint Mary's, one block east of the Ninth Street School. The boy students at both places were combatively minded, with the result that going to and coming from school was, each day, a considerable adventure.

In going to school, we crossed through the yards of the South Park Railroad, more correctly known as The Denver-South Park and Pacific Railway, a narrow gauge line extending from Leadville to Denver, via Como, an important, although small railroad town in South Park.

Many of the youngsters from the homes on the East side of Leadville carried gunnysacks as standard equipment, and in order to help the family finances along, filled them with chunks of coal which fell from heavily loaded coal cars in the railroad yards. Sometimes, I am afraid, they jumped into the cars and loaded their sacks without waiting for the coal to fall on the ground. This occupation was known as "rustling."

In the summertime, when tourists came from Denver to Leadville, some youngsters carried specimens of iron pyrites to the depot and sold them to the tourists without explaining that these were not gold, although the crystals were of a somewhat golden color.

Burros were plentiful, and practically every youngster had one, or a part ownership in one. These patient little animals were used to carry the coal and kindling wood which their owners "rustled" in the railroad yards, and other places.

### *The High School Curriculum*

The High School course of 1901 extended over a period of five years. Students came in at the beginning of the eighth grade and were graduated at the end of the twelfth grade.

All courses of the eighth grade were required courses, and were Grammar, Literature and Composition, Latin, American History, Elementary Civics, Algebra, Concrete Geometry. Added to these were Drawing, Physical Training and Music. These last courses continued throughout the five-year High School curriculum.

In the ninth grade, all courses but one were required, and were Literature and Composition, Latin, General History, Algebra, Plane Geometry, Bookkeeping, Botany, and one elective, Physical Geography.

In the third year, or tenth class, the courses were Rhetoric, Literature, Caesar, Greek and Roman History, Plane Geometry and Biology.

The Junior year introduced the student into the History of English Literature and Selections from Literature, a review of Algebra and Plane Geometry, and a course in Physics. Electives in curriculum were Latin (Cicero), English History, Solid Geometry and Physiology.

The Senior, or fifth year student, was required to take courses in History of English Literature and Study of Literary Selections, Bookkeeping and Chemistry. Electives for this year were Latin (Virgil), German, American History and Civics, Plane Trigonometry and Geology. It should be noted that the High School curriculum demanded five full courses in English and Literature, and that in the Senior year the classes studied Burke's "Speech on Conciliation with America," McCaulay's "Essay on Milton and Addison," Emerson's "Essays" and selections from Browning, Arnold and Carlyle. Collateral reading was required in connection with each of the English courses.

Bookkeeping was a required subject. The course was described as, "A means of recording common business transactions, and ability to draw properly, as to form and content, the different business papers such as notes, drafts, and checks."

In Biology, Physics, and Chemistry, the schedule called for

two prepared recitations each week and three two-hour laboratory periods.

### *Laboratory Courses*

The High School, housed in a very nice building for the era, contained three well-equipped laboratories, each large enough to hold, as I remember it, twelve to sixteen students at a time. These laboratories illustrated the science subjects coming in the last three years of the course: Biology for sophomores, Physics for juniors, and Chemistry for senior class students. Classes in Physical Training were held on the landing at the head of the stairs. However, no credit was given for Physical Training.

### *Teachers*

At this time, 1901, Superintendent Edward C. Elliott, with an A.M. degree from Nebraska, headed the teaching force of the Leadville schools. Fred P. Austin, a Ph.B. from Colorado, was principal of High School and teacher of Physics and Chemistry. Margaret M. Williams taught Mathematics and held an A.M. degree from Washington and Lee. Eleanor M. Bush was Supervisor of Music and the following teachers, each with an A.B. degree, taught the subjects indicated: William A. Haas, English and German; Martha Kimball, English and History; Harmon L. Lawyer, Latin and History; Fletcher S. Moffett, Biology and Physiology; William P. Nash, English and Latin. The Supervisor of Physical Training, Louis Lepper, is not shown as the possessor of a college degree; this, however, did not prevent him from conducting a creditable program in Physical Training.

A catalogue of the faculty for the High School, 1958-59, shows that the superintendent possessed a Ph.D., the principal an M.A., the commercial teacher and the mathematics teacher each an M.A., as was the case with the teachers in woodwork. Teachers with Master of Science degrees were located in the science and home economics fields.

### *Athletics*

Football was, by all odds, the most important athletic activity in the High School at this period, the early years of this century. Late springs militated against baseball and track. There were basketball teams both for the girls and for the boys, although I have no recollection of competition with the other High Schools except in football and the annual track meet of the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Our opponents in football were Aspen and Salida. We played two games each season with each team, giving us a total of four contests and this was plenty inasmuch as the football season in the high altitudes was short. High School dances followed the home games in Leadville.

Leadville High School made but an indifferent showing at the University of Colorado track meets. This I believe was on account of the short season for outdoor training and the lack of training facilities. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad track, from its intersection with Harrison Avenue and for a mile southwest toward the Smelter, afforded the favorite facility for conditioning exercises. However, the trip to Boulder was looked forward to with great anticipation, and, I am sure, brought the desire for a higher education to many of the boys. Engineering courses were the favorites with students graduating in '04, '05, and '06.

Upholding Superintendent Elliott's contention that the "Community ideals do not tend to the fostering of an educational spirit," is the fact that of the twelve members of the football squad of the 1904 team, only two continued into college, although seven of the group graduated from High School.

### *Surroundings*

The Leadville of 1900 to 1906 was a city of some twelve thousand population, and still dominated, to a very great extent, by the ideals and forces of the earlier mining days of from 1879 to 1900. A considerable number of High School boy students found their relaxation around the pool tables in the Pastime Saloon. Unless my memory is defective, the price for a cue in a game of rotation pool was five cents, and along with that went a glass of beer, and some free lunch, if any happened to be on the bar. All participants can testify that, usually, the free lunch was quite edible.

During his last two years in High School, the writer and two of his sisters had to walk the length of Harrison Avenue, and in doing so passed at least six saloons in five blocks on the west side of the street. As a newsboy, he carried the Leadville *Herald Democrat* which came off the press by four or four-thirty in the morning. Frequently the route was completed by 6 a.m. During that time, he left papers at a number of saloons, all of which were open. On Christmas and New Year mornings, the bartenders almost insisted on providing him with a drink of bourbon whiskey, and with the image before him of a hard riding cowboy, a free wheeling mule-skinner, and a hardened miner, it was no wonder he arrived home with an odor that caused his mother to violently combat the conditions surrounding the High School youths of the town. However, the *Herald Democrat* paid fairly good wages for those days, four dollars and fifty cents a week. After two years of this gainful employment, the writer was able to attend the University of Colorado for an entire year on the earnings which his mother had carefully saved for him in A. V. Hunter's Carbonate National Bank.

### *School Board*

During the writer's years in High School (1901-1906), Judge Charles Cavendar was a member of the Board, and a rather colorful legal character. Of course, no smoking was allowed in the High School building. Whether or not Judge Cavendar conformed strictly to the rule, I do not know, but in going from room to room he carried a partially consumed cigar in his hand.

Fen G. Barker, President of the Board, was a professional musician. His son was a member of the football team.

Alfred Thielen, a mining engineer by profession, had a seat on the Board, as did John Nowland, who operated a bookstore at the corner of Fourth and Harrison Avenue.

The treasurer of the Board was A. V. Hunter, who was also President of the Carbonate National Bank. In his latter years he left Leadville and came to Denver, where he was chairman of the Board of Directors of the First National Bank.

All members of the Board were prominent citizens of the town, well-known for their integrity and ability.

### *The Senior Play*

Interest in the theatre varied from year to year, but for the Class of 1906 it reached a white hot pitch in the presentation of the class play. Instructor d'Allemand was the coach, and after a springtime spent in strenuous practice, the climax came in late May when the production went on the stage in the old Tabor Grand Theater, then known as the Elks Opera House. From a financial point of view, at least, *Trelawney of the Wells* was a real success. Every seat was taken. With the proceeds some classical statuary was purchased for the first and second floors of the High School. Careful management had reserved a fairly large portion of the fund for an outing at Twin Lakes, and here, just before Commencement Day, the entire graduating class, together with teachers, voyaged in four-horse Tallyhos, and enjoyed a wonderful outing.

### *Self-Support*

A very large proportion of the boys in High School worked at odd jobs outside of school hours in order to help support themselves, and in a very few cases, to help provide funds for a college education. The jobs most sought after were the carrier jobs on the local paper, the *Leadville Herald Democrat*. These jobs required a boy to get up at 3:30 in the morning, carry a route of, say, 150 papers, which he usually had completed by 6:30 a.m., and for which he was paid \$4.50 a week, as has been said before. The rest of the twenty-four hours were his. Generally, these carriers were in bed at an early hour in the evening, although in some cases the student felt

that he was entitled to snatch a few winks at his desk during study periods in the High School. However, this practice was not common because the teacher in charge appeared to be especially on the outlook for sleepy students.

Other jobs, such as assisting in the assay shops, working with the ore haulers, helping in grocery stores, etc., were available over the weekends, Saturdays and Sundays.

### *The Fourth of July*

No reminiscences of Leadville would be complete without calling to mind the Fourth of July celebrations of the period from 1900 to 1906. These usually extended over a period of two days. There was no prohibition of fire crackers of any size, and the evenings were lighted by promiscuous fireworks up and down the length of Harrison Avenue. One event which always took place was the volunteer firemen's race, although the city had long passed the stage of a volunteer department. An elaborately decorated handcart carried the hose reel drawn by six men, and a seventh man, known as the spike, was out in front of the six hitched to the cart, two by two. Teams from the near-by towns competed in this race although instead of running directly against one another, the winner was decided by the time it took to run the distance and start the water through the hose from the water plug.

Another event which attracted much attention was the drilling of holes by hand in a suitable block of granite. With eight-pound sledges, two men alternately pounded on the heads of the drill for a period of fifteen minutes, and the team which had drilled the greatest distance through the rock was awarded the prize money. This was a most interesting event to watch. One of the drillers would stand up, and with his eight-pound hammer hit the drill on the head with all his might. The other would crouch, turn the drill with his hands, and pour a little water into the hole. Then the change-over would come. The man turning the drill would take a hammer, while the one who had been handling the hammer would crouch to turn the drill. This change could be made practically without losing a blow.

### *Graduation*

As the end of the term approached, preparation for graduation on the part of the Senior Class became an obsession. A number of properly worded and engraved invitations were ordered by each of the members and sent out, as is still the custom, to a selected list of friends, relatives and acquaintances. New clothes were purchased, and well does the writer remember a nice blue serge suit, selected for him at a local clothing store by his father. As a return on the invitations, a considerable number of graduation gifts came in, among

which, I remember, were Browning's *Poetical Works*, and Marvel's *Reveries of a Bachelor*. Finally the evening came, and the Tabor Grand Opera House was crowded from the parquet seats to the last row in the balcony.

Services were opened with some songs by a quartet, a member of which was the High School Principal, Fred P. Austin, a graduate of the University of Colorado. The invocation was offered by the local Methodist preacher who was also the father of a son and daughter graduating with this class. The address, and I am sure it must have been an admirable one, was made by a faculty member of the University of Colorado, whose name has been forgotten, as have been the words that he uttered that evening. Many matters of greater importance than anything that could have been said in a Commencement address, were crowding the minds of the graduates. On the contrary, the remarks of the Salutorian and the Valedictorian were received with rapt attention. Finally, after another song from the quartet, the graduates filed past the chairman of the Board of Education and received their diplomas from his hand.

Not much different, I presume, from the procedure followed at the present time.

The next morning the writer went to work checking the loaded and empty cars at the various switches in the hills and at the smelter, for the Colorado Midland and the Denver and Rio Grande Railroads, also for the Denver, South Park and Pacific Railway, more familiarly known as the C. & S. Narrow Gauge, and also sometimes known as the "Tri-Weekly" because it was said that in the winter it tried at least three times a week to get to Denver and back. Thus the benefits of an education became evident immediately. The High School graduate became a "blue collar," if not a "white collar," worker on the day following his release from High School.

In after years, he came to realize that the staff of the High School was rather an extraordinary one for the time, and that the educational offerings, a classical-scientific course, prepared him well for the University, in addition to inculcating proper habits of study, and the beginning of an appreciation of language, literature, history and science.