

DENVER'S DEMOCRATIC INVASION

"I cannot conscientiously ask the party to consider me again for the Presidency. I led them to defeat eight years and that ought to be enough for any one man."¹ So wrote William Jennings Bryan on November 7, 1900, to a supporter in Kansas City, Missouri. Yet just eight years later Bryan again received the Democratic presidential nomination at the only major national political convention ever held in Denver. For a few days in July, 1908, the Democrats took over the city, and the attention of the nation was focused upon events occurring in Denver.



In 1908 the Democrats met in Denver's new auditorium.

Denver's civic leaders and businessmen had been working to obtain a national convention for a number of years. Indeed, when the bond issue for the new auditorium passed in the spring of 1899, one of the most persuasive arguments in favor of the project was that Denver might attract "either the Republican or the Democratic national convention in 1900."²

An organization called the Denver Convention League began to promote Denver as a convention site. Members of the league, including Charles W. Franklin, C. H. Reynolds, Charles F. Wilson, H. E. Insley and W. F. R. Mills, appeared before the Democratic National Committee and described the advantages of Denver as a convention city. The new auditorium would be completed by June, 1908, and facilities were more than adequate for the number of delegates expected. In addition, the Convention League promised a \$100,000 guarantee to the national committee. With these inducements the committee voted almost unanimously to award the 1908 convention to Denver.³

In choosing Denver the Democrats recognized the growing importance of the West as a significant factor in national politics, and one that could no longer be neglected. "Denver secured the Democratic National Convention," the *Tammany Times* declared, "because the time was ripe for a convention of one of the big national political parties to be held west of the Missouri River." The party organ also acknowledged the economic contributions of the West, "whose people have labored so long and hard to reclaim broad acres from the desert, and who have dug many millions of dollars in gold from the rock-ribbed mountains to enrich the coffers of the grandest nation on the face of the earth."⁴

Denverites looked forward to showing the visitors from the East that the West was modern and progressive. They resented eastern condescension, and felt that this was an opportunity to correct the idea that Denver was an unsophisticated frontier town, "which millions of people have hitherto reckoned to lie quite beyond the pale of even possible civilization."⁵ One reporter said that easterners "thought that we had an overgrown village out here, which had made a good job of living in a wilderness and was inordinately proud of the fact."⁶ Reflecting

¹ *Tammany Times*, XXXII (July, 1908), 3.

² *Times* (Denver), April 7, 1899, clipping file, Denver Public Library Western History Collection.

³ "How Denver Won the Honor of Being the Convention City," *Tammany Times*, XXXII (July, 1908), 29.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 9, 1908, p. 16.

⁶ *Ibid.*



Convention Executive Committee, left to right: Charles W. Franklin, Henry Innis, John F. Shafroth, Robert Speer, Charles F. Wilson, W. F. R. Mills, C. M. Day

this attitude, a *Denver Post* writer told an imaginary delegate: "Why yes, we can read and write, lots of us, and I don't know a woman in Denver who carries more than one revolver when she comes down town shopping."⁷

The planners spared nothing to insure the success of the convention. "We mean to make every delegate sorry when he has to go," wrote the *Rocky Mountain News*. "We mean to set a new pace in the entertainment of conventions, of national gatherings in general."⁸ Badges bearing the slogan, "I live in Denver—ask me," were widely distributed. According to Charles W. Franklin of the Convention League, the purpose of these was "to give the glad hand to everybody, to show that Denver is with them heart and hand, and that everyone in the city is trying to show them a good time."⁹ The sight of thousands of badge-wearing Denver citizens reminded Col. John Martin, sergeant-at-arms of the convention, of "a great army under able

⁷ *Denver Post*, July 6, 1908, p. 5.

⁸ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 2, 1908, p. 16.

⁹ *Ibid.*, July 1, 1908, 3.

generalship.”¹⁰ Damon Runyon, writing for the *News*, observed that “the visitors are glad to see those badges, because they can ascertain from the wearers that the wild Indians are now all tame, and that—no that is not Pike’s peak, but Mr. Long’s, and you can’t see Pike’s from here.”¹¹

Denver streets and buildings were lavishly decorated for the convention. In the downtown area a welcome arch was constructed at the cost of \$25,000, and one block was allotted to each state, featuring portraits of its famous men.¹² As Damon Runyon described the scene, “up Seventeenth, down Sixteenth, and along the byways, the visitor wanders through a heavy foliage of patriotic coloring: red, white and blue, wherever there is a place to hang a thread upon, with all the colors of the rainbow woven in for good effect.”¹³

Many delegations began arriving on July 5 and 6, each to be welcomed by a brass band. If the delegates wished, the band would conduct them to their hotel headquarters. At least one such band was on duty night and day for this purpose.¹⁴ As Damon Runyon told it, the “Old Cohort of Democracy . . . alighted from his train running, galloped through the welcome arch, where Miss Denver, in a sassy creation of red, white and blue, appliqued with green and edged with purple mountains, stood waiting to receive him, waved a hasty greeting, and went bustling on up the street in search of a room, with bath.”¹⁵

Welcome Arch, opposite the entrance to the Denver Union Station



At least one party of Republicans attended the convention. Alice Roosevelt Longworth, wife of the Congressman and daughter of the President, failed to mention being welcomed by a brass band, but she did describe the living accommodations. “We lived in the car in the railroad yards at Denver,” she said. There was “a baggage car attached in which were our trunks and where our unfortunate maids spent their time looking after our clothes as best they might.” Ruth McCormick had brought her butler, “whose main job was to hose the roof of the car in an endeavor to give us some relief from the heat of Colorado in July. It was a good deal like living in a sweat box. We had a room at some hotel to which we would repair in relays to take a bath.”¹⁶

Soon to leave for New York and fame, Damon Runyon penned colorful descriptions for the *Rocky Mountain News* which captured the spirit and flavor of the convention. “Another enormous wave of humanity struck the union depot yesterday, surged up Seventeenth and broke over the city,” he observed after watching the delegates arrive. “The floodtide of incoming visitors was reached. Hour after hour they came, a continuous stream up Seventeenth, be-hatted, be-caned and be-badged, their bands, and our bands um-pahing away for dear life, and the thousands along the sidewalks shouting a welcome; on they came, state by state, and city after city, until it seemed as though the tide would never cease.”¹⁷

Thus welcomed, the delegates took over the city. After a “close study of the genus delegate at the Brown Palace Hotel,” the *News* concluded that a delegate was “a man wearing a badge and displaying a tendency to yell,” while a Democratic delegate was “a man wearing a lot of badges and yelling all the time.”¹⁸

They not only tended to yell, they also tended to drink. According to Runyon, Denver was “in the hands of the Democratic host, which is at this moment milling around the lobbies of the hotels, and writing interesting letters home on the comparative effects of alcohol in this altitude and down where the sea level and booze are much lower.”¹⁹ Or, as the *Chicago*

¹⁰ *Denver Post*, July 6, 1908, p. 5.

¹¹ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 4, 1908, p. 4.

¹² *Tammany Times*, XXXII (July, 1908), 19; *Denver Post*, July 3, 1908, p. 2.

¹³ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 5, 1908, p. 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁶ Alice Roosevelt Longworth, *Crowded Hours* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), p. 152.

¹⁷ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 7, 1908, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, July 4, 1908, 4.

Tribune put it, "just what effect altitude has on alcohol and just what effect altitude and alcohol together have on Democrats is to be determined within the next few days."²⁰

By July 7 all was in readiness for the beginning of the convention. The new auditorium was decorated with shields, flags, and bunting in the national colors. The ceiling was covered with stars, from which "a number of eagles, bearing in their beaks and talons small flags" were suspended.²¹ The eagles, reported a *Post* correspondent, "wear badges and carry flags and are evidently duly accredited parties to the great doings."²² Portraits of Jefferson, Jackson, Washington and Cleveland looked down on the delegates. "Tone is everything," commented the *News*. "The building is covered with decorations, but so carefully were they planned and so harmonious and quiet is the whole that to no one would occur the idea that there was too much on the walls."²³

After the first day's session Denverites and visitors alike vied with each other to express their admiration of the auditorium. Reporters struggled to find superlatives great enough to describe the magnificence of the building. One was certain that "no other national convention in the history of the land ever convened in the soul of such architectural triumph and such thoughtful arrangements and in such inspiring environs."²⁴ According to a St. Louis paper, "it would be impossible to overstate its wonderful acoustic merits or to exaggerate its beautiful proportions and the elaborate and tasteful decorations."²⁵ Col. Martin, sergeant-at-arms, thought that "in acoustic properties, arrangement of entrances and exits, seating capacity and everything it surpasses anything that was ever seen either in Christendom or in the days of the pagans."²⁶ And a *Post* editorial writer commented lyrically: "Outside in the sun it blazed under the blue sky, four square, substantial, a thing of which we may all be proud. Inside there was a cool gray, almost of the twilight, the radiance of the morning soaking up in the vast walls, and the flowing lines of red, white and blue bunting that draped the sweeping galleries."²⁷

Those who were among the first to attend programs in the auditorium agreed that the acoustics were extraordinarily good.

²⁰ *Chicago Tribune*, quoted in *Denver Post*, July 5, 1908, p. 4.

²¹ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 4, 1908, p. 4.

²² *Denver Post*, July 8, 1908, p. 12.

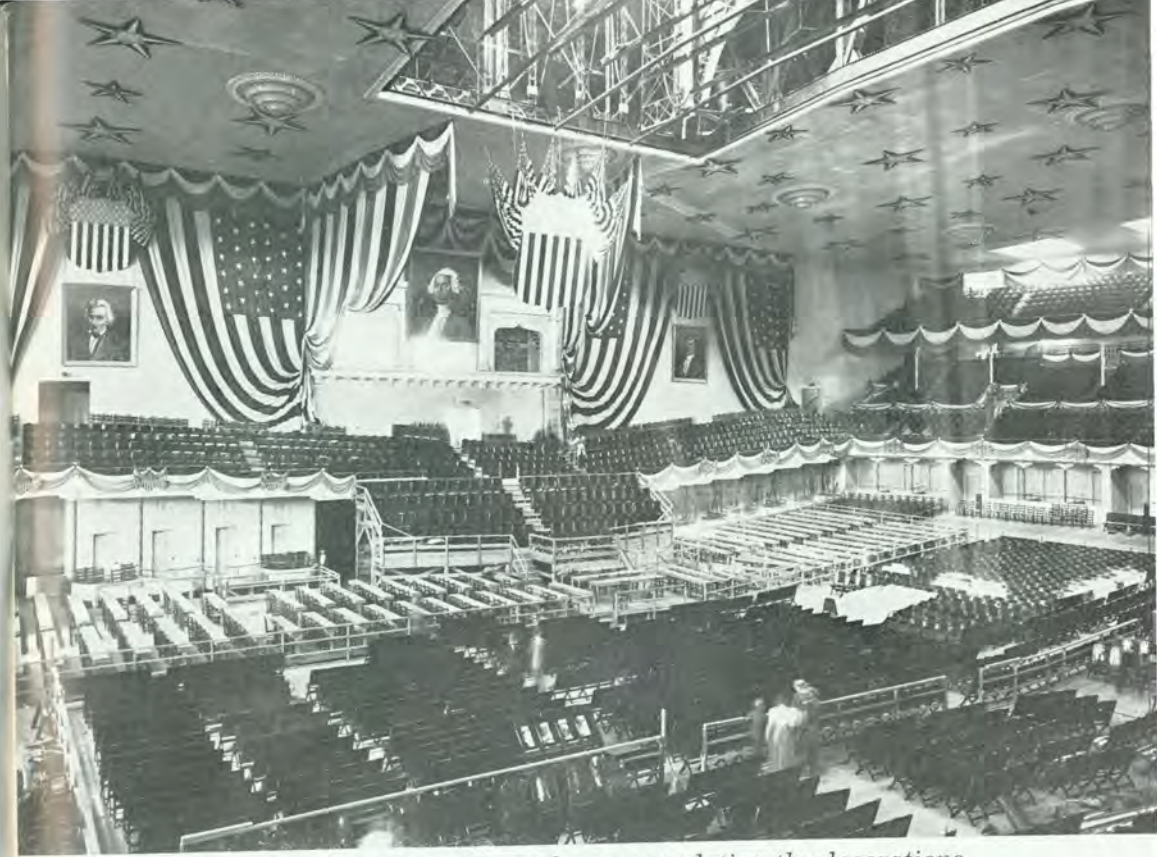
²³ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 4, 1908, p. 4.

²⁴ *Denver Post*, July 8, 1908, p. 6.

²⁵ *Globe-Democrat* (St. Louis), quoted in *Denver Post*, July 8, 1908, p. 6.

²⁶ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 9, 1908, p. 8.

²⁷ *Denver Post*, July 8, 1908, p. 22.



Auditorium interior with workmen completing the decorations

After the opening night concert on July 5 the *News* reported that "it was found that even in the far corners of the second gallery the lowest notes of a violin could be heard distinctly."²⁸ The opening session of the convention, however, was the supreme test. After the meeting one delegate said, "We heard every word of every speaker," and a reporter wrote with satisfaction that "when the adjournment hour came the world at large, as well as the persons present in the hall, knew that Denver had again made good."²⁹

The convention planners tried to assure that every delegate would be properly entertained. So that visitors who found Denver too tame and civilized would not be disappointed, Lemuel Smith, secretary of the Denver Park Board, made arrangements to import forty Apache Indians from their New Mexico reservation. They brought their teepees and other equipment and set up camp in City Park.³⁰ A trolley flat car was also loaded with Indians, who "gave war dances and all sorts of other dances,

²⁸ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 6, 1908, p. 1.

²⁹ *Denver Post*, July 8, 1908, p. 11.

³⁰ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 3, 1908, p. 7.

intermingled with war whoops that struck momentary terror to the hearts of the Easterners."³¹ Carloads of snow were brought down from the mountains and stacked in the street near the auditorium so that delegates could enjoy brief snowball fights. On at least one occasion a rowdy battle ensued, resulting in the arrest of over fifty celebrating visitors.³²

After being effusively welcomed and handsomely entertained, the members of the Democracy settled down to the business of naming their presidential candidate. It was openly acknowledged that Bryan would receive the nomination, and that the purpose of the convention was not to select but to ratify the standard-bearer. It was a Bryan convention, "loyal to his policies and obedient to his will, because the party believes in him and wants his leadership."³³ Bryan's dominance was due not to "force or fraud, to a subsidized press or political patronage, nor yet to the factitious circumstance of political success," wrote one observer. "It is due rather to the fact that Bryan best expressed what the vast majority of the party think and feel."³⁴

This did not necessarily mean that Bryan was the choice of all of the delegates. "As a reporter at the convention," William Allen White wrote in later years, "I felt a majority of the delegates accepted Bryan, even licked the spoon, but screwed up their faces in some disgust." The party "rank and file was for him," White thought, but the "party regulars" were not. "What enthusiasm there was," he said, "was the mechanical response of the delegates to the voice of leadership and their fear of the rank and file."³⁵ Bryan himself was so confident of his ability to control the convention that he did not even bother to come to Denver. Some 1200 telegrams, however, kept the wires humming between Denver and his Fairview, Nebraska, home.

The Tammany Democrats from New York were among those who did not support Bryan. They favored Governor John A. Johnson of Minnesota, whom they termed "the available candidate" because he could capture the independent vote.³⁶ Events at the second session of the convention, however, soon dispelled doubts about the delegates' choice. On July 8 the blind senator from Oklahoma, Thomas P. Gore, touched off a demonstration that was the highlight of the meeting. At the mention of Bryan's

³¹ *Denver Post*, July 8, 1908, p. 11.

³² *Ibid.*, 13.

³³ "The Democratic Convention," *Outlook*, LXXXIX (July, 1908), 645.

³⁴ Edwin Maxey, "The Denver Convention," *Arena*, XL (August-September, 1908), 152.

³⁵ William Allen White, *Autobiography* (New York: Maxmillan, 1946), p. 402.

³⁶ *Tammany Times*, XXXII (July, 1908), 28.

name pandemonium broke loose, and continued for over an hour. "A blind man from Oklahoma carried a Roman candle into a fireworks factory yesterday afternoon," reported the *Post*, "and all the pin-wheels, flower-pots, sky rockets and Willum Bryan set pieces, carefully preserved for another occasion went off with one grand bang."³⁷

The delegates attempted to set a record with the demonstration, in order to surpass that accorded Roosevelt at the Republican convention. "As yelling, sweating delegates tramped past our box," wrote Alice Longworth, "we noticed that they had watches in their hands and heard them occasionally inquire of one another if it had 'gone over that time yet.'"³⁸ Among the few who refused to join in the cheering were the Tammany Indians from New York. Most of them sat in stony silence during the entire spectacle. Yet when an exuberant Bryan man tried to grab the New York banner to carry in the procession, ex-fighter Charley White knocked him to the floor and recovered the flag.³⁹ One of the Tammany braves later observed wryly that it is "a fine Democratic convention . . . when Oklahoma counts for more than New York."⁴⁰

How were these shouting, yelling delegates to the Denver convention seen by contemporary observers and reporters? "Take a husky youth from one of these central Western farming states who has been accustomed to calling hogs mornings and afternoons since he was a boy," wrote one correspondent, "and he develops a lung power and an endurance in noise-making nothing short of marvelous."⁴¹ It was a "Populist convention," asserted the *New York Times*. "Whiskers are in evidence everywhere, homespun suits are to be seen, also the 'biled' shirt, and it takes but little imagination to distinguish, here and there, signs of the hayseed."⁴² William Allen White, ever-faithful to Theodore Roosevelt, viewed the proceedings in a somewhat different light. "This gathering of the great plain 'peepul,'" he stated, "is certainly a clothes congress. There are more high hats of silurian and post-tertiary formation at this uprising of the oppressed than ever assembled west of the Mississippi before." He commented sardonically that "this is a convention crowd wherein the Barbaric Yawp which Walt Whitman speaks of is the keynote."⁴³

³⁷ *Denver Post*, July 9, 1908, p. 20.

³⁸ Longworth, *Crowded Hours*, p. 152.

³⁹ M. R. Werner, *Bryan* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929), p. 158.

⁴⁰ *Current Literature*, LXV (August, 1908), 119.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴² *New York Times*, July 7, 1908, p. 2.

⁴³ *Denver Post*, July 6, 1908, p. 1.



"The Largest
Decorative
Shield in the
World" hung
over the
rostrum.
Foreground:
John I. Martin
and Charles
W. Franklin.

On Friday morning, to the surprise of no one, Bryan was named to lead the party during the coming campaign. He received 892½ votes, to Judge Gray's 59½ and Governor Johnson's 46.⁴⁴ A popular song at the convention, "Line up for Bryan," expressed the delegates' feelings in music:⁴⁵

We are marching on to victory. There's music in the air.
We'll place our gallant leader in the presidential chair.
We are ready for the battle, now we're waiting for the day
We'll fall in line for Bryan boys, Hip, Hip, Hoo-ray!
Line up for Bryan; how the fur will fly,
There's a hot time coming in the sweet bye and bye
When we line up for Bryan in the morning.

John W. Kern of Indiana was chosen from a slate of some twenty-five candidates for the vice presidential nomination. Then as now, few were willing to declare themselves for the vice presidency. Senator Robert L. Taylor of Tennessee told the delegates that these reluctant candidates reminded him of one of his constituents "who swore off drinking whiskey. He went out and bought a bottle and took it home to his wife and

gave it to her and said: 'Now, honey, you know I have quit drinking. I don't drink a drop, but I have brought you this bottle of whiskey for medicine; and, honey, if I get sick and won't take it, make me take it.'"⁴⁶

The party platform adopted by the delegates called for modification of the injunction law, an eight-hour day on all government work, an employer's liability act, organization of a department of labor, laws to prevent private monopolies, tariff revision, an income tax, and popular election of senators. The primary issue, according to the party, was "Shall the people rule?"⁴⁷ As Bryan declared in his acceptance speech at Lincoln on August 12, "Shall the people control their own Government and use that Government for the protection of their rights and for the promotion of their welfare? or shall the representatives of predatory wealth prey upon a defenseless public, while the offenders secure immunity from subservient officials whom they raise to power by unscrupulous methods?"⁴⁸

While the Democrats asserted that their party was "the champion of equal rights and opportunities to all," and the Republican party "the party of privilege and private monopoly,"⁴⁹ there was in reality little substantial difference in the two platforms. In spite of the Progressive sentiments in the Democratic declaration of principles, William Allen White said that the party was essentially conservative and its program similar to that of the Republicans. "No real issue divided them," he declared. "They were curiously similar in their organization and in their intention."⁵⁰

With the candidates nominated and the platform written, the Democratic delegates prepared to depart, leaving the local citizenry eminently satisfied with a job well done. Denverites basked in the glow of the laudatory comments of the visitors. "The hospitality of the Denver people is a thing unparalleled," asserted Arthur Wallace Dunn of the Associated Press, "and a man who criticises the convention, this beautiful city, or in any way reflects on the generous people—well, he is such a slanderer that I do not care to refer to him further."⁵¹ Not to be outdone, R. B. Kidd of the Chicago *Examiner* said that "somebody told

⁴⁶ Democratic National Committee, *Official Report of the Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention held in Denver, Colorado, July 7, 8, 9, and 10, 1908* (Chicago: Press of Western Newspaper Union, [1908]), p. 47.

⁴⁷ Democratic National Committee, *Campaign Text Book of the Democratic Party of the United States, 1908* (Chicago: Press of Western Newspaper Union, [1908]), p. 220-27.

⁴⁸ William Jennings Bryan, speech of acceptance, August 12, 1908, *ibid.*, 237.

⁴⁹ Democratic platform, *ibid.*, 227.

⁵⁰ White, *Autobiography*, p. 402.

⁵¹ *Denver Post*, July 12, 1908, p. 6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, July 10, 1908, 1.

⁴⁵ Words and music by George W. Gale. *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 6, 1908, p. 4.

me that some other body objected to something here in Denver. I told him to find me the objector, that I might flay him with words. The people of Denver are the best on earth. . . . Hurrah for Denver!"⁵² And a delegate from Missouri enthused, "You have the most beautiful city, the most ideal climate and the best people of any city where a national convention has ever been held."⁵³

Even citizens of the nation's largest metropolis were impressed by Denver. "There is nothing slow about Denver," declared the *New York Tribune*. "In fact, it is not only the most hospitable but one of the most enterprising cities in the union."⁵⁴ A correspondent for the *New York Sun* reported that "politicians and others who are here for the Democratic national convention are beginning to understand what Western hospitality means. Nothing is too much trouble for the local people in their efforts to give the visitors a good time. The spirit of welcome is in the crisp mountain air and what Denver may lack in size it intends to make up in energetic entertaining."⁵⁵ And Tammany boss "Big Tim" Sullivan himself told Denver, "You're cosmopolitan, you're up to date, you're grand out here and take it from me as one of the representatives of the big municipal heart of the union—New York is proud of her pretty sister of the West."⁵⁶

Others, however, were less enthusiastic. While the *New York Times* felt that Denver was a friendly city, it did have a lot to learn. "It is a fact . . . that while Denver has one hand extended in hearty welcome, the other hand is out with the palm up, in the hope of getting back some of that \$100,000 convention fund, and the hope will doubtless be gratified."⁵⁷ According to one story making the rounds during the convention, an Easterner complained to a native that he had to carry too much silver money in his pockets. "That's all right," replied the native, "we'll relieve you of that."⁵⁸

Moreover, while many agreed that Denver had easily handled the convention crowds, some observers were dismayed at the strain placed on the city's hotels and restaurants. The correspondent of the *New York World* filed a report which was subsequently given wide circulation as convincing evidence of Denver's inability to cope with the huge influx of visitors. "Denver overcrowded? Denver is swamped," he wrote. "The



Part of the convention crowd

restaurants today were down to a stewed prune basis, with salt mackerel on the side, and tomorrow the chances are that the convention will subsist on ham sandwiches." He felt that Denverites really "had no idea what a national convention was like. They had read of such things, but their knowledge of them was equivalent to that of an inland man who has read of the ocean, or a Bedouin who may have heard of Niagara Falls."⁵⁹ Despite such criticism, the great majority of the visitors were favorably impressed with the city.

With the delegates gone and the convention but a memory, Denver slowly returned to normal. The assembly had accomplished its purpose, and now the decision was up to the voters in November. Denver made plans to obtain other national conventions; the city was certain that the Democratic meeting of 1908 would not be the last. "The people of Denver have given a geography lesson to tens of thousands personally, and through the printed page to tens of millions," editorialized the *News*. "Those who looked upon the Missouri river as the jumping-off place of civilization . . . have had their country's boundaries extended several thousand miles. They realize now that there is no vacuum between the Missouri and the Pacific coast; that the whole region between belongs to the same pushing, striving, energetic race that dwells on either side."⁶⁰

While Denver did not secure subsequent political conventions, the city has been the site of numerous other regional and national meetings. Denver's coming of age as a convention city may fairly be said to date from the rowdy, raucous Democratic convention of 1908.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, July 7, 1908, 9.

⁵⁴ *New York Tribune*, quoted in *Denver Post*, July 9, 1908, p. 9.

⁵⁵ *New York Sun*, quoted in *Denver Post*, July 3, 1908, p. 6.

⁵⁶ *Denver Post*, July 7, 1908, p. 4.

⁵⁷ *New York Times*, July 6, 1908, p. 3.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, July 4, 1908, 2.

⁵⁹ *New York World*, quoted in *Denver Post*, July 10, 1908, p. 12.

⁶⁰ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 8, 1908, p. 20.

FORT VASQUEZ

BY LEROY R. HAFEN



The American fur trade, which figured so prominently in the exploration and acquisition of the West, entered a new phase in the 1830's. In the earlier years the chief interest had been in the procuring of beaver skins and the principal features were the white trapper and the summer rendezvous. After the silk hat began to replace beaver headgear in the style centers of the world, the demand for beaver fur declined. Over-trapping and the consequent depletion in beaver combined with the decreasing market demand to make the beaverskin business uneconomic.

As beaver trapping became unprofitable, fur men of the West turned to the trade in buffalo robes. These skins were "made" by the Indians and were procured from them. This trade could be conducted best by barter at trading posts, or forts, where attractive trade goods, such as blankets, knives, beads, and gewgaws could be housed, displayed, and exchanged for buffalo skins. Thus did the traffic change from beaver skins to buffalo robes and the trade shift from the summer rendezvous to the fixed trading post.

Bent's Fort, outstanding trade institution of the Southwest, rose on the bank of the Arkansas in 1833. The next year Fort William (soon to be re-christened Fort Laramie) was built on the Laramie River, not far from its junction with the North Platte. Traders from both of these pioneer outposts visited the roving Indians in the intermediate region of the South Platte. Cheyennes and Arapahoes, who called this country home, were eager for trade goods. Some adobe trading posts were built on the South Platte—indeed four of them within two years.

The first of these was Fort Vasquez, which concerns us here. The founders were Louis Vasquez and Andrew W. Sublette, two notable leaders in the early trade of the central Rockies. Before we trace the story of their fort, we need to outline the respective careers of the founding partners.

Louis Vasquez, the twelfth and youngest child of Benito and Julie Papin Vasquez, was born in St. Louis, October 3, 1795.¹

¹ Old Cathedral Church Register, St. Louis, Missouri. For a fuller biographical sketch of Louis Vasquez see LeRoy R. Hafen, "Mountain Men—Louis Vasquez," *The Colorado Magazine*, X (January, 1933), 14-21.

His father was Spanish, his mother French. Of his youth little is known. His father died when he was twelve, and he appears to have been taken under the wing of his eldest brother, Benito, Jr., whom he addressed in correspondence running from 1824 to 1842 as "*Chere Parin*."²

He engaged in the fur trade of the Missouri River in his early twenties, possibly with the Ashley-Henry expeditions. He obtained a license in September, 1823, to trade with the Pawnees and was back in St. Louis the following June.³ Here, on December 8, 1824, he wrote the first of his extant letters.⁴ He was in the Great Salt Lake region with the Ashley men in the middle '20s and was said to have been in the first party that circumnavigated the lake.⁵ The information is fragmentary.

On December 10, 1832, Vasquez, intending "to make a voyage to the western mountains," signed a document leaving, in case of death, all his property to his brother Benito.⁶ The next spring he was employed as chief assistant to Robert Campbell in conducting the supply train to the summer rendezvous on Green River. By now he was spoken of as "an old mountain man."⁷ Upon reaching the Laramie River, Vasquez was sent out to find the trappers and learn where the rendezvous was to be. The main party then continued to the Green River, where the fair of the wilderness was held.

After the trading and celebration were over, the furs were transported on pack animals over South Pass and to the Big Horn River. Here bullboats were made of buffalo skins sewed together and stretched over a willow framework. In these craft the furs were boated down the Big Horn and Yellowstone rivers, Vasquez taking the mules and cattle by land.

During the winter of 1833-34 Vasquez traded with the Crows, with whom he was well acquainted. In the spring he brought into Fort William, near the mouth of the Yellowstone, thirty packs of buffalo robes and one of beaver skins.⁸

He made his way southward to the Sweetwater, along which

² The originals are in the Vasquez Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis; photostatic copies in the library of the State Historical Society of Colorado.

³ *St. Louis Enquirer*, June 7, 1824, reprinted in Donald McKay Frost, *Notes on General Ashley, the Overland Trail, and South Pass* (Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1945), p. 132.

⁴ Vasquez Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁵ Vasquez apparently arrived too late to participate in this exploit. See Dale L. Morgan, *The West of William H. Ashley* (Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1964), p. 304.

⁶ Vasquez Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁷ Elliott Coues (ed.), *Forty Years a Fur Trader on the upper Missouri: A Personal Narrative of Charles Larpenieur, 1833-1872* (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1898), I, 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 42, 43, 44, and 62.



Louis Vasquez

the 1834 supply caravan was expected to travel. When William Sublette and his train reached the vicinity of Devil's Gate, they "found a letter sticking in a twig near Fitzpatrick's 'Cache.' When Sublette read it and made known the contents," writes William M. Anderson, a member of the party, "there was a shout of joy from the whole company. It was from Lew Vasquez, a great favorite of the mountaineers who had almost been given up for lost. This letter was his resurrection. He was much talked of today, and always praised. One old trapper said 'thank God he lives, and I shall hear his merry laugh again.'"⁹

With the information from Vasquez' letter the party continued on to Green River, where various parties of trappers were assembled. On June 14, according to Anderson, Vasquez, Thomas Fitzpatrick (headman of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company), and two others dashed into camp. Soon "Vasquez and Sublette are shaking hands with their right and smacking and pushing each other with the left. They both ask questions and neither answer."¹⁰

At the rendezvous Vasquez received a letter from his brother Benito, and on July 9, 1834, wrote from Ham's Fork a newsy one in return. He said he had traded with the Crows during the preceding fall and spring and that two of his men had been killed by the Blackfeet. He sent in a draft for 50 piastres by William Sublette, "Embrace the whole family for me. Tell them that I love them all," he wrote. "If you can procure me some novels

⁹ Albert J. Partoll (ed.), "Anderson's Narrative of a Ride to the Rocky Mountains in 1834," *Frontier Omnibus*, ed. J. W. Hakola (Missoula, Montana: Montana State University Press, 1962), p. 73.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

Mr. Campbell will be pleased to bring them to me."¹¹

When the trader caravan, returning from the rendezvous of 1834, reached the Sweetwater, they found carved on a tree a message from Andrew Sublette.¹² Let us now bring Andrew up to this point in our story.

Andrew W. Sublette, one of five brothers prominently identified with the western fur trade, was born in Somerset, Kentucky, in 1808.¹³ The family moved to Missouri, where all the boys were soon engaged in the fur business. In 1830 Andrew accompanied his brother William, who led this year's trade caravan to rendezvous—the first wagon expedition to the Rocky Mountains. While accompanying the supply train of 1832, Andrew proved himself an expert marksman when he successfully captured a wild horse by "creasing" it.¹⁴

In the spring of 1834 Andrew went up the Missouri to carry word of the sale of property and interests of William Sublette and Robert Campbell on the upper Missouri River to the American Fur Company. He then traveled up the Yellowstone and Big Horn rivers and across to the Sweetwater, where he carved his message on the tree. Near here he met brother William bringing the furs eastward from rendezvous. He appears to have returned with William to Missouri,¹⁵ but in any event was back in the mountains by winter time.



Andrew Sublette

Louis Vasquez doubtless remained in the mountains during the fall of 1834 and spent the winter there. Here Andrew Sublette appears to have joined him and they may have formed their partnership at this time. On December 30, 1834, Vasquez wrote a letter to his brother Benito from "Fort Convenience." Where this post was, remains a mystery. Louis writes that he is sending the letter by Andrew Sublette, who is going down to Missouri expressly to carry news of their situation.¹⁶

While writing of Louis Vasquez in *The Colorado Magazine* of January, 1933, I surmised that this fort was the one written of by H. H. Bancroft in his *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming, 1540-1888*,¹⁷ and by Frank Hall in his *History of the State of Colorado*.¹⁸ The information, garbled and with various dates of founding, is repeated by Henry Inman, Wilbur F. Stone, and other writers. The trading post was said to be a log cabin located on the South Platte River, some five miles north of Denver and opposite the mouth of Clear Creek.¹⁹ In pioneer times this stream was called Vasquez Fork, presumably from the location of the post near its mouth.

The main evidence against the existence of such a post on the South Platte in 1834 is the fact that the records of the Henry Dodge Dragoon expedition along the South Platte in the summer of 1835 make no mention of such a post on the river.²⁰

Andrew Sublette, after going down to Missouri in January, 1835 (carrying Vasquez' letter of December 30, 1834), came back

¹¹ Letter from Louis Vasquez to Benito Vasquez, Vasquez Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis (original in French).

¹² Doyle B. Nunis, Jr., *Andrew Sublette, Rocky Mountain Prince* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1960), p. 35.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁴ "Wyeth's Oregon, or a Short History of a Long Journey," *Early Western Travels*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1905), XXI, 87. "Creasing" was the shooting of a horse in the upper neck near the spinal column. If done expertly, the animal fell stunned; the hunter thereupon hurried forward and put a rope on the horse before he recovered. Sometimes he did not recover.

¹⁵ The train reached St. Louis in late August. On September 23, 1834, Andrew, by a legal paper, appointed his brother William his attorney. Sublette Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁶ Vasquez Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

¹⁷ Vol. XXV of *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft* (San Francisco: The History Co., 1890), p. 355.

¹⁸ Chicago: Blakely Printing Co., 1889, I, 169.

¹⁹ See Wilbur F. Stone, *History of Colorado* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Pub. Co., 1918), I, 122; and Henry Inman, *The Great Salt Lake Trail* (Topeka: Crane & Co., 1914), p. 98. In addition, Stephen Meek, writing of his fur man experiences, says that "Andrew Sublette built Fort Robert [Campbell] opposite the city of Denver." See his *Autobiography of a Mountain Man, 1805-1899* (Pasadena: Glen Dawson, 1948), p. 6. This he says was just after Fort Laramie was built (1834). This may refer to the post which Vasquez calls Fort Convenience, and thus puts Vasquez and Sublette together and perhaps in partnership.

²⁰ "Report on the Expedition of Dragoons, under Colonel Henry Dodge, to the Rocky Mountains in 1835," *American State Papers, Military Affairs* (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1861), VI. See also Louis Pelzer (ed.), "Captain Ford's Journal of an Expedition to the Rocky Mountains," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XII (March, 1926), 550-79.

up the Platte with Robert Campbell in April. Campbell remained at Fort Laramie for fifteen days and disposed of that fort to Thomas Fitzpatrick; Andrew presumably went to the South Platte. Campbell and Andrew Sublette returned down the river, boating their furs (probably including those of Sublette and Vasquez) back to Missouri.²¹

Vasquez also returned to St. Louis in the summer of 1835, probably with Campbell and Andrew Sublette. While there, on August 1, 1835, he leased his 77½ acres of land in St. Louis County to his brother Benito for a term of ten years for ten dollars, it being understood that the lease was "made for the sole use, benefit and behoof of the said Benito and his children, and not for the profit of others."²²

On July 29, 1835, Louis Vasquez and Andrew Sublette obtained a trading license from William Clark, Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis.²³ Such a license was regularly renewed by the partners for several years thereafter.

They returned to the South Platte and there built their adobe Fort Vasquez in the fall of 1835.²⁴ "John Sabille" said that he helped build the fort and that the adobe mud was prepared by driving oxen around to tramp and mix it.²⁵

During the winter of 1835-36 Vasquez and Sublette appear to have carried on a brisk trade with the Indians on the South Platte. This caused concern to the traders at Fort Laramie on the North Platte. L. Crawford, in charge of this post, wrote on June 29, 1836, of going to the South Platte to obtain Indian

²¹ *Missouri Republican*, July 18, 1835; *Niles Register*, August 8, 1835.

²² Vasquez Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis (original in English).

²³ Abstract of Licenses, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs from the St. Louis Superintendency, National Archives Microfilm Publication, Washington, D. C.

²⁴ Letters of William L. Sublette to Robert Campbell, November 2, 1835; January 4, 1836; February 9, 1836; and February 29, 1836; Campbell Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. In his letter of November 2, 1835, William Sublette reported developments, including a report from the mountains by Thompson: "Andrew and Vasquez on the South Platte all well." In the letter of January 4, 1836, he said: "Fitzpatrick I Expect will come down this winter and I will be looking for an Express from Vasquez and Andrew shortly." Apparently he was backing their venture. Sublette wrote on February 29 that Thomas Fitzpatrick had arrived at St. Louis from the mountains two days before. "I Enquired about Vasquez and Sublette he had no account of them since Sebille left them on the South fork of the platte before they comence there fort." From Henry Fraeb and other returned traders William Sublette had obtained information which he reported in his letter of February 9, 1836: "Vasquez & Sublette had about 50 lodges of Chiens at there fort on the South fork." L. Fontenelle writing (in French) to J. P. Cabbané on October 21, 1835, said that McKenzie and Laidlaw were on the Platte opposing Sublette and Vasquez.

²⁵ Interview by F. W. Cragin of F. W. Hammitt of Platteville, Colorado, April 14, 1903. Cragin Collection, Pioneers' Museum, Colorado Springs. Hammitt knew Sabille in 1860-61, when Sabille claimed to be seventy-seven years old and to have been in the mountains fifty years. Note that "Sebille" was mentioned by William Sublette in his letter to Robert Campbell, February 29, 1836. (Campbell Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.)

trade.²⁶ Milton Sublette, in charge of Fort Laramie in the fall of 1836, wrote on December 13, 1836, complaining that he had insufficient goods to purchase the Indians' buffalo robes, and that the Indians were leaving to barter with traders on the South Platte.²⁷

In October, 1836, Andrew Sublette set out from the South Platte with part of Vasquez and Sublette's buffalo robes. Vasquez sent along a letter to his brother Benito, in which he said that Pike Vasquez (his nephew, who was with him) was well, and added: "I pray you treat Sublette as you would me for my sake. He is a good youngster. . . . Pike writes his mother. . . . Write me by Sublette this winter."²⁸

Vasquez brought his furs down to St. Louis the next spring and there packed them for shipment to New York.²⁹ While in St. Louis he obtained on July 15th a trading license from William Clark, issued to "Louis Vasquez and Andrew Sublette, trading under the style of Vasquez & Sublette" with 22 men. William Sublette was listed as security for the partners. A similar license was to be issued to them on June 30, 1838.³⁰

On July 15, 1837, at St. Louis, Vasquez wrote to his brother: "I cannot go to see you for I am alone and I am obliged to go with the men."³¹ Presumably he returned to his fort that fall.

Already vigorous competition was developing on the South Platte. Lieutenant Lancaster P. Lupton, who had accompanied the Henry Dodge dragoons to the mountains in the summer of 1835, had seen the possibilities of the fur trade with the Indians at the base of the Rockies. He resigned from the army in March, 1836, and came west to engage in the Indian trade. Whether he built his fort in 1836 or 1837 is not certain.³² The post was located about one mile north of the present town of Fort Lupton, Colorado.

Peter A. Sarpy and Henry Fraeb, financed and backed by Pratte, Chouteau & Co. of St. Louis, obtained goods in April,

²⁶ Letter to Pierre Chouteau, Jr., Chouteau-Papin Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

²⁷ Letter to Pratte, Chouteau & Co., Chouteau-Papin Collection, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

²⁸ Letter from Louis Vasquez to Benito Vasquez, dated Platte River, October 9, 1836, Vasquez Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis. The translation from the French was made for me in February, 1928, by Professor E. B. Renaud of Denver University.

²⁹ Letter from Louis Vasquez to Benito Vasquez, June 18, 1837, Vasquez Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

³⁰ I found these documents more than thirty years ago in the Indian Bureau archives, Washington, D. C., in the "St. Louis Supt. File, C 316."

³¹ Vasquez Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

³² LeRoy R. Hafen, "Old Fort Lupton and Its Founder," *The Colorado Magazine*, VI (November, 1929), 220-26.

1837, and freighted them in wagons to the South Platte. Here they built their Fort Jackson.³³

Fort St. Vrain, first called Fort Lookout, was established by Bent and St. Vrain in the summer or fall of 1837. It was located on the east side of the South Platte River, about six miles northwest of present Platteville, and about 1½ miles below the mouth of St. Vrain's Fork.³⁴ Bent and St. Vrain had previously sent traders from their famous Bent's Fort on the Arkansas (established in 1833), but found it advantageous to establish a trading post on the South Platte. In 1838 they purchased the competing Fort Jackson from Sarpy and Fraeb.

Thus within a distance of some fifteen miles along the South Platte were four competing fur trade posts. Papers pertaining to Fort Jackson give us interesting details pertaining to prices and trade practices. When this fort was sold in 1838 a complete inventory of the goods was made. Typical items were: paper covered looking glasses at 46 cents per dozen; finger rings, 90 cents per gross; combs, 60 cents per dozen; battle axes, \$1.92½ each; powder, 33 cents per pound; lead, 7 cents per pound; vermilion, \$1.32 per pound; coffee, 16½ cents per pound; sugar, 13½ cents per pound.³⁵ These were of course wholesale prices to a trading company, far different from retail prices to Indians. Liquor was freely and effectively used in the trade. Sarpy, in a letter of February 18, 1838, expressed a rather typical attitude: "My object is to do all the harm possible to the opposition and yet without harming ourselves."³⁶

Details of the Vasquez and Sublette supply train's travel from Missouri to Fort Vasquez in the summer of 1838 are told by the noted mountain man James Beckwourth. The route was along the Santa Fe Trail and the Arkansas River to Bent's Fort and then northward to the destination on the South Platte. After arrival at the fort, Beckwourth said, "we erected suitable buildings within the fort for our proposed trading." In his usual boastful manner he told of his important trading expeditions to various Indian tribes. "We had a prosperous fall and winter trade," he reported, "and accumulated more peltry than our waggons could transport. . . . We had cleared sufficient to

pay Mr. Sublette's debts, and enough over to buy a handsome stock of goods for the next season's trade."³⁷ He said that Sublette and Thomas Fitzpatrick took the skins to St. Louis.

Louis Vasquez was there that summer (1839), for on July 20 he made out a legal paper, stating that inasmuch as he was about to leave for the upper Missouri River to remain some time, he appointed W. L. Sublette to be his attorney. A. Pike Vasquez, Louis' nephew, executed a similar legal paper.³⁸

The Sublette and Vasquez west-bound supply train of 1839 was accompanied by an excellent diarist, E. Willard Smith. The company left Independence, Missouri, on August 6, 1839, with four six-mule wagons and thirty-two men. It reached Bent's Fort on September 3, and arrived at Fort Vasquez September 13. "The Fort is quite a nice place," wrote E. W. Smith, "situated on the South fork of the river Platte. It is built of *darbies* [adobes], or Spanish bricks made of clay baked in the sun."³⁹



In The Smoky Hill Trail Margaret Long identified this as a picture of Fort Vasquez (illustrations, p. 19).

Enroute the company had passed rival Lupton and his six ox-drawn wagons headed for his competing fort.⁴⁰

During the fall of 1839 Vasquez and Sublette sent Thomas Biggs with some of their goods to trade at Brown's Hole in

³³ LeRoy R. Hafen, "Fort Jackson and the Early Fur Trade on the South Platte," *The Colorado Magazine*, V (February, 1928), 9-17. I discovered the ruins of this fort near Ione, Colorado, on August 23, 1924 (according to my journal), and identified it in 1927 from the documents in the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

³⁴ LeRoy R. Hafen, "Fort St. Vrain," *The Colorado Magazine*, XXIX (October, 1952), 241-55.

³⁵ LeRoy R. Hafen, "Fort Jackson," *The Colorado Magazine*, V (1928), 12, reproduces a photostatic copy of one of the original pages.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁷ T. D. Bonner, *The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth*, ed. Charles Godfrey Leland (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1892), p. 360.

³⁸ These documents are in the Sublette Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

³⁹ "The E. Willard Smith Journal, 1839-1840," *To the Rockies and Oregon, 1839-1842*, eds. LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen ("The Far West and the Rockies Historical Series"; Glendale, Arthur H. Clark Co., 1955), III, 154-68. The journal is also reproduced in LeRoy R. Hafen's "With Fur Traders in Colorado, 1839-40: The Journal of E. Willard Smith," *The Colorado Magazine*, XXVII (July, 1950), 161-88.

⁴⁰ "E. Willard Smith Journal," *To the Rockies and Oregon*, eds. Hafen and Hafen, pp. 161-62.

northwestern Colorado. E. W. Smith also went to this favorite trade center. They returned to Fort Vasquez in April, 1840.⁴¹

After building a flat-bottomed "Mackinaw boat," thirty-six by eight feet in size, they loaded the craft with seven hundred buffalo robes and four hundred buffalo tongues and began a voyage down the South Platte on April 26. It was a difficult undertaking, but by dint of much wading and pushing the crew of seven men reached the mouth of the Platte on June 22 and St. Louis on July 3.⁴² It was one of the very few successful voyages of the South Fork and main stream of the Platte. They had made a voyage of some 2,000 miles in sixty-nine days.

Vasquez and Sublette sold their fort and business in 1840 or 1841 to Lock and Randolph. This company became bankrupt through mismanagement and various difficulties—including the loss of forty-five horses and mules stolen by the Sioux, the failure of a boatload of furs to reach the States, and other misfortunes. They evacuated Fort Vasquez in 1842 and quit the country.⁴³ Vasquez and Sublette held the note of Lock and Randolph for \$800, which they were unable to collect.⁴⁴ W. L. Sublette, in writing to W. D. Stewart to borrow \$12,000, said: "Vasquez and Sublette made a rather sinking business of it. Brother A. W. Sublette is now on the farm."⁴⁵

Arranging with Robert Campbell to take care of his business, Louis Vasquez set out from St. Louis in August, 1842, with James Bridger, fellow mountain man, to trade in the mountains.⁴⁶ The subsequent careers of Louis Vasquez and Andrew Sublette do not primarily concern us here, but a general summary may be of interest. Vasquez became a partner of Bridger in the operation of Fort Bridger, present Wyoming. At that supply depot for emigrants he was frequently visited by overland travelers. He established a store in Salt Lake City in 1849. Apparently he sold Fort Bridger, or his interest in it, to the Mormons in 1855 and returned to Missouri.⁴⁷ In St. Louis in 1846 he married a widow, Narcissa Burdette Land Ashcroft. She bore him seven children.⁴⁸ In 1859 Louis staked his nephew Pike Vasquez in

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 180, 186, and 187.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 187-91.

⁴³ Rufus B. Sage, *Scenes in the Rocky Mountains*, eds. LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen ("The Far West and the Rockies Historical Series"; Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1956), v, 57-58.

⁴⁴ Letter from Robert Campbell to William L. Sublette, May 23, 1842, Sublette Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁴⁵ Letter from William L. Sublette to W. D. Stewart, September, 1842, Sublette Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* See also the letter from Louis Vasquez to Benito Vasquez, August 18, 1842, Vasquez Papers, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

⁴⁷ LeRoy R. Hafen, "Louis Vasquez," *The Colorado Magazine*, X (1933), 19-21.

⁴⁸ Lauren C. Bray, "Louis Vasquez, Mountain Man," *The Denver Westerners Monthly Roundup*, XV (July-August, 1959), 7-20. This article, which contains the fullest account of Vasquez' later life, originally appeared in the publica-

establishing a store and hotel in pioneer Denver.⁴⁹ Louis Vasquez died in September, 1868, either at Westport, Missouri, or at his nearby farm.

Andrew Sublette's later career may be sketched briefly. In 1844 he served as guide for a party of health-seekers bound for the Rocky Mountains. He visited Taos and the forts on the South Platte. During the War with Mexico he served as captain of a company of mounted riflemen to guard the Oregon Trail. After being mustered out in November, 1848, he made a round trip to Santa Fe. The next year he joined the gold rush to California, guiding a company to the coast. Here he engaged unsuccessfully in mining. In 1853 he was killed by a grizzly bear.⁵⁰

No contemporary accounts of the building of Fort Vasquez or detailed descriptions of the post have been found. But when the gold rush to Colorado occurred, some information was recorded by visitors bound for the mines. A. Pike Vasquez, who had been at the fort with his uncle Louis as early as 1836, went west with the gold rush, and in October, 1859, laid claim to 160 acres including Fort Vasquez.⁵¹ Apparently he did not retain possession for long.

D. C. Oakes, prominent Colorado pioneer of 1858, visited Fort Vasquez in 1859 and recorded:

The fort had been abandoned years before, but some of the rooms were still in a condition to offer us fair shelter from the storm; so stabling our ponies in one of the rooms, we selected another in which to sleep and starting a fire, began to cook our supper.⁵²

W. D. Anthony visited the fort in June, 1860, and wrote in his diary on the 6th:

[We] soon came to the ruins of an old Fort where we halted for a few moments. This is made of mud or 'Dobey' the enclosure is about 100 feet square. The walls about 12 feet high. Upon two corners stand the round guard house running about five feet higher. Around the walls are "port Holes" and so made as to shoot from them in any direction. The old walls are now crumbling away.⁵³

Rev. W. H. Goode passed by three of the South Platte forts in 1859. After describing Fort St. Vrain he says: "Seven miles

tion of the Kansas City Posse of the Westerners, *The Trail Guide*, III (December, 1958), 1-19. See also the data on his descendants in the *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), March 12, 1951.

⁴⁹ Advertisements in the *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), December 1, 1859, and on subsequent dates.

⁵⁰ For a full account of his later career see Nunis, *Andrew Sublette*.

⁵¹ Claim Club Book (a record of claims in St. Vrain County, Nebraska Territory), on file in the county courthouse at Greeley, Colorado.

⁵² D. C. Oakes, "The Man Who Wrote the Guide Book," *The Trail*, II (December, 1909), 12.

⁵³ Diary of W. D. Anthony, manuscript files, library of the State Historical Society of Colorado.

further is Fort Lancaster [Fort Vasquez], a similar structure, but smaller and more decayed."⁵⁴

Judge John E. Wheeler settled near Fort Vasquez in 1859, and in later years he described the fort as he first saw it. In 1898 he accompanied to the fort a party which included the noted historian Elliott Coues, Governor Alva Adams of Colorado, and F. W. Cragin, avid student of the early fur trade. The *Rocky Mountain News* carried a story of the trip and findings in its issue of June 30, 1898. From this we quote:

Fort Vasquez is on the old stage line, now the principal wagon road, one and a half miles south of Platteville. The fort lies north and south on a level tract of land. It measures 115½ feet by 103½ feet in area. Six portions of the walls are standing, the highest being ten feet above the ground. This fort evidently had no bastions. In 1859, when first seen by Judge J. W. Wheeler, a member of the party of yesterday, the walls were eleven feet high. There were two gates, one on the east and one on the south side. On the inside of the fort he is confident there stood a tower which was used for observation purposes. The fort is about 200 yards from the bottom of the cliff at the foot of which formerly flowed the river. The corners of this fort are all standing and convey an impression of solidity which is further strengthened by the commanding position of the structure.

Mr. Cragin returned to the ruins of this fort and others on the South Platte in 1903. From an interview with Judge and Mrs. Wheeler on April 13, 1903, he wrote:

Col. Louis Vasquez, seemed about 55 years old when Judge Wheeler saw him in 1859, in June. He was a small sized, slender man, rather gray; medium length beard; spoke English fairly; He claimed to be the original builder and owner of Ft. Vasquez. He told Judge Wheeler the year in which he built the fort, which to Judge Wheeler's memory was 1834 (?). Never saw him after '59; understood he went to N. Mexico.⁵⁵

On April 14, 1903, Cragin interviewed Francis W. Hammitt, who lived one mile south of Platteville. Hammitt said that John Sabille claimed that he helped build Fort Vasquez. In 1860, said Hammitt:

the main gateway was on the south side; there was a small door in the east side near south corner, raised somewhat. On a lintel over the main gate, or over this small door, (forgets which) there was a date carved in the wood: "1823" or "1833." At N.W. there was a round tower, said to have been 36 ft high, & ran way above the walls still in 1860. Walls were about 14 ft. high. Ft. Vasquez had only one tower, of which the walls of the N.W. corner of the fort formed the base. The lower part of the [tower] was probably square as to outside walls and round as

⁵⁴ William H. Goode, *Outposts of Zion* (Cincinnati: Poe & Hitchcock, 1864), p. 419.

⁵⁵ F. W. Cragin, "Early Far West Notebook," V, 47, unpublished ms. in the Cragin Collection, Pioneers' Museum, Colorado Springs. Mrs. Janet Lecompte of Colorado Springs generously provided me with this transcript from Cragin's valuable fur trade materials as well as those which follow.



Ruins of Fort Vasquez photographed by F. W. Cragin in 1903; top, view from southeast; bottom, view from southwest.

to inside walls (i.e., walls inside fort); but above the main fort walls (Hammitt says) of the tower were certainly round . . . Over the South entrance (possibly E.) there was an arched wooden lintel on which were plainly visible from the road the words "Fort Vasquez"; Mr. Hammitt doesn't remember whether these were painted on or carved, but he thinks it was painted. The road, then as now, ran N. & S. along the east side of the fort.⁵⁶

Cragin's own summary description of the fort, as written in his "Early Far West Notebook," follows:

Ft. Vasquez just west (about 300 ft west of the U.P. track and ¼ mile S. of Platteville Ry Station.) Fort is 123 ft. long (E. & W.) by 105 ft. wide (N. & S.) walls about 2 ft. thick; 8 ft (a trifle over 8 ft.—about 8 ft 2 inches) still standing on one part of W. side. 4 to 6 ft. of wall standing on considerable portions of the other 3 sides. Fort of adobes with mud mortar. Foundation made of flat flaggy sandstone (at least that on north Wall.) Fort fronts nearly east; big gap in middle of east wall indicates a gateway probably; but the lowest gap (width indet.) is in S. wall. None of gaps in N. or W. or S. wall is down to level ground, but ridge indicates continuous walls on these 3 sides. Some evidence (low ridges almost obsolete of dirt) that the west part of the fort's interior was divided off into 5 small rooms. No portholes in the 8 ft. height, preserved, of West wall. No visible remains of bastions.⁵⁷

Shortly after going to Colorado in 1924 to be Historian of the State Historical Society, I began a study of the fur trade posts on the South Platte. On a visit to Fort Vasquez on August 23, 1924, I noted in my journal that portions of the wall were two or three feet high, and that the gate had apparently been

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 49 and 53.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 41.

in the south side. Stepping off the walls of the quadrangle, I called it thirty-seven by thirty-three yards. There was a small well, laid up with rock, two or three rods south of the fort. This had probably been constructed some time after the fur trade period. The land in 1924 was owned by W. N. Perdieu, who was interested in its preservation.

During the depression of the 1930's, the rebuilding of Fort Vasquez was undertaken as a work-relief project. It was under the direction of the WPA. The State Historical Society was not consulted and had no part in the reconstruction. Inasmuch as the east wall of the old fort stood within a few feet of the regular Denver-to-Greeley highway, the decision was made to rebuild the fort farther away from the road. The remains of the old walls and the eroded material therefrom were mixed into new adobes and with these the new walls were built. The cost of the reconstruction was approximately \$5,000. Completion of the project was celebrated at the site and at Platteville on August 2, 1937, with a parade, historical program, rodeo, dance, and free lunch.⁵⁸

LEROY R. HAFEN was Colorado State Historian from 1924 to 1954. He is currently professor of history at Brigham Young University.

⁵⁸ *Denver Post*, August 1, 1937. An interior view of the rebuilt fort illustrates the story.



ZA ROUNDUP

BY EDWARD G. HAYES

Edward Hayes had come to Colorado Springs in 1880 as a student at Colorado College. Almost immediately he determined to become a rancher and spend his life in the West. After finishing college in the East, he returned to Colorado in 1886 and with his partner, Charles W. Codwise, operated the ZA Ranch, near Colorado Springs. On August 22, 1887, he wrote to his father, Dr. Joseph Byron Hayes of Canandaigua, N. Y., as follows: "I enclose a description, not as full as might be, of Cowboys and the Round-up. Please do not regard it in the light of a literary effort, only as an attempt to please yourself, Grandmother, and the boys, which I hope it will do." His account is

published below. The drawings were made by Edward Hayes during this same period and are published here through the courtesy of Miss Betty G. Hayes and Miss Catherine D. Hayes, of Canandaigua, New York, granddaughters of the artist. We also wish to acknowledge the valuable assistance of Mr. George McGill Hayes of Canandaigua, New York, and Mrs. Elizabeth Hayes Goddard of Chevy Chase, Maryland, in securing the material and preparing it for publication. The original Hayes manuscripts are now on deposit in the Charles Leaming Tutt Library at Colorado College.

Twice a year from Old Mexico up into British America thousands of men are at work on General Round-up. Range cattle, restrained only to a certain extent by natural boundaries, after having been drifted about by winter storms, and particularly southern raised cattle turned loose on a northern range having a tendency to work south, are in the Spring scattered sometimes hundreds of miles from their proper range. Gathering the proper brands, returning them to their range and branding calves constitute the principal work of the Spring round-up.

The manner of conducting a round-up differs to a certain extent with the country. For this purpose the state or territory is divided into round-up districts. These depend upon the geography of the country.

The 6th district of Colorado covers a country from the Pike's Peak range of mountains east from 30 to 40 miles and from the "Divide" south to the Arkansas river about sixty miles.

The State appoints three round-up Commissioners for the district whose business it is to elect a round-up Captain who runs the round-up and is paid by the State about \$3.00 a day. He is usually the foreman of some large outfit in the district and must be an experienced and capable "cow-man". The program of the round-up is arranged by a committee of the Stock Growers Association of the district.

The time for beginning work on the Spring round-up depends upon green grass and also in some districts upon the time of finishing work in a neighboring district. The hard work comes in on the Spring round-up when the cattle are more widely scattered and the calves are to be branded. During the summer when feed and water is good cattle will stay where they are turned.

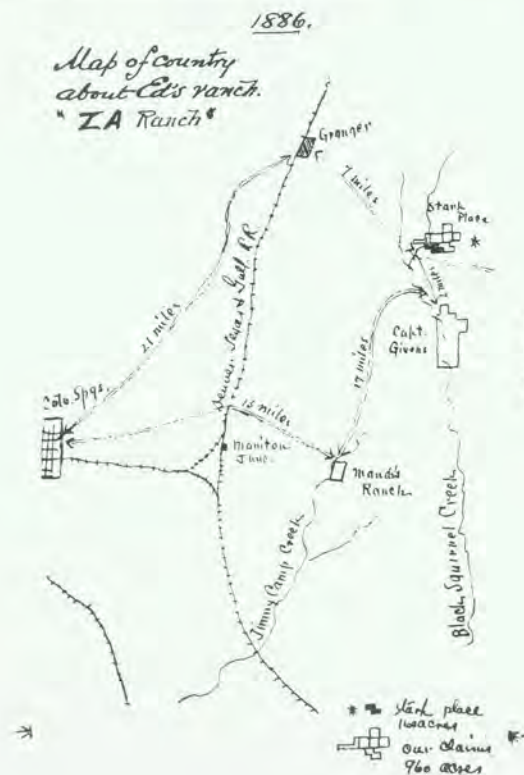
The Fall round-up is more for the purpose of gathering beef and the stock to be pastured and cared for during the winter.

Small local round-ups are at work at all times, gathering calves to be weaned, brands that have been sold, poor stock to be looked after, etc.

The day before the one named by the program to commence work, where ever it may be, you will find, in this part of the state, from two to sixteen wagons camped. A round-up or "chuck" wagon is sent out by each outfit running a thousand or more head, sometimes less, often small men combine and run a pool wagon.

With each wagon is a crew of from two to ten men, a wagon boss, two horse herders—day and night—and a cook who is also the driver. With these is a number of small men and men from the "outside" who work with the wagon and pay 50¢ a day board. Each wagon has its ramutha or cavvy—the horse herd—which is herded day and night.

Each man has from five to eight or ten horses. The wagon is drawn by four mules or horses.



At the rear of the wagon is the mess box, a high cupboard with a hinged door which drops on chains making a table. Under the wagon is a pot box. The wagon is usually piled high with beds while from the sides are hung picket ropes, hobbles, bells, etc.

The mess box is usually decorated with fancy pictures—ballet girls are the favorites. All the cooking is done in a hole in the ground. The prairie for ten yards around is sacred to the cook and called the kitchen.

The bill of fare is about as follows—fresh beef, bacon, ham, potatoes, canned corn and tomatoes, onions, beans, canned pie fruit, all kinds of dried fruit, a keg of pickles, and hot biscuit and coffee three times a day. This is what the wagon starts with but often near the end of a trip bread with bacon and coffee three times a day is a good deal better than nothing.

A Cow-boy or Puncher's outfit is worth a description. After his horse the most important possession is his saddle. Most of them, when a saddle is not in use, will cover it with his slicker during a rain preferring to take a wetting himself. A first class stock saddle costs \$50.00. It has a high horn in front for roping and a high cantle making a pretty secure and comfortable seat. It is fastened on by two hair sinches and girths which are tightened and secured by long straps. There is not a buckle or a piece of iron to be seen excepting two iron rings on each sinch. A saddle weighs from 30 to 40 odd pounds and is always russett leather, never black.

At the horn is hung a rope or lariat and behind the cantle is tied a slicker, a yellow oil skin coat. A saddle is often provided with pockets, those in front called a cantinus and behind saddle pockets. The bridle and bit are strong, the former often decorated with a ribbon or several colored poker chips.

The six or seven horses a man rides is called his "string." On one of these is tied his bed when not with the wagon. For a bed he has several pairs of blankets, a pillow called a "goose hair" and in his bed is carried a "war bag" usually containing tobacco, a deck of cards, a change of clothing, several colored silk handkerchiefs, and a bundle of "dead men's" socks. The bed is covered by a canvas sheet. Some also carry a "tepee" or cone shaped tent with a jointed pole.

His dress is always a white sombrero, with a fancy hat band, a cotton or woolen shirt and usually a vest with a tooth brush sticking out of an upper pocket—the brush is simply an ornament. About the neck is tied a gaily colored silk handkerchief and a few carry a gun and cartridges.



His trousers are light colored; usually a delicate fawn with checks two or three inches square is the favorite pattern. These are either worn inside or out of a very small pair of boots with high French heels. A pair of large rusty spurs with jingles and a pair of gloves complete the costume. The gloves are never absent. His face may be burned as black as a Mexican's but a puncher's hands are as soft and white as a bookkeeper's.

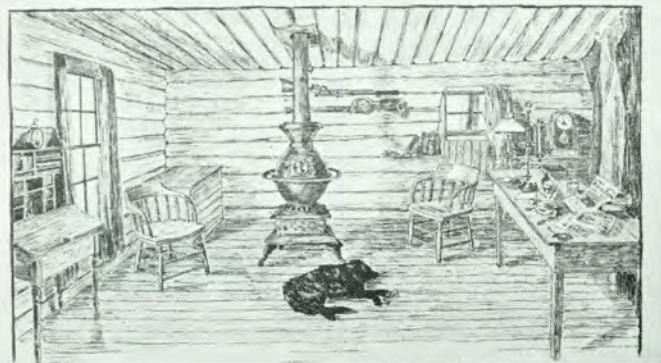
For riding in cold weather Chaperajos are worn. These are either calf skin or horse hide trousers without a seat and heavily fringed.



Buildings at the ZA Ranch; note barn in center and ranch house at far right.



ZA Ranch House



Interior of the ZA Ranch House

Barn at ZA Ranch



The character of the Cow-boy differs with the country. On the ranges distant from the more settled parts there are mostly a reckless devil-may-care set endeavoring to earn the reputation of a "bad man." All carry guns—pistols—and are not at all backward to use them. In the comparatively settled portions some are eastern men riding a season for their health, perhaps having an interest in cattle, others boys from 15 to 20 gathering a few cows for their father while the old man looks after the ranch. A number are Texas men who after the herd they had brought up had been turned over took the first job they could get and have stayed along.

Most of them commence work with the Spring round-up and ride until the beef is gathered in the Fall when they get their "time", and either work or loaf in the nearest town until the next Spring. The best men only are kept during the winter.

The saying is that "after a man has cow-punched a number of years he is good for nothing else." Their pay is from \$30.00 to \$40.00 a month most of which is 'Blown in' at the nearest town.

They work more hours and endure more hardships and privations with risk to life and limb for less pay than any other class of men in this country.

Among themselves they are profane and blasphemous to an extreme as well as obscene. They will steal—that is anything of small value—they can get away with. Yet as a set they are good fellows, generous, always ready to help one another, and can be depended upon but are very quick to resent a slight. They are honorable but their code of morals is peculiar. The unwritten laws and traditions of the range are as numerous and as strictly observed as the usages of the most fashionable society.

Cow-boys are known to one another by the first or a nickname. A rough-and-readiness, a willingness to be useful, courage mixed with some recklessness, and good humor are the traits most valued by them. A stranger coming among them possessing these will be put at his ease and called by his first name inside of an hour. Otherwise, unless he whips two or three, his life will be made miserable by being "codded," ridiculed.

On the Round-up at the first dim light of day you will be aroused by the yell of "Horses"—"Rattle your hocks"—or "Get up you". There is no time to stretch yourself or take another snooze. The sooner you crawl out from under your dew-soaked tarpaulin and get your boots on the better. The cook is just putting the finishing touches on the breakfast and all hands are hurrying to the horse cavy which the night herder

has brought in and is holding, bunched, close at hand. You snatch your rope from your saddle which is lying close by carefully covered with your slicker, pick the horse whose turn it is out of the hundred or so in the bunch, rope and saddle him, and if he be a buckler circle him a few times at the end of the rope "to take it out of him."

By this time most of the others are crowding each other for first dip into the pots and pans around the fire. Breakfast and dinner is seldom eaten—it is swallowed.

You have hardly rolled up and tied your bed before you hear "Riders Up." You mount and join those with the boss who are just starting. The Captain has instructed the boss in which direction to circle his crew the night before. At this time a tenderfoot would see some fun. It is likely that several of the horses will go to bucking over and through pots, kettles or bed, or anything in the way. Little or no attention is paid to them unless someone gives a derisive yell of "S-t-a-y with him"—"Jump off"—or "let me ride him."

This is the first chance you have to light your pipe. For the first mile or so they go at a walk, fifteen or twenty abreast. The sun is just peeping over the plains giving at each moment new charms to the delicate coloring of prairie and sky. The mountains away in the distance snow-capped and faintly defined, are growing rosy in the light. A rabbit jumps from under your horse and goes bounding away. A band of antelope, who have been watching you from a distant knoll, goes scudding across in front, swift as the shadows of a cloud. In the fresh cool air of the morning you feel that youth and health are yours. Your horse is fresh and strong under you and not a fence to break your gallop. Everything is as nature made it.

All this impresses you differently in winter, when after shivering all night you face a sharp icy wind in weather 10° below zero.

But we are on circle and have to bring in all the cattle for ten or fifteen miles. You commence to split up to drive in the different bunches. The boss will tell "Curley" to take five men and drive in from Badjes Bottom, "Bill" with some more to go in another direction and that they will "bunch" down by the old XT ranch. He with the rest of the riders will go to the "outside" or as far as he has been instructed to circle. You stop long enough to tighten your sinches and away you go on a keen lope. "Black Tom's" horse may put his foot in a hole and fall all over him. You never stop but look back long enough to satisfy yourself that Tom has enough life left in him to kick his horse in the



Interior of My Pre-emption Cabin 1887.



belly—and then let him catch up the best he can.

When you have driven in all your cattle and the other circlers are in there may be from 500 to 7000 or 8000 head which are separated into bunches of from 200 to 1000. One or two men are left to hold each bunch while the rest go to camp for dinner and fresh horses. If a very big day's work is to be done the dinner is sometimes omitted.

Then comes "cutting out." One or maybe several outfits will work a bunch at a time. A part of the men will "hold up" the bunch while several will go in and "cut out" their brands. Singling out one animal at a time they will work it quietly to the edge. And then it requires no little skill both of horse and man to get it clear of the bunch. The animals thus "cut out" are held at a short distance and is called "the cut-out."

The "cut-out" is driven from bunch to bunch until all the brands desired have been secured when it is driven to camp and turned into "the day herd."

Each wagon or maybe several together carry a "day herd" which is made up of cattle "cut" day by day. The "day herds" are driven along with the round-up from 6 to 20 miles a day, by the day herders who come out as soon as they have eaten breakfast.

The frequency with which one gets night guard depends upon the number of men in an outfit. With a large herd the guards are doubled and in stormy weather all hands turn out and "sing" to them. Usually two men are on guard at a time. Night herding on a warm moonlight night when the cattle have been well grazed and watered is little trouble, but during a thunderstorm or when the cattle have not had water in several days they are very "rolliky" and liable to stampede. Riding at full speed in the blackness of a stormy night—which is necessary to hold them—is to say the least unpleasant and dangerous.

When on guard you keep your "night" horse staked all night close to camp and saddled so as to lose no time in getting out to the herd when called.

There is little romance attached to a cow-boy's every day life. Often he has from 14 to 22 hours hard work a day in the heat of summer or cold of winter, poor water and sometimes none, frequently getting two or only one meal a day. A night spent now and then on the open prairie with only a saddle blanket for a bed, inflamed eyes from the dust of moving cattle and the sun's glare or a broken limb—all soon tell on him.

Missing most of the comforts and not a few of the so called necessities of life, he is still in love with the wild free ways of

the cow camp and could not be persuaded to change his lot.

The day of the round-up will soon be past. The vast herds which once ranged the plains are passing away. The grangers have invaded the land.

Pre-emptions and Homesteads are scattered everywhere. The cow-boy of the future will ride a mowing machine and not a broncho and in place of a lariat will swing a hay fork. No more will the wild eyed steer rustle for himself. He will be pastured in summer and fed in winter.

The reign of the Cattle Kings has past. It was barbaric but splendid.



EDWARD G. HAYES and Elizabeth McGill of Manitou Springs, Colorado, and Jamestown, New York, were married in 1890. They moved to Canandaigua, New York, where Edward Hayes became a successful banker. His diary of a horseback trip from Colorado Springs to Powder River, Wyoming Territory, was published in our Winter, 1964, issue.

DOWN THE COLORADO IN 1889

BY HELEN J. STILES

Of the dozens of railroads which were built or planned for the western half of the United States, perhaps none was more ambitiously conceived than the Denver, Colorado Cañon and Pacific Railroad. As envisioned by its president, Frank Mason Brown, the railroad was to follow the Colorado River from Grand Junction, Colorado, to the Gulf of California; from there it would go to San Diego, California, and possibly extend on to San Francisco. It was to be, for most of its length, a water-level railroad over which Colorado coal and other products of the region could be hauled to California. Its scenery would be a great attraction and the tourist business would add to its revenue.

The DCC&P RR was inaugurated with a good deal of unrestrained enthusiasm in the spring of 1889. Brown, whose self-confidence and ability as a promoter did not altogether compensate for his lack of experience as an expedition planner, lost no time in getting the railroad under way. In March, he hired Denver mining engineer Frank C. Kendrick to make the survey of the route along the upper part of the Colorado (at that time the Grand) River. Kendrick and his men spent seven weeks in the field, completing 160.78 miles of survey to the junction of the Grand and the Green rivers by May 4, 1889. Then they rowed and pulled their boat up the Green to Green River (then called Blake), Utah, a distance of 117 miles.

On May 25, Brown and his chief engineer, Robert B. Stanton, with fourteen men and six none-too-substantial boats, proceeded from Blake back down the Green River to the junction and continued the survey of the Colorado River as far as Marble Canyon in Arizona. Here Brown was killed, a mile below Soap Creek Rapid, on July 10. A few days later two more of the men were lost in the river. Stanton was shaken but not daunted by

these tragedies and the following year he completed the survey with a reorganized party. However, the plans for the railroad came to nothing and the scheme was eventually abandoned.

There is no lack of information about the Brown-Stanton affair¹ but Kendrick and his party have come in for scant mention. Not much was known about Kendrick's part of the survey and usually he rated a sentence or two and often a remark having to do with his party nearly starving before they reached civilization. The section of Kendrick's notebook which follows completes the history of the DCC&P RR, and shows the responsible way in which he conducted his end of the survey. Kendrick also has the distinction of leading the first party of record to run this 160-mile stretch of the Colorado River.²

Frank Clarence Kendrick was thirty-six years old when he made his historic boat trip, and at that time he was on his way to becoming an important mining and irrigation engineer. He was born in Randolph, Ohio, on October 11, 1852, and educated there and in Kent, Ohio. The Kendricks were a well-known pioneer family in Denver. Kendrick's father had come to Colorado early in the 1870's and settled on what was known as the Kendrick Farms, about halfway between Denver and Morrison. The elder Kendrick raised sheep and cattle for a time and ran a hotel in Morrison. One of his sons, C. A. Kendrick, founded the Denver stationery firm of Kendrick-Bellamy; another son, William F. Kendrick, was a mining promoter and was also responsible for bringing the first pheasants to Colorado from England.

Frank Kendrick and his wife Emily



Kendrick seems to have been a quiet, good-humored man. His daughter describes him as cheery and often joking. He was about 5 feet 9 inches tall, inclined to be stocky, with black hair and a sandy mustache. He liked the out-of-doors, but hated to be away from his family.³ He rather wistfully remarked, after completing the seven weeks of hard work on the river survey, that he had given up the idea of returning, since "a man's place is near home and those he loves even if he does not make so much money or gain as much glory"—certainly a wise decision which he would doubtless reflect upon later when the news came of the disasters in Marble Canyon.

Brown and Kendrick set the first stake on the Denver, Colorado Cañon and Pacific Railroad on March 28, 1889, at Grand Junction, Colorado. They arrived at 3:45 A.M., after an overnight ride from Denver on the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, and at once hurried over to the river to set the stake—a predictable piece of Brown publicity. Brown then departed for the East to complete preparations for the boat trip down the main canyons of the Colorado, leaving Kendrick to organize the survey team and proceed down the Grand River.

Kendrick took a day to round up men and supplies. His assistant engineer, Thomas Rigney, had come with him from Denver and later accompanied Brown and Stanton as far as Dandy Crossing (now Hite, Utah). Three Grand Junction men, Frank Knox, George Cost, and Charles Brock, the boatman, completed the party.

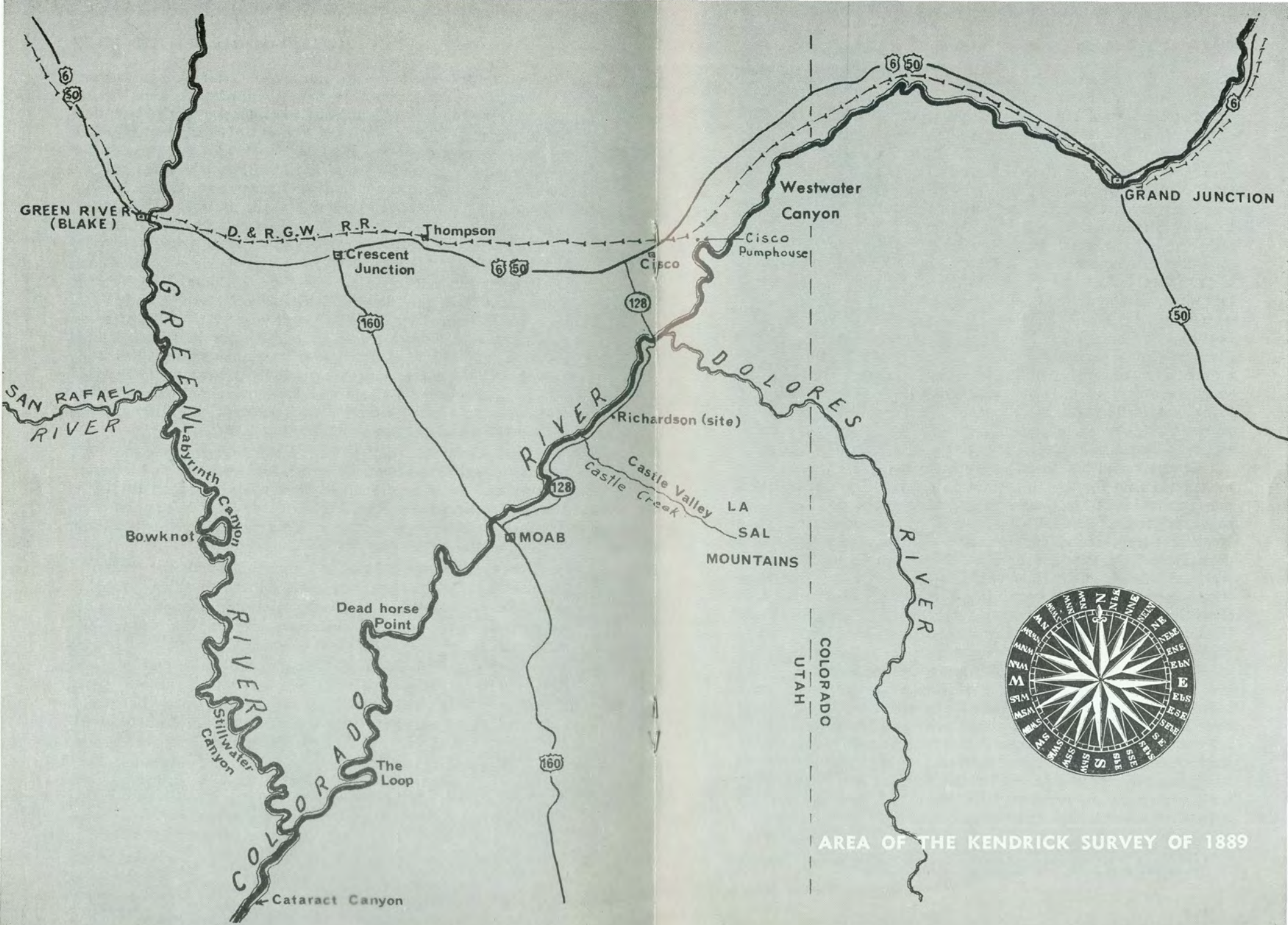
Kendrick's diary did not tell anything about the design of the boat, but for the stretch of water he was on, it was probably adequate. It is possible, as Freeman states,⁴ that it was quite unfitted for work in rough water and necessitated the twelve-mile portage around Westwater Canyon that might otherwise have been run. But Kendrick was a careful man, and he probably would have been dubious about shooting these difficult rapids no matter how well built the boat. Stanton later took this boat, along with five others, back down the Colorado with him. It was described by E. A. Reynolds, a member of the group, as "an open dory made of pine, ribbed with oak and very

¹ Good accounts of the Brown-Stanton survey can be found in Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, *The Romance of the Colorado River* (New York: Putnam, 1904) pp. 342-369; Lewis R. Freeman, *The Colorado River Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1923), pp. 293-323; and Dwight Smith, "The Engineer and the Canyon," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXVIII (July, 1960), 262-273.

² With the exception of a twelve-mile portage around Westwater Canyon.

³ Interview with Mrs. Laura K. Frazier, Windsor, Colorado, March 21, 1964.

⁴ Freeman, *Colorado River*, pp. 294-95.



AREA OF THE KENDRICK SURVEY OF 1889

strong.”⁵ F. A. Nims, photographer with the Brown-Stanton party, identified this boat as the one called Black Betty or Brown Betty, loaded with the cook’s supplies, which was wrecked in Cataract Canyon—one of Brown’s early misfortunes.⁶

If Brown was talkative about the project, Kendrick was anything but. An item in the *Grand Junction News* for March 30, 1889, stated: “Another railroad surveying party outfitted here Thursday and are to make a trip down the Grand River in boats, locating a route as they travel. It was impossible to find out anything about them.” From Kendrick’s notebook, it is at least possible to find out some of the items that they bought—surveying supplies, tent, tent wire, oars, cigarettes, pills, blow pipe and lamp, flour, beef, coffee, and dried apples.

On Friday, March 29, the survey ran 2900 feet of line. By Saturday evening they had gone about three miles and on Sunday they stayed in camp. For several weeks Sunday remained a day of relaxation. However, by April 28, a Sunday, they must have decided that it was better to get on with the job. They had lost several days because the supplies expected at Cisco failed to materialize, and probably Kendrick was working against a deadline. From here on, they took no more Sundays off.

Kendrick and his “boys” were lucky with the weather. He mentioned rain for the first time on April 9. By April 21, the mercury had hit 90 in Castle Valley, as they crawled under the sagebrush to find shade. Below Moab, they presumably had good weather except for strong winds in the gooseneck known as “The Loop.” On the long haul up the Green River they were wet and wind-blasted. However, this was not a wet year and they were ahead of the heaviest spring runoff. Records of 1889 show low water and Kendrick talks about it on the Green. Shallow water was harder for the boatman but safer than a high river.

As the surveyors headed out from Grand Junction, spring had hardly begun to show. Perhaps the cottonwoods were budded and under sunny banks along the river there might have been patches of green grass. The Grand River would have been muddy or perhaps greenish colored. As today, there were long stretches of dry and wintry country, sandy gulches, isolated cedar trees, and gray sage on the hills. Even after a recent snow, the ground has a powdery, dry look, and the white in the distance is as often alkali as it is snow.



Westwater or Box X Ranch

Across the Utah line, the river began to cut through the familiar red sandstone into dark granite bedrock. At Westwater Ranch, which Kendrick called the Box X Ranch, they approached their first rough water and made their only major portage. This was Hades Cañon, the present-day Westwater Canyon, which contains some of the most formidable rapids on the Colorado. It has always been considered a tricky piece of water to navigate and Kendrick took no chances. He spent three days triangulating the canyon and then moved camp to the Sisco (Cisco) pumphouse. A blistering twelve-mile walk through the sand constituted the portage.

Having replenished their food supply, the men continued down the river from the Cisco pumphouse—one of the landmarks of Kendrick’s day which is still standing. They picked up red agate at the mouth of the Dolores River and were pleasantly surprised at the scenery and farming in Castle Valley.

There were compensations for the hard-working crew. Kendrick constantly exclaimed about the fine country and its strange formations, as he penetrated Utah’s arches and needles region. His men fished, hunted ducks, and took shots at deer, which still frequent the brushy flats along the river. There were Indian

⁵ Ethan Allen Reynolds, “In the Whirlpools of the Grand Cañon of the Colorado,” *Cosmopolitan*, VIII (November, 1889), 26.

⁶ Franklin A. Nims, diaries, unpublished ms. in the Western History Collection, Denver Public Library.

inscriptions to examine and specimens to collect. The energetic Brock amused himself by scrambling up the cliffs, rescuing ledged cattle, and even flirting with the rapids at Westwater.

Kendrick and his men must have felt the same fascination with the Colorado River as did its other early explorers. Even today, this part of the West gives the traveler the feeling that he is the first to set foot in its isolated canyons and eroded badlands. At high noon, there is a flat, hazy, purplish look to the canyonlands, but early or late in the day, the low sun intensifies the chocolates, yellows, pinks, buffs and oranges of the buttes. By sundown, almost anywhere in this desert, there is an endlessly intriguing procession of odd-shaped pinnacles on the western horizon. No wonder the homesick Kendrick could see teapots and family groups.

By the time the party had covered almost seventy miles from Moab to the confluence of the Grand and the Green, they were ready to inscribe their last reading on the big red sand stone⁷ and head for home without even a curious look downstream at Cataract Canyon. Kendrick thought that the distance to Blake was seventy-five miles; actually it was a hundred and seventeen. He was eager to see his family, the weather had turned wet and windy, and the going upstream was rough and tedious. The notebook from here on reflected his impatience with the endless hairpin loops of the river and the monotonous canyon walls. Apparently he did not have access to Powell's accounts of his expeditions on the Green River. At any rate, Kendrick was misinformed on the distance, which explains his scanty food supply.

Some accounts make it appear that they were on short rations during the whole eleven days; however, Kendrick does not say anything about this until May 9. He tells of game and cattle, and had his party really been in desperate straits, rather than making all possible speed, they could take taken time to hunt, or they might have butchered a cow. But there is no doubt that the hospitality of the Wheelers, who ranched near the mouth of the San Rafael River for many years, helped the party to finish their journey in good shape.

In his notebook, Kendrick seldom commented on the feasibility of the railroad route, but his views were incorporated into a report written by Stanton.⁸ Stanton and Kendrick believed

⁷ This rock cannot be found today. As late as 1911, Kolb mentioned seeing this or a similar marker placed by the DCC&P survey. E. L. Kolb, *Through the Grand Canyon from Wyoming to Mexico* (New York, Macmillan, 1958), p. 126.
⁸ Stanton, Robert Brewster, "Availability of the Canon of the Colorado River of the West for Railway Purposes," *Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers* (April 1892), 302-303.

that the line along the Grand River was possible, with several tunnels and some "heavy work" involved. Although Kendrick suggested bypassing Westwater Canyon (which Stanton called Granite Cañon) Stanton proposed to run the railroad through it. When Kendrick returned to Denver on May 18, he talked with Brown for most of the day; presumably they were both optimistic about the route. Whether the DCC&P actually would have been built if Brown had lived is guesswork. If so, it would have opened up to travel seventy-five years ago, a part of the Southwest that today is just beginning to be accessible.

The notebook which follows is published as Kendrick wrote it, except for a few changes in capitalization and punctuation. Both Mrs. Louisa Ward Arps, of Denver, and Mr. Otis "Dock" Marston, of Berkeley, California, contributed materially to the work of editing the notebook. The original notebook is in the manuscript files of the State Historical Society of Colorado.

Wednesday 3 27 89

Left Denver for Grand Jc at 8 A.M.

Thursday 3 28

Arrived at Grand Junction at 3:40 A.M. and set first stake on Denver, Colo Canon & Pacific R R at 3:45 A.M.

Got boat and provisions ready to run down the river.

Friday 3 29 89

Cost went after Palmer but did not get him. We ran 2900 ft of line in P. M.

Sat 3 30 89

Ran to Sta 140 in P. M.⁹

In A. M. had to hunt up new man.

Time that men began working for D. Colo. Canon & Pac. R. R.

F. C. Kendrick		March 25, 1889
Thomas Rigney @	50.00	" 27
George Cost	30.00	" 28
Brock	40.00	" 29
Frank Knox	30.00	Apr 1

Sunday 30th

Laying in camp down on Grand River.

Monday Apl 1st 1889

Ran line parallel to D & R G to Sta 660.

⁹ The distance between stations is 100 feet.

Tuesday Apl 2 89

Ran line down from 660 to 903 below big cliff at Macks [...] ¹⁰ line.

Wednesday Apl 3rd, 89

Ran line to sta 1126 + 20.

Thursday Apl 4th 89

Ran down from 1126 + 20 by the Crevasse pumphouse at 1230. Crevasse pumphouse to Sta 1327 + 10.

Friday Apl 5th 1889

Ran from sta 1327 + 10 to 1473 + 70. Had a quantity of brush and rough ground to get over but could get a good line.

Camped at mouth of gulch at sta 1470, one of the finest camps we have had. Cliffs at our back are 400 ft high and are overhanging. In front is the river bed 500 ft wide with its swift running water & then on the other side are the cliffs again from 300 to 500 ft in height. From camp in the bend of the river we get a magnificent view of the stream & hills. There is a Sentinel rock standing $\frac{1}{3}$ mile below camp. It has a small round base for about 50 ft in height & then it swells out quick to a breadth of 30 to 40 ft & looks very much like a Turk's turban.

The river down to this point is not nearly as rough as I supposed it would be. Can get a splendid line with very easy curves & not much heavy work. On some of the bottoms there is a heavy growth of cottonwood. A raft passed camp this morn while we were eating breakfast. Nothing on it. Do not know where it came from.

Saturday Apl 6th 1889

Ran line down to sta 1648 to Granite Canon. Canon at head has a fall of 17 ft in 3000.

Sunday Apl 7 89

Camped at cottonwood grove at head of Granite Canon. The best campground yet. Wrote letters to Mama, J. W. France & F. M. Brown. Rained a little in P.M.

Monday Apl 8th 1889

Ran down to Sta 1851—Had to triangulate across the river.

Tuesday Apl 9th 1889

Ran to State Line at Sta 1880 & ran on to Sta 1979 + 57. Had to triangulate the river at Murphys Ranch & ran onto a

¹⁰ Notebook not clear.



Westwater (Hades) Canyon

fish net. Made 3 hauls & got 14 fish which would weigh over 40 lbs. Met the 1st man for a week.

Wednesday Apl 10th

Ran line down through Box X ranch¹¹ to Sta 2207 at mouth of "Hades canon"¹² where the woman was drowned. Rained in the night as it did last night. Brock came near going over the rapids & we had to tow him back. This is a very fine valley. We got a 3 mile tangent through it. The D&RGW Survey strikes across from here to Sisco & l[e]aves the river.

Thursday Apl 11 89

Went back 2 miles to see about getting team to take us to Sisco. Then triangulated down the canon 3 miles. Rained at noon.

Friday Apl 12 89

Triangulated the 12 Mile canon. Made to Sta 2929 or Sisco Pump house. Canon has perpendicular walls of from 500 to 700 ft. on the north side & from 500 to 1200 on south side.

Line can be run from upper end of flat above canon across to Sisco pump house on a 1% grade & by striking the river 10 miles below pump house it can be made lighter. The canon

¹¹ Westwater Ranch.

¹² Westwater Canyon.

would be nearly 12 miles of solid rock with cuts of 3 to 500 ft. River narrow and very dangerous.

Saturday Apl 13th 89

Move camp across to Sisco pump house. Had a 12 mile walk through the sand and blistered my feet badly.¹³ But was amply repaid by getting 2 letters & 2 postals from my Dear one.

Sunday Apl 14th 89

Went to Sisco Sta to get provisions ordered from Grand Junct. When I got there I did not find them & have to go to Junction tonight. Arrived at Junct. at 12 P. M.

Monday Apl 15th 89

Done all business in an hour & have a long day to put in.

Tuesday Apl 16th 89

Came back from Junct. at 3:45 A. M. Arrived at Sisco 6:15 A. M. Found my goods & then started for an 8 mile walk across the mesa.

Got to camp & found the boys eating bread & coffee. A dog had got in camp & stole their meat. Went over to the agate beds in P. M. and then went duck hunting. Got 3.

Wednesday Apl 17th 1889

Ran line from 2988 to 3223.

Thursday Apl 18th 1889

Ran from 3223-3535. Camped where they were loading raft for Fish Valley. Very cold & windy all day.

Friday Apl 19 89

Ran from Sta 3535 to 3803. At mouth of Delores [sic] we ran into a nice bed of Red Agates at the head of a nice valley about 1 mile long.

Saturday Apl 20th 1889

Ran from 3803 through 5 miles of Canon & into Little Castle valley to Sta 4232, a big Red Rock. Crossed the river with line in the morning. Raft passed us just before noon.

Sunday Apl 21 89

Was a long day. Camped on a sand bank with sagebrush for shade. Mercury 90. Put in the day with writing to Mama & looking over the valley. There is the finest scenery here that we have yet seen. Castles & towers of every imaginable kind.

¹³ Kendrick's only reference to the portage around Westwater Canyon.

They tell me they raise figs, raisins, cotton et cet. here at an elevation of 3900.¹⁴

Monday Apl 22 89

Ran from Sta 4232 to 4438. Got into heavy rapids & had to do a little packing. Found a cow & young calf & steer on a ledge or rock under a cliff in the river where they had been washed down & lodged. They must have been there for a week or more.

Brock stripped to make the run of the rapids & when he got pretty well through them he ran up close to the cliff & climbed out on the shelf where the cattle were. The cow made a run at him but was so weak she fell down. Then he crowded them into the river to get them down where they could land. The cow was so weak that she could hardly keep her head out but managed to drift to shore about ¼ mile down.

The steer & calf would swim like fish & would cling to the rocky cliff all along & finally got into a narrow crevice in the rock not more than 6 ft wide. Brock drove the boat rope into a crack in the rock & went after them. It looked as though a squirrel could not get along but he made it by crawling along on his hands & knees in the edge of the water. I would hardly have dared to go, for on one side was the water running at the rate of 10 miles per hour & all in a foam, & on the other a cliff 100 ft. high.

But he followed up the crevice & got ahead of them & drove them back. Then they charged on him & got by him. That time he caught the calf & helped him up some falls in the crevice & got him out that way & then drove the steer down again. That time he got him into the water but could hardly get him away. Finally the current caught him & carried him away like a feather & he landed down where the cow was.

Brock wore his toenails all off but was satisfied.

Tuesday Apl 23d 89

Ran from 4438 to 4832 & 6 miles of it through a box canon with walls of from 600 to 800 ft. high. Crossed Rock Creek¹⁵ at lower end of Little Castle Valley—the first good water this side of the range.

Wednesday Apl 24 89

Ran from 4832 to .¹⁶ Crooked & rough most of the way to Sta which is at the Ferry at Moab.

¹⁴ Professor Valley, near site of Richardson, Utah.

¹⁵ Castle Creek at White Ranch.

¹⁶ This and subsequent blanks are Kendrick's.



Colorado River near Moab, La Sal Mountains in background

Thursday Apl 25 89

Ran from Sta to Sta at mouth of Canon.

Friday Apl 26 89

Laid in camp at Moab.

Sat Apl 27

Laid in camp at Moab. Got provisions at night.

Sunday Apl 28 89

Ran from Sta to Sta . Camped at foot of Cathedral rock. It looks like a grand old building with a dome roof & a steeple with heavy foundations separate from main building & then a large double door in the middle of the front.

Monday Apl 29th 1889

Ran from Sta to Sta . Cost & Knox ran onto 2 deer.

Tuesday, Apl 30th 89

Ran from Sta 6155 + 80 to Sta 6632 + 10. Saw Grandmothers teapot & a Dutch family group. Jumped a deer in the river & fired about a doz shots at him. *No Venison.*

Wednesday May 1st 89

Ran from 6632 + 10 to 7000 + 65 & would have gone 3 miles more only Cost & Knox could not get along the river fast enough.

Ran onto 5 deer in the bottom & shot one but did not get him. 132½ miles from Grand Junct. Brush on the banks of the river is so dense that it is almost impossible to make a landing & when we do land we have to climb over the brush & are often 3 to 5 ft up in the air on the brush. Slow work. Back from the river there is nothing but greasewood & rocks. The last 3 days we have had the grandest scenery yet. Cliffs 1000 to 1500 ft high and in all shapes from a group of Rogers statuary to a church or old castles of olden times.

Thursday May 2nd 1889

Ran from Sta 7000 + 65 to Sta 7593. Triangulation most of the way on account of thick brush on what few flats we found & the gulches coming in with perpendicular sides of from 100 to 500 ft. In many places the canons would come in only a few hundred ft apart & the perpendicular distance a man would have to travel would be greater than the horizontal. A Barren & Godforsaken looking country only along the river where everything grows luxuriously.

At Sta 7144 + 20 we found a little valley coming in from the South where it appears some few cattle come to water, the first below Moab. On a large rock at the East side of canon there are many Indian inscriptions. Snakes, lizards with 2 heads, men & women & cet & many things we could not make out. Also the names of many cowboys written in 87 & 88.

Camped at night in the bottom of a canon under cliffs 800 ft high. A nice place to be caught in in case of a water spout.

Friday May 3d 1889

Ran from Sta 7593 to 8202 + [70]. At Sta 8155 + 40 the river is only about 1600 ft distant through the Mt. & is about 5 miles around, 2 miles of it through a box canon with perp. walls of 100 to 400 ft, the water running close up to the walls & leaving no footing. A grand & gloomy place.¹⁷ The river runs smooth & has quite a good current. Have not struck a rappid below Moab,

¹⁷ The Loop.

but today the wind was so strong that it was as bad as the rapids. The water would wash over the sides of the boat & we had all 5 of us in.

Camped on a large flat rock in the edge of the river & found it full of fossil shells. The canon for many miles back have been lined with agates.

Saturday May 4th 1889

Ran from 8202 + 70 to 8489 + 50 at the mouth of Green river or 160.78 miles from Grand Junction. Struck Green river at 11 A.M. or 1 hour before the time I had set. About 2 miles above the mouth we struck a Lime formation full of fossils. Got quite a lot of spec.



Junction of the Green and Colorado rivers, photographed by James McCormick in 1891.

Took dinner¹⁸ at mouth of Green and are now ready to take a 75 mile pull up to Blake. At mouth of Green we mark a large Red Sand Stone (lying in the forks of the Green & Colorado)

Sta 8489 + 50

DCC & PRR

May 4th 1889

The Colorado canon from here does not look very rough

¹⁸ Notebook not clear.

but we cannot see only about ¼ mile & have seen enough canon so we are not anxious to go down to see what it is.

Made about 8 miles up the Green—only found 2 places where the walls closed in so that we could not walk on the side. Towed boat most of the way.

Sunday May 5th 1889

Came up the Green about 8 miles in A. M. Pretty rough traveling but after the 1st 2 miles Brock rowed the boat & could get along as fast as we could. The cliffs are not as high or in as queer shapes as on the Grand, though there are many fine views here. Saw 1 antelope & 1 deer this a.m. Am getting tired of this walking business & want to get to Blake. Am in hopes to see Mama & the babies by Saturday night. Looks very much like rain.

The hardest day's work of the trip. My boots gave out & I had to sew them up with wire. Our clothes will not stand many days of this brush.

Monday May 6th 1889

The wind blew a hurricane last night & about 3 A.M. it began raining. Had a good solid shower & as we were camped under the edge of a high cliff & the wind & rain would keep dropping rock from the top, it made it rather interesting.

I got up & went down to see if the boat was all right & then went back to bed but not to sleep much. Our blanket[s] got a pretty good wetting.

Noon camp—on a sand bar. We are getting into a little more open country. Today we came along on top of the cliffs for quite a distance & we could see over a good deal of the country. Just in front of us stands a point which must be 1000 ft high & looks like an immense church steeple. On one side & standing fully 300 ft. high stands a woman dressed in the latest style with a long trailing dress.

We started two nice deer on the flat below here but did not get a shot. Think we have made nearly 30 miles in our 2 days travel.

In P.M. I helped Brock row as there was no bank for pulling boat.

The hardest day yet. Had the nicest campground yet, on a nice large flat & it seems good to get where we can see a little.

Tuesday May 7th 89

Had a hard pull all forenoon & camped in sight of last camp. River makes a big bend & doubles on itself. Bad ground & hard

work.

In P.M. River doubled back & I do not think we are over 5 miles in a direct line from last night's camp. River is very low & sand bars reach nearly across with from 6" to 8" of water.

Wednesday May 8th 89

Had much better ground all A.M. Did not get started until 10 A.M. as we had to fix boat & all were about tired out. Some very grand sentinel rocks along here & a great country for rattlesnakes, centipedes, tarantulas & scorpions. Weather very windy & threatening storm. Country is covered with agates. Cliffs are all of Red sandstone.

Have not seen any signs of man or stock since Apl 27th. At 10:30 A.M. came in sight of needle rock & at 1 P.M. ate dinner at foot of it on S.W. side. At 6:30 went into camp at foot of it on N.W. side. At 4:30 we were fully 2½ miles to the NW of it but had to come back with the river. For the past 2 days we have not made more than 10 miles in a straight line.

Thursday May 9th 1889

Rained last eve—in the night, & was rainy this morning. We have to light out as our grub is getting low. Had much better river today than usual & made good time though it rained considerable. Everybody are looking anxiously for the mouth of the canon. See a good many deer but have no way to get them.

Camped at night on a high bank with a high cliff for background.

Friday May 10th 1889

Rained most of the night & everything wet & slippery. I had to slip in the river the first thing this A.M. & got my feet wet. Everybody in good spirits & all expect to see Blake before night
Ah - Me -

Made a good run & at 5 P. M. I saw a low ridge (about 300 ft high) & told the boys that I would bet them the river was on the other side. Brock climbed up & sure enough there it was not 1000 feet away, & still so far. Flour nearly gone & prospect for several days more canon. At 7 P.M. we camp about 3 miles from the ridge & when the boat came up, Tom & Knox grabbed a handful of dried apples & a cup of water.

Will not get to see Mama for several days yet.

This morning a large rock of about 50 tons weight fell from the top of a cliff 800 ft high & made a terrible racket. The smoke raised from the canon like a heavy fire. We have been very lucky in not having any more rolling rock than we have for

they are no respecter of persons & are just as liable to knock a fellows head off as not.

Saturday May 11th 1889

Rained again last night but is pretty clear this A.M. At 10 A.M. we were within 1000 feet of where we were at 5 P.M. last night & had had 5 hours of hard rowing & walking.

At noon we are camped on a little bar with the river running East.

The river is like an immense snake that is stretched out taking a sun bath & has not room to stretch out strait. It must be fully 3 times as long as in a direct line. The cliffs here are a little lower & looks some like letting up but not as much as 3 days ago. Have passed some nice bottoms of 50 to 160 acres each in the last 2 days.

Sunday May 12th 1889

Got an early start & had [pretty?]¹⁹ good river. Made good headway & just after noon we discovered a watering place for cattle. Everybody set up a shout for it was the first signs of life & gave us hope that we were near some one.

We went on by that bottom & the cliffs closed in again as close as before. Our hopes were blasted once more but we could hope for more signs soon. Just at night we came to another bottom where a few cattle came down to water & we had to cross the river to camp. When we crossed I looked ahead & with joy could see a long line of mountains in the distance & what appeared low mesa lands between the range & us. We divided our flour into 2 parts, cooked ½ & went to bed happy. But I with a terrible headache.

Monday May 13th 1889

Got started at 6 A.M. and made good time until 10:30 a.m. when we came upon a large bottom the largest yet²⁰ & as we were towing the boat along I discovered a cabin on the bank & there was smoke coming from the chimney. The first signs of human life for 16 days. Well you can imagine our feelings when we called out & a man answered & came out. He said afterward that when he caught sight of us he had a mind to throw what he had at us & run—& no wonder—we were covered with Rags & mud. Our boots are tied up with wire & 3 of the boys have hardly enough shirt to cover themselves. We went up & concluded to stay over until Tues. as we were only 26 miles

¹⁹ Notebook not clear.

²⁰ Opposite the mouth of San Rafael River.



Fisher's Towers, La Sal Mountains in background

yet to Blake & 90 miles from the Colo, making 116²¹ instead of 45²² as we had been told.

We took dinner, supper & breakfast with them. There are 4 brothers named Wheeler & they used us first class. One of them is in the office of the Colo Fuel Co. in Denver. We tried to get them to take us to Thompson Spgs. but their horses were all out & they could not find them. So we will have to take up our line of march again in the morning.

Tuesday May 14th 1889

Made a good run having better towing ground than before but much swifter water. Jumped some deer but they only

²¹ US Bureau of Reclamation profile of the Green River shows this distance as 117 miles.

²² Kendrick must have meant 75. See entry for May 4.

laughed at us. A pleasant day only quite warm. I think we must have made 15 miles.

Wednesday May 15 1889

Started out in the morning with swift water and it kept getting swifter with gravel bars running away out in the river. No help for it but to get out in the water & pull on the rope. Ugh—its cold and to cap it all there is a hurricane blowing making the waves wash over everything & wetting us all over. The sand is blowing so it looks like a heavy snowstorm coming. Often we cannot see the boat. At noon we stopped & consulted about getting dinner & we came to the conclusion that as we had only grub enough for 1 more meal that we had better save it for supper as we might have to travel all day tomorrow without anything. So on we went wading & tugging on the rope sometimes stumbling over a sunken rock, falling into a hole or getting stuck fast in the mud.

At 1 P. M. we came to what is called the Devils Auger or the whirlpool where the Wheeler boys sunk their boat & where the trapper got wrecked. The main channel is pretty rough but we took a side one & after some few mishaps got through all OK. At 4 P.M. I heard a steam whistle & everybody set up a shout for we knew our journey was about ended. Still we had some very swift water and about 3 miles to go—but at 6 pm we came in sight of the long looked for RR bridge & then everybody was happy. We tied up, washed & changed what rags we had for something better and went up to Blake to rustle some supper & I think the boarding house Mrs. thought she had never seen anyone hungry before. We all slept well as we were tired out & knew that we did not have to get up in the morning & take another pull on the rope.

Thursday May 16th 89

Laid in Blake getting things stowed away & waiting for the train which leaves at 6 P.M. Blake is the end of divisions on the D&RGW and is situated in a fine valley which could be made very good by getting water out. It would take a ditch about 18 miles long to water 10,000 acres. A good scheme & would pay well.

F. C. Kendrick

Thos Rigney

Geo Cost 41 days @ 30.00 47.15

Frank Knox 39 days @ 30.00 45.00

Chas Brock 40 days @ 40.00 per mo 61.60

Geo Cost dr

1 sk tob 20 overhls 1.00 tob 25 1.45

T Knox dr shoes 3.50 3.50

Chas Brock dr

overhls 1.00 tobacco 50 1.50

Went to Grand Junct. on night train.

Friday May 17th 89

Paid off the boys at Grand J. & left for Denver on 10 A. M. train. Had a snow storm while crossing Marshall Pass. Was surprised to see the fine valley around Montrose & Delta a very fine country. Met 5 trains of conductors on top of Marshall Pass going to Salt Lake.

Saturday 18th 89

Got in Denver at 7 A.M. reported to Brown & was unable to get away until 3 P. M. He seems to be well pleased with our work. Then went home with M. G. & saw my Darlings once more. How nice it is to be at home again. I have given up going back as I think a mans place is near home & those he loves rather than far away even if he does not make so much money or gain as much glory.

HELEN J. STILES is former editor of the Colorado Mountain Club's Trail and Timberline. She is now a librarian at the United States Air Force Academy.

VISIT TO CARIBOU, 1963

BY WALDO R. WEDEL

It was mid-August. The day was cloudy and cool, and the air held a promise of rain soon to come. We were on our annual family visit to the old silver-mining camp of Caribou. As it did when this was a bustling community of a thousand or more souls in the 1870's and 1880's, the wind was blowing fresh as we drove up the rutted and stony road from Nederland to the crest of the ridge overlooking the townsite, 9800 feet above sea level. Ahead, the road continued on to Caribou Park; to the right, a well-traveled fork curving over a hill led to the old cemetery. We took the left turn, parked on the ridge near a couple of sagging and weather-beaten frame houses, and then scattered over the hillside.

Caribou, 1963



We had been over parts of the townsite almost every summer for several years past. This year, it seemed, there was more litter to be seen on the slopes between the old cellars, on the stone-faced house platforms dug into the hillside, and around the fallen houses. Perhaps there had been less snow and rain and the grass was thinner. Or possibly our accumulated experience was enabling us to spot things we hadn't noticed before. At any rate, bits of china and glass, square hand-wrought nails, fragments of cast-iron from stoves and skillets, and many other scraps of discarded household furnishings were to be seen in many places.

We prowled through and around each of the remaining hillside shacks, past a wind-defying outhouse or two, and around the edges of the old pits. A few yards down the slope from a squatty, black, tar-papered building—one of the dwindling few still standing and perhaps among the last to be built and occupied in the dying town—we found unmistakable signs that someone not long before us had been digging. Trash littered the turned back-dirt and broken artifacts were visible in the ragged face of the cut. This was a little too much for an archeologist to resist; we returned to the car, armed ourselves with the shovel that goes everywhere with us in summer, and hurried back to the garbage dump.

The ground was gratifyingly soft and mellow. It was also a rich black from decayed organic matter and supported a lush growth of grass and weeds, through which we had to chop our way to a clean working surface. In the fill were quantities of sawed beef and broken chicken bones, and of glass and china-ware fragments whose sharp edges discouraged any scratching with the bare hands. There were occasional whole and many broken bottles, parts of kerosene lamps, sardine tins, an old shoe, a cotton work glove, even a dirty sock. A crumpled and rusty tin still bore traces of the green label of Tuxedo smoking tobacco; another carried the equally familiar red label of Prince Albert. An old door latch had a doubled length of barbed wire twisted through the hole in place of the original knob. Random lengths of wire, nails, and an occasional nut or bolt were scattered through the black fill. The base of a flat-bottomed crock still held a tenacious, deeply-wrinkled mass of unidentified organic matter. Anyone working in a prehistoric Indian trash heap and turning up comparable quantities of material would call it "good digging."

Of great interest to us were the broken pieces of another earthenware vessel that lay just below the grass roots. Some of



the pieces were nested one on top of another; all lay flat, as though they had been thrown together onto the surface of a house dump; and they ran steadily and almost continuously up the slope as we followed the rising trash toward the house above. The pieces were cleanly broken, so that we were able from time to time to fit some of them together. And, more exciting, on some fragments there were inch-high letters and figures, all done in a thick, bluish, applied pigment. The matching pieces soon showed that we had all or most of the bottom and sides of the vessel, including part of the shoulder, but no mouth or handle parts. Before we were satisfied that we had all we might get of the vessel, a cold rain drove us to the car and thence back to our cabin at Allenspark.

During the next few days, we washed the potsherds, dried them thoroughly, and then, with the help of Elmer's Glue, slowly fitted the pieces together. What emerged was a flat-bottomed, straight-sided jar, about eight inches in diameter and the same in height. Missing was most of the top, including the mouth, and one or more pieces from the side, including, of course, a part of the inscription. But there was enough of the lettering to give us something to work on. The curving uppermost line read "BON. I. LOOK." Below this were four figures, "1557", followed by a gap and then three letters "AKE." It was clear that at least one, and more likely two letters were missing. Below the second line, at the edge of the broken-away section, were two more letters, "ER," in all likelihood the final syllable of a name.



Caribou, 1886

When the sherd bearing the figures first appeared, it was tempting to think that we might have a date, but when cleaning revealed the figures clearly, we knew that this was impossible. Caribou came into existence after 1869, reached its peak in the 1870's, went through a succession of ups and downs in the 1880's and 1890's, and lingered on into the early 1900's. The material in the trash heap thus could not have been deposited before 1870; and the presence of reasonably well preserved leather and cotton fabrics suggested that a part, at least, of the rubbish was much later in origin. Moreover, since the vessel fragments were all found just under the grass roots, they were very likely from a late period of the town's history—possibly discarded by the occupants of the shack still standing a few yards up the slope to the west.

If not a date, then were the figures part of a street address, and would the missing letters identify the names of the street and city? A guest from Boulder, Miss Catherine Barclay of the National Bureau of Standards, quickly solved this part of the mystery, producing a Denver city map that listed two streets with suggestive names, Lake and Blake. Lake was too short for the markings on the vessel; and besides Lake Street was really outside Denver and probably of too recent date. Blake fitted nicely, and Blake Street at 1557 would have been in the heart of old Denver, the industrial and commercial center of the

city during the Caribou period. There remained, then, the question—who or what was “Bon. I. Look”?

Telephoned inquiries to local historians got us nowhere, beyond the information that Denver was the main supplier for Caribou and its contemporary mining towns. We carried the jug back to Washington and tried without success to track the inscription further through Smithsonian experts in colonial history and crafts. They reminded us that there wasn't much information in print on the earthenware manufacturers and potters of the 19th century Denver region.

A letter to the Colorado State Historical Society, to which we might well have turned first, finally cleared matters up. Their files revealed the following information:

A check through the [Denver] City Directories showed that Bonne I. Look was engaged in the grocery business at 1557 Blake Street after 1893. In the latter year he was in partnership in a bookselling firm at another address. The first entry for him was 1891, when he worked for a real estate firm. The 1894 entry shows that he was the proprietor of the Farmers' Cash Grocery at 1557 Blake. The name of the firm was changed to Consumers' Wholesale House in 1898. The 1903 directory shows the address of the firm as 1563 Blake. It was later moved to 1561 Blake, and by 1910 it was at 1500 Blake. There is no evidence that Look was in the grocery business before 1893 and there is no listing for the Farmers' Cash Grocery before 1893. All of this leads to the conclusion that the container dates from the period 1893-1903.

The historical record thus indicates that Bonne I. Look was actively in the grocery business during the later years of Caribou's existence. The jug we found, carrying his name and his Denver business address, was in trash deposits we had already concluded were late in Caribou's history. For a further time check, we wrote the manufacturers of Tuxedo and Prince Albert smoking tobaccos, since the labeled tins we had found near the jug fragments seemed to be the most precisely datable objects available. We learned that the Tuxedo brand was registered in 1896, and that Prince Albert began appearing on dealers' shelves in 1907.

The jug was examined by C. Malcolm Watkins, curator of Cultural History at the U. S. National Museum, and by G. Hubert Smith of the Smithsonian's River Basin Surveys office in Lincoln, Nebraska. Watkins identified the piece as a “salt-glazed stoneware jug with a lining of Albany slip characteristic of stoneware made in the nineteenth century.” Smith expressed the tentative opinion that the jug was probably manufactured in the Denver locality and noted that it was not particularly

well made or carefully fired. It represents a type of ware that was probably produced rapidly and in considerable numbers for the local trade. The letters and figures were stenciled onto the vessel surface with a thickish mixture of cobalt and alumina; and as another result of hasty manufacture, some of them have a distinctly raised or appliquéed appearance. With more thorough firing the pigment of which the characters are composed would have fused into the vessel surface, and the surface itself would have developed a more marked glaze. The jug was, in short, a mass-produced item intended for strictly utilitarian service, not to grace a connoisseur's mantel.

We will never know what the jug contained when it left Mr. Look's emporium for the rocky road to Caribou—molasses or vinegar, perhaps, or possibly something stronger to fortify its owner against the loneliness and chill winds of the mining camp. It may have served its owner for several years, since the Prince Albert tin near which its fragments were found could not have gotten into the garbage dump before 1907. But, whatever its history, for us who collected and re-assembled the jug, the link between Caribou's past and Colorado's present has become a little less impersonal—even if the erstwhile site of the Farmer's Cash Grocery on Blake Street is today nothing more than a parking lot.¹

WALDO R. WEDEL is chairman of the department of anthropology of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.

¹In addition to the several individuals named in the text, I am indebted to Mr. John Wayne Jones, American Tobacco Company, and Mr. T. A. Porter, R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company.

PRISON CHAPLAIN

BY EDWARD C. BROOKS

On Christmas Day in 1871, a young Methodist minister delivered the first sermon at the newly-built penitentiary in Canon City. The Rev. Edward C. Brooks, born in Ohio in 1846, had just completed his studies at the Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston, Illinois, before coming to Colorado in 1869. He served churches in the territory until he went to Kansas in 1874. Subsequently he returned to the prison in 1885 as the first chaplain at that institution. He held this position for two years and then moved to Iowa, where he remained until his death in 1939.¹

Shortly after leaving Canon City Rev. Brooks wrote an account of his experiences there. He had lived with the men in the prison and had become well acquainted with their hopes and fears. He saw each man as an individual and gained an understanding of the factors which contributed to lawlessness and crime. His ideas on reform were quite advanced for the time, and the following article reflects his belief that "influences could be brought to bear upon men that would send them out of prison to be useful citizens, instead of merely punished criminals."

We are indebted to Rev. Brooks' daughter, Mrs. Don Secrist, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, for making her father's reminiscences available to us. Except for a few minor editorial changes, the article is published as it appeared in manuscript.

In the fall of 1884, Benjamin H. Eaton was elected governor of the state. He had for several years been a member of the Board of Prison Commissioners, and in his inaugural address he recommended that the legislature provide for a chaplain who should be an official of the institution. This being done, in April, 1885, he appointed me to the position.

¹ For biographical information see Isaac Haight Beardsley, *Echoes From Peak and Plain* (Cincinnati: Curtis and Jennings, 1898), p. 330. Some of Rev. Brooks' experiences in Colorado were published previously in *The Colorado Magazine* under the titles "Recollections of a Pioneer Preacher," V (June, 1928), 115-18, and "A Pioneer Minister in Southern Colorado," VI (May, 1929), 113-15.



Edward C. Brooks

Upon entering upon the chaplaincy I felt that my duties were of a twofold character: First, to the prisoners, to lead them toward and into a better life, so that when they should leave the prison they should go as useful members of society, and not menace the safety of the state. Next, I was to acquaint myself as far as possible with the conditions surrounding their lives, to learn of their heart longings, so that I might rightly represent them to the people of the outside world, among whom they would eventually mingle and also warn the youth against those courses which tend to the overthrow of manhood.

In order to get into the hearts of these men, I remembered that when God wanted to win man back to himself, He came and dwelt among men. So instead of taking a home away from the prison, and coming to them once or twice daily, I took rooms within the prison walls, where I was accessible to the men whenever they wanted to see me. On inquiry I found that there were only eighteen Bibles in the prison. I sent out an appeal through the press, and in a short time from churches, the American Bible Society, and individuals, I received enough to give a copy to every man then in prison, and to every subsequent comer. One prisoner wrote me when time came for him to leave, asking if he might take his Bible with him, saying that it had been of so much help and comfort to him that he would like to keep it. Of course I was glad to grant his request. Among my duties I had each morning to read all the letters coming to the prisoners, as well as those they sent out. One morning I read a letter one of the boys wrote to a pal of his on the outside, in which he said: "Oh Bill, I have got hold of a wonderful book, the

Bible. I had never read it, and had no idea what a book it was. Get you one, Bill, and read and study it."

In bringing before you incidents of prison life, some humorous, some pathetic, but all tragic, I have no wish to inspire any feeling of pity or tolerance for crime, nor to make crime appear in any wise heroic. Crime is never heroic; it is the very essence of cowardice, but I want to show you that I found it true that

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that Grace can restore.

During my two years as chaplain I had to deal with 648 men. Of these, 3 were but sixteen years old. The largest number at any age was 49 who were twenty-three years of age. More than half of the inmates were under thirty. We had one man, a Mexican, sentenced for 10 years, who was ninety-one years old. These prisoners represented 26 different crimes: 71 for murder, 16 for manslaughter, and 270 for larceny. The remainder were robbery, burglary, and various other crimes.

A convict on entering the prison was taken to the office of the deputy warden; there the names by which he was known on the outside world were entered on the books, and he was given a number instead of a name. His height, weight, color of eyes, any scars or other physical peculiarities by means of which he could be identified, his finger prints, age, nationality, crime, term of sentence, and all information possible to secure concerning his previous history were made matters of record. He was then taken to the bath room and clothed in prison uniform. At that time, all coming to us were compelled to wear black and white stripes running around the body. I understand that in many prisons this feature has been done away with. The men were then taken to the barber shop where they were given a clean shave. They were then consigned to their cells and given a copy of the prison rules with which they were expected to acquaint themselves. They were furnished three wholesome meals each day. We had a regular physician, and most of the



men were in much better physical condition when they left than when they came.

One of the greatest difficulties we encountered in effecting the reformation of the men lay in the monotonous routine of prison life. The bell for rising would ring at five in the morning; from then until six, the prisoners were required to put their cells in order, and get themselves ready for the day's work. Six o'clock was breakfast, and after that they were marched to their several places of labor. At fifteen minutes before twelve the whistle would summon them to dinner, after which they worked until five, when they were called in for supper. After supper they returned to their cells, and the count was taken to see that none of the boarders had left. Then until the next morning they had nothing to occupy their thoughts, except brooding over their situation and planning what they would do when released in order to revenge themselves upon society. One man said to me: "I have to work here ten years for my board and clothes, and when my time is out, I will be sent out with ten dollars and a tramp suit of clothes." General Cameron and I set out to plan some way to turn their thoughts into other channels.²

We found that there were fifty-six men who could neither read nor write, so we organized an evening school, and immediately after supper these men would go to the chapel where they would put in two hours with their teachers. At General Cameron's suggestion they were started in the second reader. We made seven classes and had for them some of their fellow prisoners as teachers. We had among our men quite a number well qualified to act as teachers: one graduate of Yale, two lawyers, one physician who was a graduate of Rush Medical College in Chicago, and a number of others who were well educated. After the school had been in progress a number of weeks, more of the men came to me and requested the privilege of attending, and we soon had classes in arithmetic, geography, history, physiology, German, and Spanish. A remarkable thing about the school was that there was never a case of the least disorder during the nearly two years we had it in operation. We also organized a Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle with twelve members, some of whom completed the course of study and received their diplomas before they left the prison.

On Sunday we had preaching services at ten o'clock, followed by Sunday school in which I was assisted by members

² General R. A. Cameron was appointed warden of the state penitentiary in 1885 and spent two years at this post. Ansel Watrous, *History of Larimer County, Colorado* (Ft. Collins: Courier Printing and Publishing Co., 1911), pp. 270-71.



of the several churches of the city. We had a choir, led by a man who was also organist. He had at one time been organist in one of the large churches of a city in Canada. In the choir were also this man's wife and son, who were prisoners with him. We had a glee club composed of colored men, all but one of whom had been members of some prominent minstrel troupes. One of these men I first met several years before, when "Donovan's Tennesseans" gave an entertainment in my church in Augusta, Kansas. On Sunday afternoon at three o'clock, we had a service consisting of singing by the entire congregation, and by our glee club to whom the General had given the name "Kentucky Warblers." There were three Italian boys who had been street musicians. One whom we called "Little Joe" was exceptionally fine. Quite a number of the people from the city would come to our Sunday afternoon service. Frequently one of the prisoners would prepare and read a paper.

Occasionally visitors would favor us with addresses. On one instance the governor of the state came, as did the bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Another time the bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church spoke. The pastors of the churches of Canon City were always ready to assist in any way possible. There was a Roman Catholic priest, Father Smith, who came to the prison once each month to celebrate Mass with the communicants of that church, of whom there were eighteen. One Sunday a strange scene was witnessed—a Roman Catholic priest and a Methodist preacher occupying the pulpit together.

A very amusing incident occurred one afternoon. There was a party holding a tent meeting in the city, and the General suggested I invite one of their number to come and talk to our

boys. There was in our choir as bass singer a very large man, serving a life sentence, who was my errand boy. His name was Andy. From where he sat in the choir he could not look at the speaker without looking past me. When this man whom I had invited to address the prisoners rose to speak, he began in a sing-song tone and said, "My friends, it gives me great pleasure to meet so many of you together upon this auspicious occasion." Just then Andy caught my eye, and I was afraid that he would burst out laughing; he buried his face in his handkerchief as though to suppress a cough. After services were dismissed I went to my room, and there was Andy rolling on the floor, convulsed in laughter. I asked him what was the matter. He said, "Oh, Chaplain, to have that man get up there tell us murderers, robbers, and criminals of all sorts that he was glad to meet so many of us here, was almost more than I could stand."

The General gave the prisoners another surprise. On Sunday evening at bed time, he would take a number of our singers, go to each of the cell houses, and have them sing two or three familiar songs. We started a series of mid-week entertainments for the boys on Wednesday evenings. One evening the General would give a talk on "The Science of Common Things." The next week Mr. Dudley, one of the guards, would speak on "Natural Philosophy." Then it was the Chaplain's turn and he took for his subject "Astronomy." On these evenings also we would have music and often some of the men would read a paper of their own composition. One evening the General said to me that the boys were complaining that I never made them laugh, that I always sent them to their cells *thinking*. The General himself was the very soul of humor. He could have the crowd for one moment on the verge of tears, and the next, without a change of subject, in a roar of laughter. The Chaplain was not gifted in that direction, but I told him that I would try and think up something funny to say and see if I could make them laugh. My next talk was to treat the Ptolemaic theory of the universe. I alluded to the fact that Ptolemy taught that the

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planets were held in their places in relation to the sun by great bars and their movements regulated by means of a crank, so that it was a system of cranks and bars. I said that some of the people of Colorado seemed to consider the management of the prison to be like the Ptolemaic theory, a system of cranks and bars. Pointing to the General and myself and to the bars across the windows as I said this, I alluded to the fact that by many of the old politicians of the state Governor Eaton, General Cameron and myself were called "cranks" because we believed in treating the prisoners as human beings and believed their reformation was a possibility.

I looked down at the General, expecting to see him laugh; I knew that if he should laugh the boys would see the joke and join in the laugh, but not even a smile greeted me. I looked at the boys and saw an angry expression on their faces, and realized that my poor joke had proven a failure! When I went to the office, there sat General Cameron laughing. He said, "That was a mighty good joke of yours, Chaplain, but the men did not see that you were applying it to us." I asked him, if he saw the joke, why he did not laugh. He said it was not his turn to make them laugh, and that the men thought I meant them when I said "cranks," for they all knew that after a man had been in prison six months he invariably became more or less cranky. The next time I spoke, I explained the joke and told them that by "cranks" I meant the General and myself, and that they must not expect any witticisms from me, for as a manufacturer of jokes and funny sayings, I could not expect to stand in a class with the General. If they would forgive me this time, I would not again afflict them with any of my feeble attempts at wit. Then, although they did not laugh at my well studied joke, they did most heartily at its explanation, and I was at once restored to their favor.

As I stated in the beginning of this article, I felt that it was incumbent upon me to learn as far as possible the conditions surrounding these men, which were in a measure responsible for their criminal conduct. Some of the men I found were born of criminal parents, and they had from early life been surrounded by criminal associations. Others came from homes of respectability, but studying into their life histories, I found that society at large was in a great measure responsible for much of the crime there represented. You ask, "In what way?" I answer first, the home: (1) By neglectful leniency, treating disobedience as a matter of no, or not much, importance, and making threats which the child soon comes to learn will not be executed. I have

heard mothers severely threaten little children, when they had no intention of carrying the threats into execution, and the children knew it. Such children soon learn to treat with contempt the law of home, school, state and God. (2) By harshness and undue severity, thus causing the child to hate all authority and law. (3) By encouraging in the home those practices, seemingly in themselves innocent, which are intimately associated with vice, immorality and crime. Second, polite society: (1) By winking at and treating with indifference the violation of duly enacted laws; for instance, prohibitory laws. (2) By sanctioning or participating in those practices which are to be found invariably among the greatest attractive features of vicious resorts, thus many times luring young men into the schools of crime.

One of the first lessons which should be impressed upon the minds of children is a respectful OBEDIENCE to DULY ENACTED LAW and rightly constituted AUTHORITY. Again, when I see men prominent in public life violating law with impunity, or hear them speaking with contempt of duly enacted laws, and lightly of their violation, I feel that they are encouraging our boys in courses which will increase our criminal population.

I became very strongly impressed with the conviction that punishment is never in itself reformatory, and that society's right to imprison and punish criminals is not to revenge itself for wrongs inflicted, but to protect society against their future depredations. Every year there are going from the prisons of the land a large number of merely "punished men" who constitute a more dangerous element than before their imprisonment, for now they have added to their criminal tendencies a spirit of revenge, a determination "to get even" as they call it.

I asked a young fellow one day how long he had to stay. He answered, "Five years, sir, and the judge that sentenced me had better have given me a life sentence, for as soon as I can after I get out, I shall do something that will either send me up for life or hang me. I am going to get the fellow that swore me in here." Here this poor boy had had nothing given to him to occupy his thoughts during the months he had been in prison but how to accomplish his revenge. Imprisonment should serve as a warning and deter others who might be inclined to do wrong, but also, by no means the least important, bring reformatory influences to bear upon the one imprisoned. When he leaves the prison he should go out to be a useful member of the body politic, instead of a menace to the safety of the state.