

EXCAVATING FORT MASSACHUSETTS

BY GALEN R. BAKER

The general location of Fort Massachusetts, the first permanent American military post in Colorado, has been more or less well-known by residents of the Fort Garland area for many years. Local people are known to have done some relic hunting on the site in the early 1900's, but this is now forbidden, and the land is closed to the public. A more exact location of the old fort was determined in July, 1964, by utilizing old photographs. Of particular help were a group of photographs made by O. T. Davis between 1900 and 1910. Standing on an elevated terrace above and east of the Ute Creek flood plain, Davis was able to take in the area of the fort and to draw on his photographs the location of the stockade and adjacent buildings as

View of Fort Massachusetts site by O. T. Davis, c. 1900



he believed they had existed.¹ Excavations made during August and September, 1964, determined the exact location of the stockade and adjacent buildings, and generally confirmed the location of the fort outlined by Davis on his photographs.

The State Historical Society of Colorado, in cooperation with Trinidad State Junior College, began formal excavation of Fort Massachusetts on August 18, 1964, and continued through September 12. The fort is located on Ute Creek at the foot of the Sierra Blanca Range in San Luis Valley. This location is approximately seven miles north of the present-day US 160, where it crosses Ute Creek, about one mile west of Fort Garland, Colorado.

A laboratory and a headquarters for the archaeology crew from Trinidad State Junior College were set up in the Company Quarters building of Old Fort Garland. The larger west room was used for the processing and study of recovered artifacts, and for the preparation of maps, field notes, and manuscripts. One person stayed in the laboratory full time, and the excavation crew supplemented the laboratory work in the evening after returning from the field. A photo lab, where film could be developed and pictures made and enlarged, was set up in the extreme east room of the building. Here a complete file of all pictures, with notes, was kept. Sleeping quarters and kitchen facilities were also set up in this building. A crew that varied between ten and thirty people worked on the site for the period of time mentioned above.

The site has been laid off in hundred-foot grids, and the excavated areas were further subdivided into five-foot squares for greater artifact control. Each square was given a number and a letter to aid in the development of accurate field maps and records. At the present state of excavation, inferences can be made regarding the size, use, and function of the stockade, and the occupation area of the entire site itself.

The valley of Ute Creek is in late adolescence or early maturity in the cycle of erosion. The present topography of the site may be described as an oval-shaped, broad, open valley, about one-eighth mile wide in the vicinity of the fort, with long open terraces rising gently above the flood plain on both the east and west sides. Ute (or Utah) Creek drains a large section of the southern slopes of the Sierra Blanca and particularly the southeast side of Blanca Peak. Near Fort Garland this creek



Aerial view of the fort site with the fort outlined in white. The south gate was about where the line at the left crosses the road.

joins Trinchera Creek, which then drains into the Rio Grande River ten miles to the south and west. The fort is located about a mile from the mouth of a narrow ravine formed where the stream runs out of the foothills of the Sierra Blanca. The fort was placed here because of good pasture and water and an adequate wood supply—necessary items for quartering men and horses for a long period of time in any one place.

A major objection to the construction of the fort in its present location was the danger of flooding, but present evidence indicates the danger was small. Adjacent to the northeast corner of the occupation area are large quantities of rounded river rocks. Probably they were removed to their present location during the leveling of the construction site in 1853. No such rocks were removed from the site itself during this summer's excavation, indicating no major flooding since the 1850's.

There is some evidence of renewed stream downcutting by Ute Creek below the present flood plain (probably occurring prior to the 1850 military occupation), which was a major factor in preventing flooding of the fort site during and since that time.

¹ Original prints of this photograph are in both the library of the State Historical Society of Colorado and in the Denver Public Library Western History Collection.

At the time of the occupation of the fort by troops, there were at least two streams, one on each side of the stockade, as indicated by Colonel Mansfield's map of the stockade area.² Since Fort Massachusetts was established on the west bank of Ute Creek,³ the mainstream channel in 1853 was the easternmost channel observed today.

The stream has a gentle gradient of only a few feet drop per mile for about six miles, from the RL Ranch headquarters upstream to the mouth of the narrow gorge. This gorge lies about one mile upstream from the fort site. Except perhaps for some continued downcutting, the topography is probably very similar to what it looked like one hundred years ago.

Colonel Joseph K. F. Mansfield criticized the location of the fort at this intersection, because of the poor defensive position and the distance from the main stream of Ute Indian movement.⁴ These objections seem to be valid, but one can't help but think that Major George Blake, who determined the location, directed the construction, and first commanded the fort, had an eye for the scenery and convenience of quarters, which is offered by this site. The temperate climate, the crystal-clear water, the plentiful game, the Ute Valley, and the Sierra Blanca view, combine to create a very pleasant area in which to live.

Fort Massachusetts is located at the upper end of the broadest part of the Ute Creek Valley. For a quarter of a mile on each side of the creek there is a low, open, grassy alluvial terrace, gradually sloping up from the creek to the low, juniper-covered hills, which surround the valley and are about fifty to a hundred feet higher than the adjacent open terraces. Today, the flood plain and terraces are used for grazing Angus cattle and sheep.

During excavation, serious attempts were made to find the four corners of the fort. The first excavations were inconclusive, but later test trenches indicated that the fort is about 270 feet wide on the south and north sides (east-west lines) and about 320 feet long on the east and west sides (north-south lines).

² Joseph K. F. Mansfield, Report of Inspection of the Department of New Mexico, 1853, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Miscellaneous File, National Archives, Washington, D. C. Photostatic copies of Mansfield's report and the accompanying map are in the library of the State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver. Mansfield's report is also reprinted in M. L. Crimmins, "Fort Massachusetts, First United States Military Post in Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine*, XIV (July, 1937), 131; and in Robert W. Frazer (ed.), *Mansfield on the Condition of the Western Forts, 1853-54* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 17-19; the map of Fort Massachusetts is reproduced in the "Sketches and Plans" section of Frazer's book, Fig. 5.

³ See Mansfield's plan of the fort in *ibid.* See also Gwinn H. Heap's map in his *Central Route to the Pacific* (Vol. VII of *The Far West and the Rockies Historical Series*, ed. LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen; Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1957), opp. p. 336.

⁴ Crimmins, *The Colorado Magazine*, XIV (1937), 131.

Excavations in the northeast and southeast corners have brought to light log wall structures that stand outside of the general rectangular plan of the stockade area. The structure in the southeast corner is probably the smithy, and that in the northeast corner is the blockhouse indicated on Mansfield's map of 1853.

Although exact dimensions cannot yet be determined, the main outline of the stockade and of the adjacent buildings around the fort can be visualized from the irregular ground surface. Where adobe bricks were used to construct fireplaces or walls, and where the foundation logs of the buildings have not been destroyed or removed, a small mound two to three feet high can be observed extending above the general ground level.

Apparently, wherever there is sage brush growing in the area of the ruins, there is some indication of the former military and civilian occupation of the 1850's. Former occupation is also indicated by reddish earth, pieces of glass, metal, earthenware, and parts of log wall foundations eroding out of the surface. If we are correct in our estimate of the fort's outline, then there are to be found at least five or six outlying buildings not yet identified through written historical sources. These, as well as the corral area, which is located about five hundred feet southwest of the stockade and across the west stream, will be excavated in the summer of 1965.

The remains of the log wall foundations at this site indicate that most of the fort, and the stockade itself, was constructed of ponderosa pine tree trunks stacked horizontally, as suggested in a drawing published by DeWitt C. Peters in 1858.⁵ A most amazing fact is the good preservation of some of these logs, many of them almost complete in shape. There is a report of a fire in 1891 which was supposed to have destroyed the remains of the fort.⁶ Yet, excavation shows that complete destruction did not occur and that much of the fort's foundation logs and adobe fireplaces remain today just as they were a hundred years ago.

As noted above, excavations so far have proved the photographs of O. T. Davis to be essentially correct in having located the stockade quadrangle. Yet a further statement is needed here on this matter. Davis would also put one soldiers' barrack outside the stockade to the south. An incorrectly labeled structure on M. L. Crimmins's copy of Colonel Mansfield's sketch of the fort of 1853 shows a small barrack structure at that same

⁵ DeWitt C. Peters, *The Life and Adventures of Kit Carson* (New York: W. R. C. Clark & Co., 1858), opp. p. 476. The book was reprinted at least twice; the illustration from a later edition appeared on the cover of *Mountain & Plain History Notes*, I (October, 1964).

⁶ Note on the reverse side of the O. T. Davis photograph of the Fort Massachusetts site in the Denver Public Library Western History Collection.

point.⁷ However, Mansfield's original map shows that this structure was originally labeled as the sutler's store.⁸ Surface evidence points to an extensive structure probably some forty feet or more in diameter. This should be an important area for the recovery of artifacts which will help to understand more clearly the needs of, and materials utilized by mid-nineteenth-century occupants of this region.

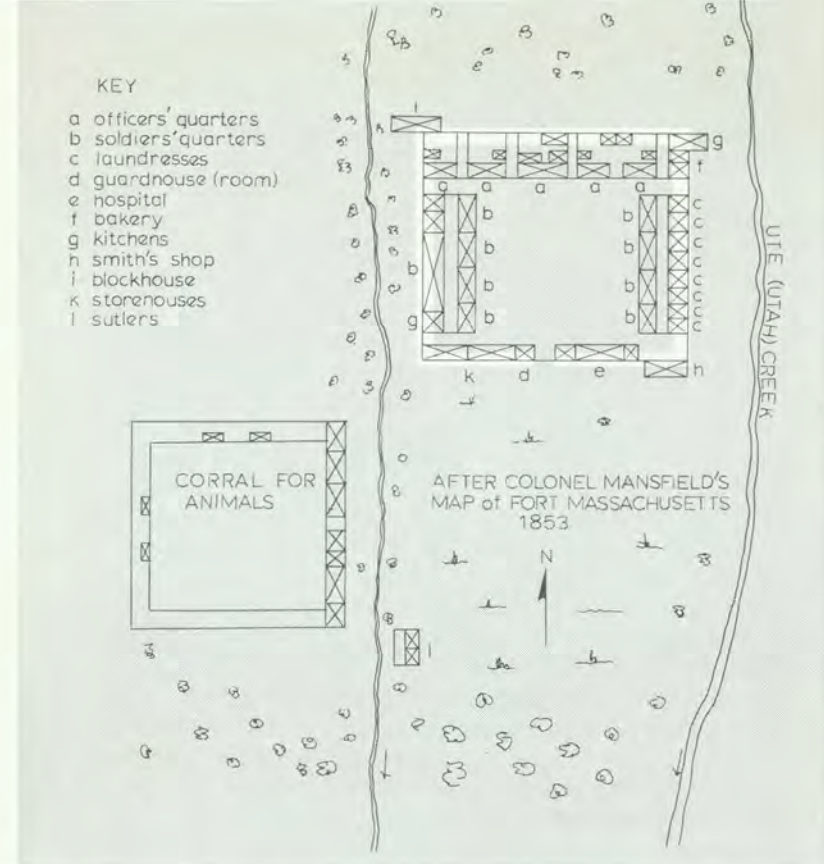
Present indications in Area D at the south end of the excavation area, show that in all probability, we have uncovered part of the south side of the fort and perhaps part of the south entrance. A number of large foundation logs were found in place lying in a north-south direction and may have served as the sides of the main entryway into the stockade and as walls of the adjoining rooms, such as the guardroom on the west side and the hospital on the east side. Mansfield's map and our excavations show that the outside stockade walls of the fort also served as the back walls for adjoining rooms. Fireplaces for the outside rooms were thus probably placed on east-west walls adjoining the stockade wall. For example, on the west side adobe fireplaces have been located on what appears to be a partition wall at right angles to the outside stockade wall.

Area D was one of the two or three more interesting excavation points. The first room to be excavated is the most likely candidate for the guardroom because of its location as the first room west of the south entrance. Also, there is a very substantial adobe wall dividing the room on an east-west line, and it may be that another line of bricks may exist showing a north-south subdivision; this would mean at least four separate cells in this room. Excavation has just begun to outline the other rooms on the remainder of the west side of the south wall. This is quite likely the quartermaster area.

A portion of the north end of the stockade has been uncovered. This is believed to be the area shown as officers' quarters in Colonel Mansfield's 1853 sketch. One stone fireplace with a cobblestone front has been uncovered, giving further distinction to this area in contrast to the outlined men's barrack, partially excavated on the west side of the stockade. Work on this part of the stockade is very limited to date, and therefore, the extent and distribution of officers' quarters and the other uses of this part of the fort are still to be determined.

⁷ Crimmins, *The Colorado Magazine*, XIV (1937), 130.

⁸ The original Mansfield map is reproduced in *Mountain & Plain History Notes*, I (October, 1964). I am indebted to Morris Taylor, history professor at Trinidad State Junior College, for pointing out the discrepancy between the Mansfield map and the Crimmins copy.



To date, we have uncovered most of one barrack on the west side of the stockade. At least five adjoining rooms have been outlined, four of which were apparently sleeping quarters for enlisted soldiers. An adobe fireplace, measuring 9 feet 3½ inches long and 3 feet 7 inches wide, front to back, was located in the middle of the west wall in each sleeping room. The adobe was apparently covered with a fine sand plaster, still remaining on some surfaces. The adobe bricks were of various sizes, but the most common size seems to have been 9 inches wide, 18 inches long and 3 inches thick, of a mud and grass mixture. It appears that the smaller bricks recovered could have been of another mold or could have been a part of the common larger size. Logs were so cut as to butt into the rear corners of the fireplaces.

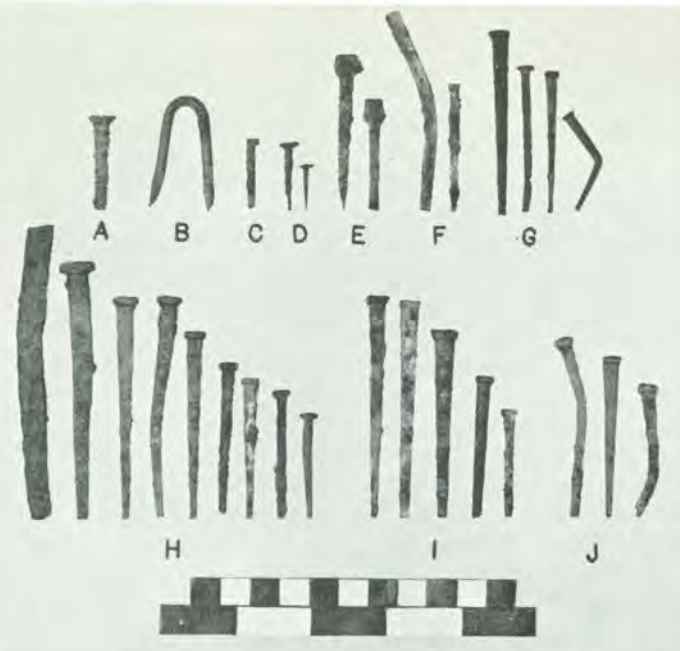
Each room measured 30 feet north-south and 20½ feet east-west, and probably had an entrance facing east. A fourth room on the south end, so far as is now known, does not have a fireplace and may therefore have served as a tack room. Another probable sleeping room is still in the process of being uncovered on the north end of this same barrack.

The barrack roof was probably flat with only the fireplace chimney sticking above the top of the buildings. The roof itself was supported by the barrack walls, by partitions separating each of the sleeping quarters, and by at least two center vertical logs which are indicated today by two log stubs still in place in the southernmost room of the excavated barrack area. Each sleeping room of the barrack probably housed one squad of men.

Great numbers of artifacts have not to date been recovered. Still it must be remembered that excavation has only begun and that the fort's 1858 abandonment was a planned and orderly procedure. Most of the materials used by the military were probably packed up and carried away at the time of the fort's closing. The archaeologist, of course, learns as much from those materials discarded by the user as from those carried away.

Dozens of square, cut nails have been recovered. In analyzing the nails found at Fort Massachusetts, I have used the report by Fontana and Greenleaf⁹ as a basic reference and have arranged my types according to their report. Those cut nails found to date at Fort Massachusetts are as follows:

1. L-headed, or angle-headed cut nails, appeared in the United States about 1800 and continued in use in some places until as late as the 1850's. They were used in floors and clapboards, and were made simply by bending the head of the shank.¹⁰ Only one L-headed nail form was recovered from Fort Massachusetts. This low frequency is probably the result of the disappearance of this nail form from common use throughout the United States at this time. (Item C in photograph.)
2. Fencing nails were commonly made in sizes 6d to 16d. The sizes found at Fort Massachusetts were 6d, 7d, and 8d. These forms were made with slightly raised or reinforced heads to take hard pounding. They had beveled shanks, and were rectangular in cross section at the point. Fencing nails were used to join heavy, rough lumber for fences.¹¹ The low frequency of fencing nails recovered so far in the fort probably indicates that little or no fencing was done inside the stockade grounds proper. (Item J.)
3. Common nails were usually made in sizes 2d to 60d. Those found at Fort Massachusetts were sizes 4d, 5d, 8d, 9d, 10d, 12d, and 20d. This nail type has a beveled shank and is



rectangular in cross section at the point. The number of common nails found at Fort Massachusetts reflects the fact that common nails were used more than any other form of square, cut nail. They were used for sheathing, siding, and framing. Sizes 6d and 8d were used in light framing and for boxes and wooden crates. Sizes 16d and heavier were used for heavy framing, rafters, studding for partitions, and in stringer holders in wooden bridges. Size 60d was used to secure planks in wooden bridges.¹² Light and heavy framing seems, therefore, to be indicated as part of the construction of Fort Massachusetts structures. Thirty-one common nails were found, and this constitutes the largest number of nails recovered for any one type. (Item H.)

4. Brads were commonly made in sizes 6d, 7d, 8d, and 10d. Those found at Fort Massachusetts were 4d, 5d, 6d, and 8d. Brads have beveled shanks, the taper being more extended than in casing nails, and they are rectangular in cross section at the point. The 6d brad (one found on the surface at the fort) was commonly employed in quarter-round base shoes, which are old-style moldings, fitting at a right angle between the floor and wall of a building.¹³ Again, the low frequency of brads is probably due to the early stage of excavation. (Item G.)
5. Finishing nails were made usually in sizes 6d, 8d, and 10d.

⁹ Bernard L. Fontana and J. Cameron Greenleaf, "Johnny Ward's Ranch: A Study in Historic Archaeology," *The Kiva*, XXVIII (October-December, 1962), 44-69.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 58.

The sizes found at Fort Massachusetts were 5d and 10d. The type is approximately square in cross section at the point, with head extremely small to allow the nail to be counter-sunk into the wood. Finishing nails were used for all finish work inside buildings.¹⁴ If our recovered sample is representative, then the low tally of finishing nails (five were recovered) may indicate little finish work in the room interiors of the fort. (Item F.)

6. Casing nails were commonly made in sizes 6d, 8d, and 10d. Those found at Fort Massachusetts were 4d, 6d, 8d, 9d, and 10d. The 6d and 8d square, cut casing nails have beveled shanks. 10d does not. All are square in cross section at the point. The beveling ends immediately under the head, allowing the nail to be driven flush into flat surfaces without scarring or splitting the wood. Casing nails were used on outside casings of window frames, door heads, and flooring, especially with tongue-in-groove finishing.¹⁵ The casing nail category contained the second largest group (twenty) of the nails coming from Fort Massachusetts. (Item I.)
7. More horseshoe nails should be found in the corral area to the southwest when it is excavated. Only three were found in the stockade area itself. (Item E.)
8. Five wire staples were found either on the surface or close to it, and I would infer that they are artifacts of the present-day ranching industry which now controls the area. (Item B.)
9. Tacks found at Fort Massachusetts include two types, with one example of each. They are flat-headed and tapered to a point. One is $\frac{7}{8}$ inch long, the other $\frac{5}{8}$ inch. (Item D.)
10. Spikes, found infrequently to this point, must have been used in heavy construction. They may have been locally forged.

Screws are represented by only one recovery. It was found relatively deep in the excavation in the 18-24 inch level. This one appears to be machine-made, probably in the 1840 period, when machines were first being used to process screws. It was found below, and associated with, cut nails within the guardroom complex of the 1850's occupation.

Unworked bone, mostly cow bone, was found predominantly in Area G. This seems strange, because this particular area was

ARTIFACT		AREA													SURFACE	TOTAL			
		A	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	M	P	S					
Common Nails	3d							1						1					2
	4d	1																	1
	5d			1	1														2
	6d							2					1						3
	8d			1				2											3
	9d	1		1	1	1					1	1							6
	10d	1						7							1				9
	12d	1		3															4
	20d	1																	1
TOTAL		5		6	2	1		12		1	3			1					31
Casing Nails	4d			1	2		1												4
	6d				1														1
	8d			1															1
	9d			2				4				1							7
	10d			2	1			3											6
	over 10d												1						1
TOTAL				6	4		1	7			1	1							20
Brads	4d				1														1
	5d	1																	1
	6d																	1	1
	8d																	1	1
TOTAL		1			1													2	4
Finishing Nails	5d			3	1														4
	10d											1							1
TOTAL				3	1							1							5
Fencing Nails	6d							1											1
	7d							2											2
	8d											1							1
TOTAL								3				1							4
L-Head Nails				1															1
Horseshoe Nails	#3													1					1
	#6			2															2
TOTAL				2										1					3
Nail Fragments		6	17	21	1	4	19		1	4		1							74
TOTAL NAILS		12	35	29	2	5	41		2	10	1	3		2					142
Wire Staples			5																5
Tacks						2													2
Screws			1																1
Spikes			1				1												2
Miscellaneous Metals		8	1	12	5			2			1	2							36
TOTAL		8	1	19	5		2	3			1	2							36
Unworked Bone		1	37	20	1	183	9	1	1	15		4							272
Worked Bone		15	17	8	1		6				6						34		87
TOTAL		16	54	28	2	183	15	1	1	21		4				34			359
Earthenware			1				1				1					2	9		14
Heavy Earthenware			1																2
Ironstone			8	2			4		1										6
Bottle Glass		1	17	1		18	17		1	113		3	15	28					214
Pan & Flat Glass		5	88	167	2		5			2									9
Pipes			3	2															5
TOTAL		6	118	172	2	18	27		2	116		3	17	54					535
ARTIFACT GRAND TOTAL		42	1	226	234	6	208	86	1	5	148	3	10	51	92				1113

No artifacts were found in areas B, L, and T.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 57-58.

SOUTHWEST CORNER

AREA L

AREA P

BARRACKS

AREA G

AREA E

AREA F

TACK ROOM

AREA I

AREA D

STOREHOUSES

GUARDHOUSE (ROOM)

SLEEPING

QUARTERS

SOUTH GATE AREA RANCH ROAD

NORTH SOUTH PROFILE

AREA M

SOUTHEAST CORNER

PROBABLE BLOCKHOUSE OR SMITH SHOP

NORTHWEST CORNER AREA T

PROBABLE BLOCKHOUSE

EAST WEST PROFILE

SURFACE

SURFACE

AREA H

AREA K

FORT MASSACHUSETTS
OVERALL MAP
SCALE 20 FEET

LEGEND

- 1-WALL LOGS
- 2-ADOBE BRICK FIREPLACE
- 3-STONE HEARTH FIREPLACE
- 4-ADOBE BRICK WALL
- 5-RED-BURNED ADOBE
- 6-VERTICAL POST
- UNEXCAVATED
- 6-12 INCHES
- PROJECTION
- EXCAVATION AREA
- 16-LOGS
- 17-FIREPIT

AREA S

NORTHEAST CORNER

16

1

Clay Pipe



not thought to be a kitchen area nor a garbage dump for the occupants. The largest percentage of worked bone, i.e., cut with a metal knife, came from the northeast corner, Area S, where a kitchen and a garbage dump are believed to have been located.

Miscellaneous metal includes material ranging all the way from scraps of undetermined usage to .58 caliber shells, a possible figure-eight brand fragment, embroidery scissors, buckles, a gate or door latch, twisted metal loops, and a "hole-in-top" can end fragment. In regard to the "hole-in-top" can fragment, this is most probably of 1850 vintage and a luxury on the frontier at this time. It is also interesting to note that it was found in Area H, which may have been the quarters area for officers. The "hole-in-top" refers to a small hole left in the end of the can for gases to escape after cooking. This hole was then soldered.¹⁶ Both hole and solder can be seen, on opposite sides of the can end fragment.

Fourteen sherds of earthenware plus two sherds of "heavy" earthenware were found. The lighter sherds are parts of plates, soup bowls, cups and saucers, while the heavy earthenware sherds may have belonged to large crocks. Sherds that may be ironstone were also found. Most of these pieces were white, though one has part of what was apparently a blue insignia.

Pane and flat glass fragments were the most numerous of artifacts recovered at Fort Massachusetts, 278 pieces being found. Presumably some of this material is associated with the fort occupation, as determined by the deep burial of many of the pieces (even in the 18-30 inch levels). Most of it comes from Area E (the barrack to the west) and Area D (the guardroom and quartermaster area). Both areas must have had glass windows. Some fragments of bottle glass (presumably wine) were obtained from Area D, which is interesting because this is presumably the guardroom.

Five fragments of smoking pipes have been recovered. Three of these fragments definitely belong to the elbow pipe category and the other two are probably the same. The best example shows the facial relief of a turbaned head with a large mustache. The other nearly complete elbow pipe is plain and appears to be a rather dark kaolin in composition. The pipes have been found only in Areas D (guardroom) and E (barrack) to date.



A particular aid to our efforts was the recovery by the State Historical Society of a wooden singletree yoke and a mule bridle—both with U. S. Army buttons attached—and of part of a wooden wheel. Their former location at the fort site is unknown, but they are significant because such well preserved large artifacts are rare, and they help illustrate the kinds of perishable materials commonly used by soldiers in the West at this period.

Continued, controlled excavation of Fort Massachusetts will bring to light new information on military and ranch life in nineteenth-century Colorado, and will give a more clearly documented idea of a western fort of log construction. Not to be forgotten is the possibility of obtaining information about the Ute Indians in the vicinity before, during, and after occupation of the fort by the military. A few recovered Indian artifacts, such as a mano and projectile points from the site, suggest that Indians may have camped temporarily in the shelter of the stockade after its abandonment in 1858.

Although written records have given us much information about the location and use of Fort Massachusetts, there are still large gaps in our knowledge of life at this early western fort. Much about the military life of the frontier can be reconstructed from the artifacts recovered under controlled excavation.

Special thanks go to R. Lacy, Inc., owners of the land, who gave permission to excavate the site of Fort Massachusetts. Of particular assistance were Mr. J. W. Griffith, vice president of R. Lacy, Inc., and Mr. J. M. Gibbs and his son Gary Gibbs, who were unfailingly gracious and helpful during the field work activities at the site. There are many others who in some way or other contributed to making the field work successful, but their names are too numerous to mention here. The archaeological work accomplished at Fort Massachusetts was done under the direction of the State Historical Society of Colorado, with the cooperation of the Trinidad State Junior College Archaeology Field School and Research Program.

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¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 68-69.

Military Reservation at Fort Sedgwick, Col. T.

C. & M. Office, Hdqrs Dept. of the Platte, No. 1870

FORT SEDGWICK

BY DANIEL S. DAY

Nothing remains of the installations of what was once Fort Sedgwick. Located in the northeastern corner of Colorado, Fort Sedgwick quickly outlived its usefulness as a protector of travelers, settlers, and stage lines from depredations by hostile Indians. A latter-day flagpole marks the site of the fort just south of the town of Ovid.

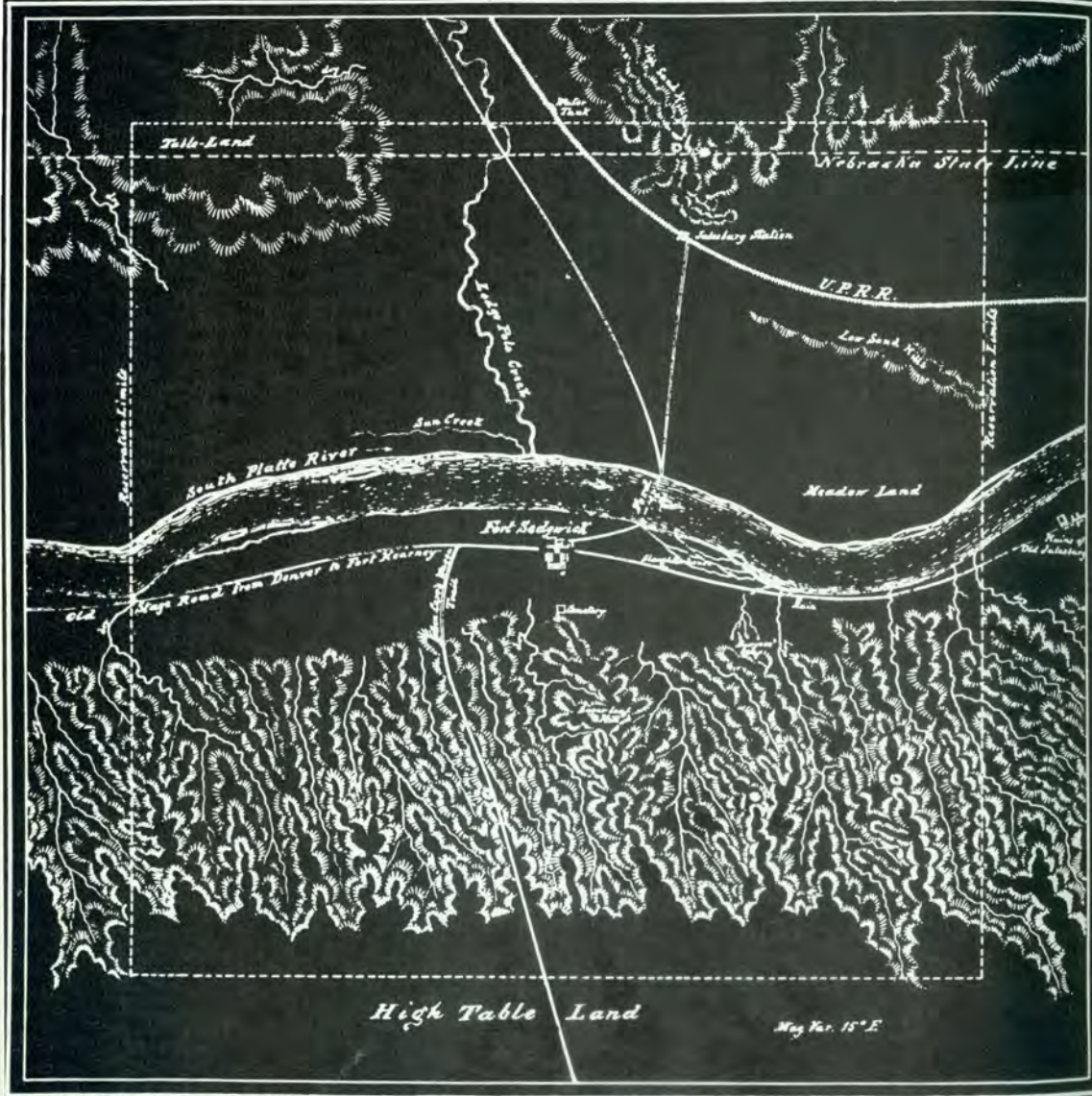
The Indian War of 1864 necessitated the establishment of some sort of military post in the area around the old town of Julesburg, which was a station on the Overland Stage Line and situated near the crossing of the Oregon Trail over the South Platte River. Consequently, on May 19, 1864, Camp Rankin was established about three and a half miles west of the original Julesburg¹ and about eighty-six miles west of the Platte Junction.² It was located on the south side of the South Platte River on the old emigrant route to Colorado, opposite the mouth of Lodgepole Creek. The position of the fort was 41° north latitude and 102° 30' west longitude. It was 3,660 feet above sea level.³

According to records, the first official occupation of the post was on August 6, 1864. Company B, Seventh Iowa Cavalry, with Captain John Wilcox commanding, had marched to the post from Fort Kearny for temporary duty. However, an army report of August 2, 1864, states that Camp Rankin was not established until August 24, 1864. By the end of February, 1865, Company E, Third United States Veteran Volunteer Infantry, was located at

¹ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Report to Accompany Bill S. 471*, 44th Cong., 1st Sess., 1876, Rept. No. 213, p. 1; U.S. Congress, Senate, *Report to Accompany Bill S. 1742*, 46th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1880, Rept. No. 661, p. 2. (Referred to hereafter as *Senate Report No. 213* and *Senate Report No. 661*.) Descriptions of the founding of the post can be found in George Bird Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), p. 183, and in Frank A. Root and William E. Connelley, *The Overland Stage to California* (Topeka: Root and Connelley, 1901), p. 220.

² Memorandum from the War Department, Adjutant General's Office, August 2, 1928, library, State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver (referred to hereafter as Adjutant General's Memorandum). *Senate Report No. 661*, p. 2.

³ U.S. War Department, Surgeon General's Office, *A Report on Barracks and Hospitals with Descriptions of Military Posts*, Circular No. 4 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1870), p. 338 (referred to hereafter as *Report on Barracks and Hospitals*).



High Table Land

Mag. Var. 15° E.

Prepared under direction of Major Alex. J. Perry Chief Quarter Master Served February 1870
Scale Dept. of the Platte, Omaha, Neb.
Miles

Camp Rankin, and by the end of June the regiment had its headquarters there. Colonel C. H. McNally, a captain in the regular army and colonel of the Third United States Veteran Volunteers, was in command at Camp Rankin. He had been with Grant at Shiloh, and had participated in all of the battles before Vicksburg. He had proceeded with Sherman from Atlanta to Charleston. The *Rocky Mountain News* described him in this way:

He inspected every horse in Sherman's command, and now rides the same horse in Julesburg which carried him from Vicksburg to the coast. No officer in the service makes a finer appearance or sits more gracefully on a horse than does Col. McNally. His horse is about sixteen hands high, and carries himself as proudly as if he "ranked" all others in the west. Color—dapple iron-gray.⁴

About this time Company I arrived, followed shortly by Company H, Sixth United States Volunteer Infantry. Parts of these regiments remained until late in the summer of 1866.⁵

By the summer of 1865 Camp Rankin had four or five sod buildings, and a great number of tents, "presenting the appearance of a young city." A daily mail was established between Camp Rankin and Fort Laramie.⁶

The fort was built about a quarter-mile from the river, which was fordable almost all year. From around the first of June until the middle of August the river was quite high, and then the water often came above the bottom of the wagons. The river was half a mile in width at this point, with the channel often shifting. At times there were areas of quicksand, and the river was considered treacherous.⁷

The region was not particularly attractive when Camp Rankin was established. An observer of the site in 1869 said of the place: "What a sandy desert of cyclones and rattlesnakes it was."⁸ General Philip H. Sheridan, in a letter to the Secretary of War in 1876, described the countryside in these words:

It is undulating prairie-land, no wood, plenty of bottom and buffalo grass. There is but little rain, except in the spring. I have no reliable knowledge of the character of the soil, or whether anything has been raised on it or not. It is valuable, at least, for grazing purposes. A garden was commenced in the spring of 1869, but was destroyed by hail.⁹

General William T. Sherman described the area much more

⁴ Adjutant General's Memorandum; *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 7, 1865, p. 1, July 31, 1865, p. 4 (referred to hereafter as *DRMN*).

⁵ Adjutant General's Memorandum.

⁶ *DRMN*, July 7, 1865, p. 1.

⁷ *Report on Barracks and Hospitals*, p. 338; *DRMN*, July 7, 1865, p. 1; Emily Boynton O'Brien, "Army Life at Fort Sedgwick," *The Colorado Magazine*, VI (September, 1929), 175.

⁸ William H. Bisbee, *Through Four American Wars* (Boston: Meeker Publishing Co., 1931), pp. 188-89.

⁹ *Senate Report No. 661*, pp. 1-2.



The fort was named after General John Sedgwick, founder of Fort Wise (Fort Lyon).

succinctly: "No wood, soil thin and poor, not fit for cultivation—only for grazing."¹⁰ A traveler in the region during the summer of 1865 stated that the roads were almost impassable, due to heavy summer rains, but that the grass on the Platte was "never better than it is the present season."¹¹

On September 27, 1865, the name of the post was changed from Camp Rankin to Fort Sedgwick in honor of Major General John Sedgwick, founder of Fort Wise, who had been killed at the Battle of Spottsylvania Court House on May 9, 1864.¹² By this time it had begun to assume the appearance of a fort, for fortifications and works had been erected during the previous summer, as well as a frame building (22' x 100') for use of quartermaster stores. Other buildings, including a hospital, were to be completed as fast as material and labor could be obtained. Government trains were arriving with hospital supplies.¹³ Arrangements were made for the delivery of thousands of bushels of corn at about twelve cents a pound. Firewood was expensive, costing thirty to forty-five dollars a cord.¹⁴

The Department of Kansas controlled military posts in the state of Kansas and the territories of Nebraska and Colorado, as well as the Indian Territories and Fort Smith in Arkansas, beginning in January, 1864. Major General Samuel R. Curtis was the department commander, with his headquarters at Fort

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹ *DRMN*, August 14, 1865, p. 1.

¹² *Senate Report No. 661*, p. 2; Adjutant General's Memorandum; Grinnell, *Fighting Cheyennes*, p. 176; *DRMN*, November 23, 1865, p. 4.

¹³ *DRMN*, July 24, 1865, p. 1.

¹⁴ *DRMN*, July 31, 1865, p. 4; *Senate Report No. 661*, p. 2.

Leavenworth. Supplies for all the troops in the department were sent out from this fort.¹⁵ In August, 1866, Fort Sedgwick came under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Platte, with headquarters in Omaha, Nebraska.¹⁶

Fort Sedgwick was enlarged from year to year as it became more important in controlling the Indians in the area. Sometimes there were as many as seven companies of infantry and a company of cavalry. At one time there were nearly thirty buildings on the post. These were scattered over a large area, and the Overland Stage route passed among them.¹⁷ Finally the President of the United States declared the sixty-four square mile area surrounding Fort Sedgwick a military reservation. This reservation extended northward into Nebraska.¹⁸ It later was sectioned, and contained parts of two townships.¹⁹

Life in Fort Sedgwick during the Indian wars was hard but not unbearable. The mean temperature for the year 1869 was 50° F., with the extremes of 99° F. and 16° F. The rainfall in that year was 3.9 inches, and the snowfall was 10.82 inches. The atmosphere was very dry, and the prevailing winds came from the west.²⁰

The ground around the fort rose gradually from the river to the bluffs, about a mile behind the fort. Then there was a series of hills for about ten miles. Beyond the hills was a flat tableland which stretched as far as the eye could reach. The immediate area around the fort was nearly level, but with just enough slope to insure good drainage. The soil was predominantly sand and gravel, and slightly impregnated with alkali.

It was not easy to grow vegetables without irrigation and hard work, and insects and violent hailstorms caused additional problems. It was difficult to ship fresh vegetables to Fort Sedgwick because of the great distance from garden areas. The government attempted to solve this problem by sending what were known as "desiccated vegetables." These were turnips, beets, cabbages, onions, and green peppers which had been steamed and dried. The dried leaves were pressed together into cakes twelve inches square and one inch thick. They came sealed

¹⁵ U.S. Congress, Senate, *Message of the President . . . in Relation to the Number and Designation of Military Departments*, 40th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1868, Ex. Doc. No. 49, pp. 5-6; U.S. Congress, House, *Annual Report of the Secretary of War*, 38th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1865, Ex. Doc. No. 83, p. 143; *DRMN*, January 29, 1864, p. 2.

¹⁶ *Message of the President . . . in Relation to the Number and Designation of Military Departments*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷ C. M. Rolfsen interview, C.W.A. Pamphlet 351-31, p. 5, library, State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver.

¹⁸ Adjutant General's Memorandum.

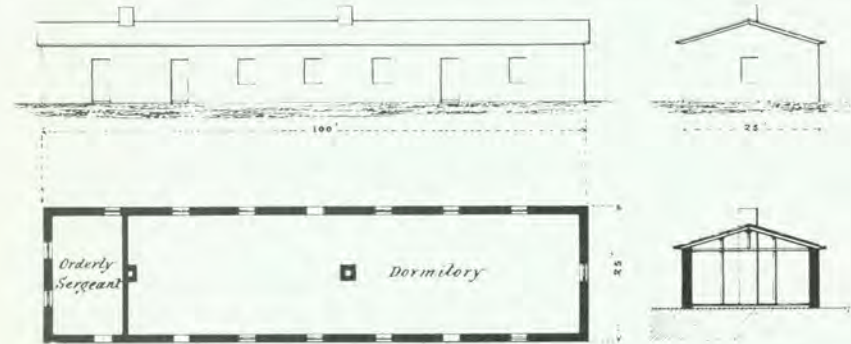
¹⁹ *Senate Report No. 213*, p. 1.

²⁰ *Report on Barracks and Hospitals*, p. 339.

in cans a foot square. They were used mostly for soups, and soldiers sent out to scout could put pieces of the "desiccated vegetables" in their saddle bags.²¹

Fort Sedgwick was supplied with good water from several wells, which were sunk to an average depth of twenty feet. The wells undoubtedly were served by percolation from the river. Water was also obtained directly from the river, near which the "foul" was located, about five hundred yards below the fort. Offal and refuse material were transported to a place some distance from the post and scattered on the prairie.²²

The barracks were adobe buildings, one hundred feet by twenty-five feet, and ten feet high. Each building was intended for one company, giving them about three hundred cubic feet



of space for each man. The walls of the buildings were two feet thick. One end of each building was partitioned off (a room 14' x 21') for the orderly sergeant. Heat came from stoves, and there were no special means of ventilation. There were no washrooms in the barracks. Behind each of the buildings was another adobe building, containing a large kitchen and mess hall, all



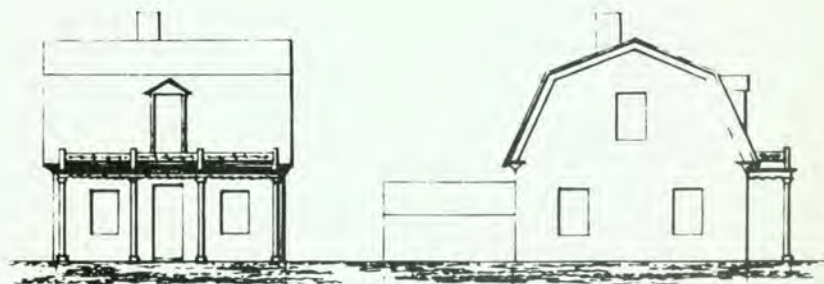
completely furnished. Married soldiers' quarters were made of board and canvas, and were considered "hardly suitable for occupancy."²³

²¹ *Ibid.*; O'Brien, *The Colorado Magazine*, VI (1929), 176.

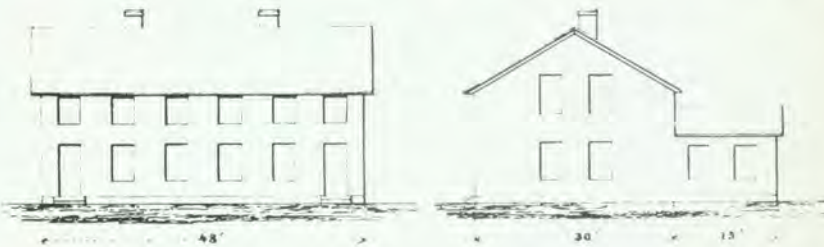
²² *Report on Barracks and Hospitals*, p. 339-40.

²³ *Ibid.*, 339.

The officers were provided with four small houses, each one and a half stories high. Two of the houses were made of plastered adobe; the other two were of portable frame with exterior battens. Each of the adobe houses for the officers contained three rooms (one 15' x 16', a second 11' x 16', and the third 11' x 14'). All ceilings were eight feet high. The parlor, the dining-room, and the kitchen were on the first floor. On the



upper floor were the two sleeping rooms (one 22' x 15', and the other 11' x 15'). These upper floor rooms had seven-foot ceilings. Each frame building for the officers contained three rooms on the first floor (two 10' x 11', and one 14' x 15'). On the upper floor there was one room (22' x 28'). Each of the four houses was intended to accommodate one set of company officers. The

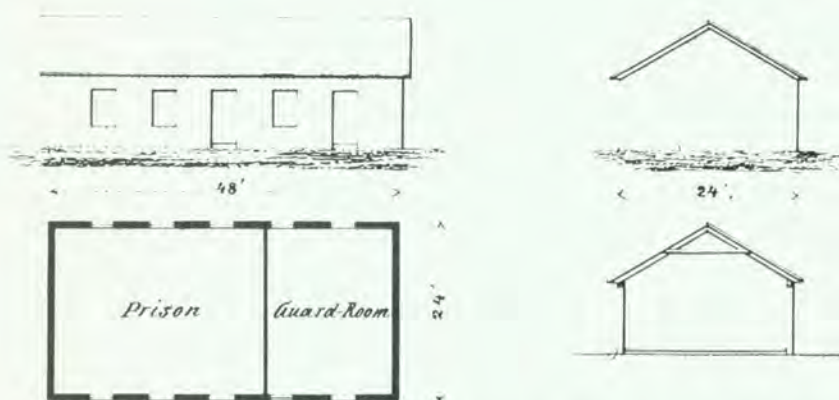


houses were heated by stoves and artificially lighted by lamps. There were no water closets or bath rooms. Water was supplied to these houses from the river and from a well in the rear of the quarters. Temporary sheds for kitchens were connected to the frame quarters.²⁴

To the north of the parade ground was the frame guard house (48' across the front, 24' deep, and 10' high). It was heated and lighted in the same way as the other buildings in the fort.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

There were no individual cells in the guard house; but the building was divided into two rooms, one of which (20' x 24') served as a guard room, while the other (28' x 24') was shared by all the prisoners. Both rooms used the same chimney for their stoves, and the prisoners' room was provided with a roof ventilator. When inspected by the Surgeon General's representatives in 1869, the guard house was considered to be in a



bad state of repair. The roof leaked. The walls were full of holes. During a period of three months, eighty-two prisoners were confined in the guard house, but with the maximum number at any one time being sixteen, and the average number seven.²⁵

The hospital was nicely situated, being off from the other buildings, two hundred yards behind the parade ground, toward the bluffs. It was an L-shaped, adobe building (28' across the front, 100' deep, and with a wing 28' across the front, and 32' deep). Within the building were a ward (25' x 25'), a dispensary (10' x 13'), a steward's room (13' x 15'), a kitchen (25' x 20'), a dining room (25' x 16'), a store room (14' x 25'), and the surgeons' quarters (24' x 25'). All of the ceilings were over ten feet high. The Surgeon General considered the hospital to be of sufficient size, but the construction was faulty. "Improvement in this particular has been sought," he said, "but not yet accomplished."

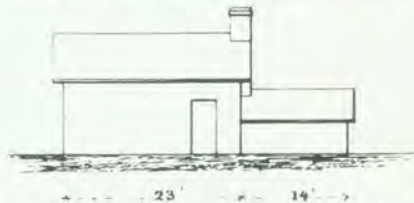
The rooms were heated by stoves and ventilated by doors, windows, and roof ventilators. The ward contained ten beds, giving more than six hundred cubic feet of space per man if all the beds were occupied. However, there was no bath room, no

²⁵ *Ibid.*



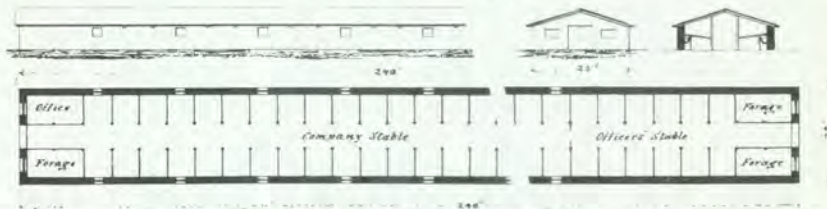
wash room, and no water closet. The wing of the building had been originally intended as a ward, but was occupied by the surgeons. Most of the occupants, when the Surgeon General's inspection was made, were patients from other posts, or workers from the Union Pacific Railroad.²⁶

There was also a bakery (18' x 23', and 12' high) at Fort Sedgwick, with adobe walls three feet thick. The oven where



the bread was baked was ten by twelve. The supply of bread to the fort was considered constant and sufficient.²⁷

There were two stables. One was located three hundred yards east of the fort, and was a wooden building, rectangular in shape (25' x 240', and 11' high to the ridge). The other stable was



between the fort and the river. It was built of logs with a dirt roof, and was about two hundred yards from the company quar-

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

ters. It was considered by the inspectors to be "in a very dilapidated condition."²⁸

In the adjutant's office was a library under the supervision of a soldier appointed to act as librarian. In 1869 the collection consisted of nearly three hundred volumes of biographies, novels, and miscellaneous works.²⁹

Mail was received daily. In 1869 it took two days to transmit a letter to department headquarters and six days to send a letter to Washington, D. C.³⁰ Mail usually arrived from Fort Laramie tri-weekly, once a week on horseback, and twice a week by ambulance. Either way, it took about thirty-six hours running time for mail to arrive from Fort Laramie.³¹ The *Rocky Mountain News* was received regularly and in 1867 was "the only paper which there is not some difficulty in obtaining by mail."³² In 1867 there was a telegraph office at Fort Sedgwick, as well as at new Julesburg.³³

There seems to have been little illness at the fort; the Surgeon General reported "a small amount of malaria present, but not enough to produce intermittent or other fevers." Most of the cases in the hospital involving soldiers were surgical. Many had rheumatism, although most of these cases were sent from the sub-post of Sidney, which was situated in the valley of Lodge Pole Creek. Diseases of the lungs were almost unknown. There was once an outbreak of scurvy, but sauce was made from the hunch of the prickly pear, and all were entirely cured.³⁴

There were desertions from Fort Sedgwick, mostly from the "galvanized" troops—men recruited from among rebel prisoners. The *Kearney Herald* stated in the summer of 1866 that seventy men had left their units at Fort Sedgwick and Fort Mitchell within a few days.³⁵

In 1867 a "Lyceum and Debating Club" was established at the fort. Questions for debate were chosen from familiar subjects, "such as are calculated to give a free and easy manner to the speaker, and impart to him a knowledge of the importance of improving his mind." A standing committee prepared an "entertainment" for the Wednesday night meetings. This consisted of original essays, declamations, readings, and songs. The society was initiated for the benefit of the men stationed at

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 339-40.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 340.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *DRMN*, July 12, 1865, p. 2.

³² *DRMN*, January 21, 1867, p. 3.

³³ *DRMN*, July 17, 1867, p. 4.

³⁴ *Report on Barracks and Hospitals*, p. 340.

³⁵ *DRMN*, August 6, 1866, p. 4.

Fort Sedgwick, but others might join. The club was intended, according to the corresponding secretary,

to promote an interest among its members for study, to divert their minds from evil habits and associations (such as soldiers too frequently resort to for enjoyment), to kill the monotony of a soldier's life on the plains, and as a pleasing entertainment to form a society between whom congeniality of interest and sociability shall be the leading features. It is intended to impart to all concerned a knowledge of Parliamentary etiquette and the first principles of the speaker and the man of business. By encouragement . . . we hope to conduct a lyceum that would do honor to any society. It is lamentable to witness the waste of talent among our rising generation, from this fact we conceived the idea of organizing this order, and we wish to embrace every resource, calculated to advance our interests and instill into the minds of the members the necessity of industry, for success in every art, whatever the natural talent may be, is the reward of industry and pains. How true; when the historian remarks, if Demosthenes and Cicero had been content, like others, to go on as they began, and had not made the persevering efforts for improvement they did, what would their country have benefitted by their genius, or the world have known of their fame; they would have been lost in the undistinguished crowd that sunk to oblivion around them. Of how many more will the same remark prove true. We have sixty-five members now, and new acquisitions every meeting. We earnestly solicit the attendance of all who are disposed to recognize literary acquirements necessary to form the useful member in society.³⁶

The fort also served as a haven for travelers. One anonymous person wrote the following to the *Rocky Mountain News* in 1866:

We were compelled by sickness in our family on our recent trip from the east, to lie over at [Fort Sedgwick], and take pleasure in acknowledging the many courtesies received at the hands of the gentlemanly officers and employees thereat: To Major Chambers, officer in command, Dr. H. Latham, Surgeon, Capt. Alexander, C. S., and Capt. E. L. Berthoud and lady, we are under special obligations for hospitalities tendered us, and assure them that our short stay with them will long be remembered as a pleasant event in our dreary trip across the plains.³⁷

Unquestionably the scarcest item at Fort Sedgwick was female companionship. One of the soldiers wrote to the *Rocky Mountain News*: "Females are a scarce article at Julesburg. A few gross could be readily disposed of, provided they were willing to go into the ranks." It was declared in the newspaper that "two or three good wash women could do a clean business in the *soft-soaping line*."³⁸ Another letter to the editor stated that there were, in July, 1865, only three families at the post,

³⁶ *DRMN*, March 20, 1867, p. 3.

³⁷ *DRMN*, May 23, 1866, p. 4.

³⁸ *DRMN*, July 7, 1865, p. 1; July 12, 1865, p. 2.



Captain O'Brien once shot a buffalo on Fort Sedgwick's skating pond.

and "consequently females are scarcer than gold coin, and would command a higher premium, if offered in market." The same writer noted a feminine arrival in this way:

The wife of a California soldier arrived here a few days since from Salt Lake on her way to join her husband at Fort Laramie. She is fourteen years of age and her husband is forty. She is a Mormon of the *female persuasion*.³⁹

By the time Emily O'Brien arrived at Fort Sedgwick to join her husband, Captain Nicholas J. O'Brien, in 1867, there were fifteen ladies at the fort, wives of men stationed there. These ladies would assemble on their horses to watch dress parade in the afternoon. Each morning they would ride out for a canter across the prairie, but they did not go far from the fort because of the Indian threat. Once they witnessed a buffalo stamped.

In the winter a large skating pond was made from water diverted from the South Platte River, and sometimes the officers would join the ladies in a skating party. One morning a huge buffalo visited the pond, looking for drinking water. Captain O'Brien shot the animal, and his enormous head was mounted on a pole in the fort, where it startled more than one horse. The buffalo robe was reportedly sent to Henry M. Stanley, at that time a reporter for the *New York Herald*.⁴⁰

³⁹ *DRMN*, July 24, 1865, p. 1.

⁴⁰ O'Brien, *The Colorado Magazine*, VI (1929), 175-77.

Once John Dillon, the actor, was travelling eastward from Denver through Julesburg on the stagecoach. The telegraph operator there notified the operator at the fort, and some of the officers rode out to greet him, persuading him to stay over and give a performance in the hospital. There were no chairs, so the front row sat on the floor, and the next rows on boxes. With a fifty-cent admission charge, the place was packed, and after the performance the men played poker until breakfast.⁴¹

Camp Rankin had been in existence only a few months when the garrison got its first taste of blood. On January 7, 1865, Indians attacked Julesburg, smashing windows and looting everything, including the express coach. Most of the inhabitants escaped to Camp Rankin, but five bodies were left in the hastily abandoned town. According to Surgeon J. F. Hamilton, who took care of the wounded after the battle, there had been no indication whatsoever that the Indians would attack.⁴²

On the morning of the battle, a Mr. Cross started out from the American Ranch with a wagon load of passengers. When he was five miles from the American Ranch and the same distance from Valley Station, upstream from Julesburg, Indians suddenly rode by from behind and fired arrows at the wagon, one of which grazed Cross's face. One Indian rode by the horses, striking them over the head in an attempt to force the team off the road. Passengers in the wagon estimated that between forty and seventy Indians took part in the attack.⁴³

The Indians were reportedly led by a white man who rode beside the wagon for a considerable distance, and then suddenly fired at Cross, shattering his arm at the elbow. The wagon started weaving from side to side until the Indians finally shot the wheel horses. One person had already been killed, and the rest had saved their lives by lying down in the wagon. After the horses were shot, the party ran for the river bank, using their guns as clubs, since none of them were loaded. They made their way to Valley Station, where Cross's arm was amputated.⁴⁴

A wagon containing a couple of discharged soldiers was likewise attacked, but nothing was heard of them again. The soldiers had some scalps and Indian relics from Sand Creek, and they had talked about them a great deal every time they

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁴² U.S. Congress, Senate, *Testimony as to the Claim of Ben Holladay for Losses and Damages*, 46th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1880, Misc. Doc. No. 19, p. 29; *DRMN*, January 9, 1865, p. 2; January 16, 1865, p. 2.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

made a stop. It was believed that the Indians had captured them alive, and were holding them for torture.⁴⁵

The soldiers from Camp Rankin—the entire force consisted of one company of the Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry—eventually drove the Indians out of Julesburg toward the bluffs, but they were suddenly surrounded and forced to fall back. The Indians proceeded to loot the town and were finally driven off only after the arrival of artillery from Camp Rankin.⁴⁶

Bodies of the five citizens and thirteen soldiers were brought to camp after dark, and they presented “every form of ghastly mutilation.” Only forty soldiers participated in the action, while the Cheyennes and Comanches were numbered around fifteen hundred. The telegraph instruments at Julesburg had been saved, and the office was reopened under guard.⁴⁷



The Julesburg telegraph office, once destroyed in an Indian raid.

Following the battle of Julesburg, the *Central City Register* said of the troops from Camp Rankin:

These troops are an Ohio [sic] regiment and have been constantly represented as a band of rebels and thieves, who have constantly annoyed the immigration without affording the least protection. *If we mistake not they have shown themselves cowards as well.*⁴⁸

The editor of the *Rocky Mountain News* felt compelled to respond with these words: “We fear that the editor of the *Register*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*; see also the Post Return of Camp Rankin, January 31, 1865, photocopy in the library of the State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver.

⁴⁷ *DRMN*, January 10, 1865, p. 2; April 15, 1865, p. 2; see also the Post Return of Camp Rankin, January 31, 1865, photocopy in the library of the State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver, which lists fifteen men killed, including one recruit.

⁴⁸ Quoted in *DRMN*, January 11, 1865, p. 2.

is prone to judge others by himself." He called upon the people to come to the defense of the soldiers who had been fighting fifteen hundred Indians, particularly since more than a third of the soldiers had been killed. "Instead of abuse, the remnants of that devoted little band deserve the united thanks of our people and of the Legislative Assembly of Colorado."⁴⁹

On February 2, 1865, the station at Julesburg was again attacked by Indians—Cheyennes, Sioux, and Arapahoes, according to an affidavit by Lieutenant J. S. Brewer of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry, who was on duty at Camp Rankin when the Indian attack occurred. He estimated that there were between fifteen hundred and twenty-five hundred warriors. Forces from the post skirmished with them, but were unable to drive them off. The Indians forced the employees of the Overland Stage Line to take refuge at the fort and got possession of the station. They seized stores of flour, corn, and other items and then set fire to the buildings of the station. Four days later these same Indians drove off nine head of cattle belonging to the post, as well as about five hundred head of cattle belonging to various persons.⁵⁰

The Indian troubles continued, and had various repercussions. Eighty bags of mail destined for Kansas and Julesburg had to be returned to New York because the Indians held areas extending about five hundred miles along the Overland mail route. The mail had to be sent via the Isthmus route.⁵¹ Coaches traveling along the Platte River were driven back.⁵² Ranches were burned and cattle stolen.⁵³ Telegraph lines were destroyed in several places.⁵⁴

At this time the question of how to treat the Indian problem was being argued on all sides. In a report to the House of Representatives, Commissioner of Indian Affairs D. N. Cooley asserted:

Certain facts are apparent from the documents accompanying the reports of last year, and others have been detailed in a report to Congress, and these show that during the spring and summer of last year persistent efforts were made by a part of these Indians to make peace, which efforts were repelled by some of the military officers; and that when several hundred of them had come to a place designated by Governor Evans as a rendezvous for those who would separate themselves from the hostile parties, these Indians were set upon and butchered in cold blood by troops in the service of the United States.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ DRMN, January 11, 1865, p. 2.

⁵⁰ *Testimony as to the Claim of Ben Holladay*, pp. 28-29.

⁵¹ DRMN, January 27, 1865, p. 2.

⁵² DRMN, January 30, 1865, p. 2.

⁵³ DRMN, January 31, 1865, p. 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ U.S. Congress, House, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for 1865*, 39th Cong., 1st Sess., 1866, p. 192.

Another Indian Commissioner, W. P. Dole, had felt that "the valley of the Platte River, and all the country south, must be entirely abandoned" by Indians, and officials in Colorado were trying to reach just such an agreement.⁵⁶

One of the people who had been in Julesburg when it was attacked on January 7, 1865, had this to say about the Indian question: "We have no love for 'Lo, the poor Indian,' unless he is low in the ground. We saw him in that fight."⁵⁷

Early in March, 1865, Camp Rankin was heavily reinforced, and by midsummer more than six hundred men were stationed there, with a full colonel in command of the post.⁵⁸ Although much of the time was spent in building quarters and in forays against the Indians, the men managed to find other diversions.

On August 22, 1865, men from the Twenty-first New York Volunteer Cavalry looted the sutler's store. Lieutenant W. T. Smith of the Sixteenth Kansas Volunteer Cavalry, who was officer of the day, was ordered by the post commander to disperse the rioters. He found three officers and a number of enlisted men in the store, all of whom refused to budge. When he called for reinforcements, the New Yorkers did likewise. Bayonets failed to dampen their enthusiasm. Finally a New York lieutenant told the O.D.'s men to disperse, saying: "We won't hurt you, but I'll shoot that G-- d---d Officer of the Day." According to Lieutenant Smith, the other officer then "drew his revolver to carry his threat into execution," but "one of my men struck him on the head and knocked him down." A New York sergeant then fired at the lieutenant, "cutting a small hole" in his glove. "I then ordered my men to fire," said Lieutenant Smith, "which they obeyed promptly. The result was two of them (New York men) were wounded, one on the head, one cut by a blow from [a] gun when knocked down, and one shot through the thigh and hand." A further result, in the words of the post return, was that ten officers were "detained at Fort Leavenworth" for investigation of mutiny.⁵⁹

Sketch of Fort Sedgwick in 1870, looking east. The riot of August, 1865, took place at the sutler's store, farthest building on the left of the road.



Troops and supplies continued to arrive at the fort daily in the summer of 1865. Although many of the men went on to Laramie and beyond, sufficient numbers of troops were left to guard the mail route along the Platte. Civilian teamsters were hired at the camp to drive the supply trains. According to a newspaper announcement, wages were fifty dollars per month and rations, but "drunken men need not apply."⁶⁰

Late in October, 1865, Cheyennes and Arapahoes crossed the Platte, leaving a trail of death and destruction in their wake. They soon controlled most of the Platte route, and stage lines threatened to stop their regular runs unless the Indians were cleared from the area. Emigrant trains had to be well armed and had to maintain a constant guard against surprise attacks. Some newspapers believed that an indecisive military policy was responsible for the renewal of the Indian raids, and called for immediate changes.⁶¹

A correspondent for the *Chicago Republican* asserted in the summer of 1866 that "the present system of establishing small military posts throughout the Indian country, and along the lines of travel, is the best policy that has yet been adopted for the successful management of these Indians." There was, however, some question as to the proper method of garrisoning the posts.⁶²

After a raid on a cattle herd within a few miles of Fort Sedgwick, the *Kearney Herald* remarked:

It is a little singular that the Government can find nothing better than infantry troops to guard the long line of travel through the Indian country.

Mr. Veasy's cattle were taken eighteen miles east of Fort Sedgwick, so the dispatch says. This fort is garrisoned with infantry, a splendid outfit to pursue and recapture the spoils taken by the marauding savages. It is a wonderful weakness that our great Generals have passed by and inspected the post in question and yet did not see the necessity of, and provide the necessary troops for, such an emergency.⁶³

There were cavalry at Fort Sedgwick, but in insufficient numbers. It was reported in October, 1866, that Companies K and M of the Second Cavalry were sent out against the Indians, but their commander was Captain James P. W. Neill, of the

Eighteenth Infantry.⁶⁴ But cavalry or infantry, the men were expected to pursue the hostile tribesmen, and lack of transport was no excuse for failure to go into the field.

Combat conditions were graphically described in a letter from a Fort Sedgwick trooper to the *Rocky Mountain News*. The man, who signed his message "L", had this to say:

It does not seem to make any difference how low the mercury is, how forcibly the wind comes tearing down from the great ice and snow fields of the north, how utterly desolate the country, how little fuel or forage, or how much snow, the troops have to march.⁶⁵

The letter could have referred to the cavalry unit ordered out to pursue Indians who had attacked herders of the various ox trains which were in winter quarters at Fort Sedgwick. Thirty-five soldiers were sent into a January snowstorm in pursuit of a band of Indians estimated at two hundred and fifty. In a couple of days they were back at the fort with most of the stolen oxen, but the bitter cold had taken its toll. One soldier had frozen to death; twenty-one men were severely frostbitten; a few suffered amputations.⁶⁶

Still, the effectiveness of the troops continued to improve. In some cases artillery was brought into use, and the cavalrymen were usually well mounted and armed with the new Spencer rifles. A member of the garrison wrote to the *News* in February, 1867:

There has been no parley with these friendly thieves and murderers for the past four months. No Indian depredations have been committed in the vicinity of this Post, without swift punishment, and Col. Dodge who is an old Indian fighter, is determined that [hostile bands] shall not escape.⁶⁷

The end for the Plains Tribes was not long in coming. When Forsyth's command was besieged at Beecher Island in September, 1868, Major James S. Brisbin hastened to his aid with two companies of the Second Cavalry from Fort Sedgwick.⁶⁸ A decisive blow against the hostile Plains Indians in Colorado was struck at the Battle of Summit Springs, July 11, 1869.⁶⁹ Within a few months it became apparent that the Indian threat in the Fort Sedgwick area was at an end.

In the report of Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs H. R.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 377.

⁶¹ *DRMN*, April 15, 1865, p. 2.

⁶² Post Returns of Camp Rankin, March 31, 1865, and July 31, 1865, photocopy in the library of the State Historical Society of Colorado, Denver.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, August 31, 1865; this return also contains a verbatim copy of Lt. Smith's report of the incident.

⁶⁴ *DRMN*, June 21, 1865, p. 2; June 26, 1865, p. 2; July 12, 1865, p. 2.

⁶⁵ *DRMN*, October 30, 1865, p. 1; November 27, 1865, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Quoted in *DRMN*, June 2, 1866, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Quoted in *DRMN*, October 23, 1866, pp. 1, 4.

⁶⁴ *DRMN*, October 25, 1866, p. 1.

⁶⁵ *DRMN*, January 21, 1867, p. 3.

⁶⁶ *DRMN*, January 26, 1867, p. 1.

⁶⁷ *DRMN*, February 23, 1867, p. 1.

⁶⁸ Brisbin's report, edited by Harry H. Anderson, appeared in "Stand at the Arikaree," *The Colorado Magazine*, XLI (Fall, 1964), 336-42.

⁶⁹ Jack D. Filipiak, "The Battle of Summit Springs," *The Colorado Magazine*, XLI (Fall, 1964), 343-54.

Clum to Secretary of Interior Columbus Delano, in 1871, these welcome words appeared:

Of the tribes of late years hostile and difficult to manage, but now quiet and disposed to be friendly, are the Arapahoes and Cheyennes. No serious difficulties have arisen with them during the past year, and their conduct has been quite commendable.⁷⁰

An order was issued directing the abandonment of Fort Sedgwick on May 16, 1871, and it was abandoned on May 31, "as being of no further use in a military point of view." At the time, General Sheridan reported that there were no improvements of any value to the government, so far as he knew.⁷¹ On July 22, 1884, the military reservation was turned over to the Interior Department under provisions of an act of Congress approved July 5, 1884. This act provided for the disposal of reservations no longer needed for military purposes.⁷² Preparation for this transfer of the reservation from the War Department to the Department of the Interior had been underway for some years. A bill to reopen the lands of Fort Sedgwick military reservation to settlement as public lands had been introduced into Congress over eight years before. The bill was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs in the Senate, with Senator Francis Cockrell as chairman of that committee. He asked for a report on the reservation from the Secretary of War, Alphonso Taft, and the latter responded with a letter:

In compliance with the request in your note of the 8th instant, I have the honor to transmit copy of a letter of March 17 from Lieutenant-General Sheridan, and of an endorsement of the General of the Army, relative to Fort Sedgwick military reservation, which furnished all the information on the subject afforded by the files of the Department; and I would respectfully suggest that the bill (S. 471) herewith returned, be amended to authorize the Secretary of War to transfer said reservation to the custody and control of the Secretary of the Interior for disposition according to the existing laws of the United States relating to public lands, being no longer needed for military purposes.⁷³

After the transfer of the reservation to the Department of the Interior, the land was opened for settlement.

In 1889 the County of Sedgwick was established, being made up of part of Logan County, and receiving its name from the former fort. Julesburg became the county seat.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ U.S., Department of the Interior, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1871* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), p. 3.

⁷¹ *Senate Report No. 661*, p. 2; *Senate Report No. 213*, p. 1; Adjutant General's Memorandum.

⁷² Adjutant General's Memorandum; *DRMN*, August 2, 1884, p. 3.

⁷³ *Senate Report No. 213*, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Colorado, General Assembly, House, *An Act to Establish the County of Sedgwick, and the County Seat Thereof*, 7th Sess., 1889, H. B. 148, pp. 340-43.

Fort Sedgwick was short-lived, but it played an important role in the westward movement. The fort was typical of posts established along the lines of travel and communication. Its greatest concern was with hostile Indians, who resented the penetration of white men into areas which they considered exclusively their own. Fort Sedgwick was not one of the great military posts of the West, but it had a purpose; and when its purpose was fulfilled, the fort passed out of existence.

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First Ladies of Colorado

Rebecca Hill Eaton

BY HELEN CANNON

In the summer of 1864, a caravan of ox- and mule-drawn wagons pitched camp on the bank of the Cache la Poudre about two miles south of the present town of Windsor, Colorado. For two members of the party, Benjamin Harrison Eaton and Rebecca Jane Hill Eaton, this was the terminus of their wedding trip which had begun in the spring from Louisa County, Iowa. The young man was not a gold-seeker but a farmer, fired with a dream of harnessing the waters of this euphoniouly named stream to convert the cactus-infested plains of the Territory of Colorado into lush farming lands. And the young woman, as is the way of brides, shared his dream and had faith that it could be done. And it was, for Benjamin Harrison Eaton lived to own between twenty-five and twenty-six thousand acres of such land and be called the "Burbank of Colorado." Being governor was probably not part of the dream—that was an extra that came along in 1885-1887, which made his "Becky Jane" a First Lady of Colorado.

Rebecca Jane Hill was probably born in Jefferson County, Indiana, near Madison, in November, 1838.¹ Her father, Abraham Hill, was born in Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky, on May 4, 1804.² When he was about ten years old, the family moved to Jefferson County, Indiana, near Madison, where his father built and operated a flour mill for many years. Abraham married Nancy Lame on June 5, 1828,³ in Jefferson County, Indiana, and

¹ The certificate of death of Rebecca Jane Hill Eaton (No. 304, Bureau of Vital Statistics, San Diego, California), gives November as the month of her birth, and seventy-five years as her age at the time of death on April 16, 1914.

² Obituary of Abraham Hill, *The Tribune* (Greeley), May 23, 1895, p. 8; *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Louisa County* (Chicago: A. T. Andreas, 1874), p. 16; records of Eaton Cemetery, Eaton, Colorado.

³ The marriage license of Abraham Hill shows that he married Nancy Lame on June 5, 1828 (Marriage Record Book, 1811-1832, Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana, p. 86). His obituary says he married Nancy Lane in Indiana in 1838. The date 1838 is an error; possibly the name is also.

they, with their six children,⁴ migrated from Indiana to Louisa County, Iowa, in 1840,⁵ shortly after that county was opened to settlers and government land offered for sale. He was listed in the 1850 Iowa census as a miller⁶ and in the 1860 Iowa census as a farmer, and the land records of Louisa County show that he bought and sold land extensively in that county from 1841 until 1881. The family home was located near Long Creek about six miles northwest of the present town of Wapello. Nancy, Abraham's wife and Rebecca Jane's mother, was born in 1812, and died at the age of thirty-four on July 20, 1846.⁷ She is buried in old Long Creek Cemetery near the family homestead along with their son Jesse,⁸ and their daughter, Margaret.⁹

On September 2, 1847, in Louisa County, Iowa,¹⁰ the forty-three-year-old Abraham Hill married Mrs. Cynthia J. Gregory, an eighteen-year-old widow with a year-old son.¹¹ They had ten children,¹² three of whom died in infancy or early childhood¹³ and are buried in Long Creek Cemetery with Cynthia's son, Bryan Gregory,¹⁴ who died at the age of six. In 1881, Abraham and Cynthia moved to Eaton, Colorado, as did most of the Hill children. They died there—Abraham on May 15, 1895, and Cynthia on June 4, 1896.¹⁵ Their graves, surrounded by those of their children and grandchildren, in the Eaton Cemetery are

⁴ *The Tribune* (Greeley), May 23, 1895, p. 8. The Jefferson County, Indiana, census for 1840 shows that Abraham Hill had six children, two males and four females.

⁵ *The Tribune* (Greeley), May 23, 1895, p. 8; *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Louisa County*, p. 16.

⁶ Hill's Mill was located on Long Creek near the Dan McKay farm, Cairo, Marshall County, Iowa. Arthur Springer, *History of Louisa County, Iowa* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1912), I, 303.

⁷ A rubbing of the inscription on the gravestone of Nancy Hill in the Long Creek, Iowa, cemetery reads: "Nancy, wife of Abraham Hill, died July 20, 1846, aged 34 yrs., 22 ds." Rubbing made by Mrs. Marjorie Pettis, Wapello, Iowa.

⁸ A rubbing of the inscription on the gravestone of Jesse Hill in the Long Creek, Iowa, cemetery reads: "Jesse, son of A. & N. Hill, died Mar. 8, 1853, aged 16 yrs, 11 mo, 15 d's." Rubbing made by Mrs. Marjorie Pettis. The 1850 census for Wapello Township, Louisa County, Iowa, gives Jesse's age as 14 years.

⁹ A rubbing of the inscription on the gravestone of Margaret Hill in the Long Creek, Iowa, cemetery reads: "Margaret, daughter of A. & N. Hill, died May 1, 1852, aged 12, 8 m's, 1 d's." Rubbing made by Mrs. Marjorie Pettis. The 1850 census of Wapello Township, Louisa County, Iowa, gives Margaret's age as 10 years.

¹⁰ Marriage Records, Book A (1842-1855). Wapello, Louisa County, Iowa, p. 80.

¹¹ According to her obituary and the records of Eaton Cemetery, Eaton, Colorado, Cynthia J. Gregory Hill was born April 25, 1829, in Jefferson County, Indiana.

¹² *The Tribune* (Greeley), May 23, 1895, p. 8; obituary of Cynthia Gregory Hill, *The Tribune* (Greeley), June 11, 1896, p. 5; this is confirmed by data from the 1860 and 1870 census of Marshall Township, Louisa County, Iowa.

¹³ The inscriptions on the gravestones of these three children in Long Creek Cemetery read: "Phebe, daughter of A. & C. Hill, died Oct. 4, 1851, aged 4 m's, 25 d's; John R., son of A. & C. Hill died Oct. 1, 1856, aged [?]; William H., son of A. & C. Hill, died Sept. 9, 1856, aged [?]."

¹⁴ The inscription on his gravestone in Long Creek Cemetery reads: "Bryan, son of R. & C. J. Gregory, died Feb. 14, 1852, aged 6 yrs., 4 mo., 13 d's."

¹⁵ *The Tribune* (Greeley), May 23, 1895, p. 8; June 11, 1896, p. 5; records of Eaton Cemetery, Eaton, Colorado.

marked with the simple inscription: "Father and Mother Hill."

Little is known about the girlhood life of Rebecca Hill, but certainly it must have been saddened by the illness and death of so many loved ones. Likewise, as an elder child in this large farm family, it would have been necessary for her to assume much responsibility for the numerous household tasks. It was also an isolated life, for in 1850 the population of Louisa County was less than five thousand,¹⁶ and in 1870 the population of the town of Wapello, incorporated in 1856,¹⁷ was listed as 870.¹⁸ If it is true, as later recorded, that she had never been out of the state of Iowa from the time she arrived there as a child until her wedding trip to Colorado in 1864, then she received only a meager country-school education, and her other educational opportunities would have been almost nil.

In the fall of 1863, Rebecca Jane's brother, James Hill,¹⁹ returned home from the gold fields of Colorado for a visit accompanied by his friend and partner, Benjamin Harrison Eaton, who was on his way to Ohio to see his mother and six-year-old son, Aaron James. This was probably the first time Rebecca Jane had met Ben Eaton, though it was not his first trip to Louisa County, Iowa. He had come from Ohio in 1854 as a school teacher. He came again in 1858 to take up a government land grant in Oakland township soon after the death of his wife, Delilah Wolfe, in West Bedford, Ohio.²⁰ Restless, he joined the Columbus City, Iowa, Pikes Peak Expedition to Colorado.²¹ But Ben Eaton's heart was not in mining, and he soon left Colorado for New Mexico, where he became a tenant farmer on the Maxwell Land Grant. Here he built his first irrigation ditch and caught the vision of the potentialities of this type of farming. Returning to Colorado in 1863, he and his friend, Jim Hill, took up a homestead two miles south of the present town of Windsor. Hurriedly, they built a claim shack, then caught the freighting wagons east in the fall of 1863.

Benjamin Harrison Eaton and Rebecca Jane Hill were married in the spring of 1864,²² and started on their wedding journey

¹⁶ *Portrait and Biographical Album of Louisa County, Iowa* (Chicago: Acme Publishing Co., 1889), p. 618.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 635.

¹⁸ *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Louisa County*, p. 7.

¹⁹ James Hill was the son of Nancy and Abraham Hill. He was born near Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana, on January 29, 1834. He died on May 19, 1896, and is buried in Eaton Cemetery, Eaton, Colorado. *The Tribune* (Greeley), May 23, 1896, p. 6.

²⁰ Quantrille McClung, "Benjamin Harrison Eaton and Wives Delila Wolfe and Rebecca Jane Hill," *Colorado Genealogist*, XV (January, 1954), 5.

²¹ *The Enterprise* (Columbus City, Iowa), April 30, 1859. Cited in Springer, *History of Louisa County, Iowa*, I, 343.

²² Application for marriage license, No. 160, dated March 26, 1864. Marriage

west from Wapello, Iowa. Ben drove an ox-drawn wagon loaded with supplies and Rebecca Jane a mule-drawn wagon carrying their bedding, cook stove (a wedding gift from her father), cooking utensils, wash tubs, and flat-irons for the little cabin on the Cache la Poudre. They ferried the Missouri River and proceeded to Omaha to join other parties going west, for it was not safe during the Indian uprisings of 1864-1868 to travel in groups of less than a hundred men. Besides the ever-present danger of Indian attacks to somewhat mar the pleasure of the adventurous trip, there was the lurking fear that Mr. Eaton's claim might have been "jumped" during his absence from the homestead. Following the Platte River at a pace of ten to twelve miles a day, the Eatons arrived at their claim in the late summer to find that their fear of claim jumpers had been unwarranted. The claim shack, however, was uninhabitable—cattle had died in the cabin and their carcasses had not been removed. The bride refused to live in such a place and demanded that the men pitch the tents under the cottonwood trees on the bank of the river.²³

Before a suitable cabin could be built, word was received that the Indians were on the warpath, and the settlers were fleeing for protection to Camp Collins (Fort Collins) several miles up the Cache la Poudre. The Eatons decided to pack their possessions and move to the camp for the winter.²⁴ In the spring, they returned to the claim and built a comfortable log cabin which served as the family home for many years and later as a summer home. It was the birthplace of their three children, Abraham Lincoln, born in 1865;²⁵ Bruce Grant, born August 18, 1868;²⁶ and Jennie Bell, born July 24, 1870.²⁷ The "Hay Ranch," as the place became known, also served as a haven of rest and safety for travelers in this sparsely settled region in the 1860's.²⁸ In addition it was a foster home for the single men living close-by who delighted in swapping buffalo and deer steaks, or fish from the Poudre, for its hospitality and Becky Jane's famous cooking. Rebecca Jane competently, zestfully, and ingeniously entered into pioneer life on the Hay Ranch. Industrious and



Eaton home at Madison Avenue and Linden Street (805 12th Street), Greeley.

thrifty, besides the countless household tasks she found time for a number of money-making projects, such as raising fine chickens and eggs and selling them for fancy prices to feed the soldiers stationed at Camp Collins. Some of the earnings from this endeavor were invested in a little hand-turned sewing machine purchased from Elizabeth ("Lizzie") Fraser, an itinerant agent for the Singer Sewing Machine Company of Chicago.²⁹ In addition to sewing for her family and her bachelor customers, who paid her handsomely to mend their clothes and make their shirts, she now made flour sacks to bag and sell the surplus wheat being milled on the Hay Ranch.

In 1870, when Union Colony made its settlement and laid the foundation for the city of Greeley, Colorado, Benjamin Harrison Eaton joined the enterprise and was active in the promotion of its interests.³⁰ Simultaneously, he purchased between twenty-five and twenty-six thousand acres of government subsidy land contiguous to Greeley and the present town of Eaton from the Union Pacific Railroad for one to four dollars per acre, and embarked upon his vast enterprise of farming and irrigation in Weld County, often called the "Eaton Farm Empire."³¹ It was at this time, probably in 1873, that the family moved to Greeley for business advantages and better educational facilities for the children, particularly for Aaron James, who had joined his father's family in 1868 and was now ready for high school. Also in this period, the year 1881, their permanent Greeley home was built on a two-acre plot at the northwest corner of Madison Avenue and Linden Street.³² It was a three-story brick house trimmed in cut-stone and uniquely ornamented by a cupola in the center of the roof. Its spacious

Records, Book C, Wapello, Louisa County, Iowa, p. 42. These records do not show the return and registration of the license.

²³ *The Greeley Daily Tribune*, November 21, 1946, pp. 20-21.

²⁴ Pauline Allison, *The History of Eaton, Colorado* (Eaton, 1942[?]), p. 4.

²⁵ According to his gravestone and the records of Linn Grove Cemetery, Greeley, Colorado, Abraham Lincoln Eaton died at the age of fourteen on December 26, 1879.

²⁶ Gravestone and records of Linn Grove Cemetery, Greeley, Colorado.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Interview with Mrs. W. W. Brown, Kenton Nursing Home, Greeley, Colorado, January 4, 1964. Mrs. Brown was born on December 3, 1867.

interior was decorated with oak paneling, fancy woodwork, marble, and tiles imported from Chicago. Incorporated into the design were all the newest conveniences of the day, including hot and cold running water to each bedroom, ash chutes to the basement, and an electric bell system.³³ Back of the house was a two-story barn with accommodations for four horses, a carriage, a cow, and a hostler on the second floor.³⁴ Biographers of Benjamin Harrison Eaton have said that he was "land poor" and an old man before he overcame adversity and enjoyed prosperity. Rebecca Jane Eaton must have thought prosperity had come to her in 1881 if she compared her new home with that of the winter of 1864-65, with its one room divided into three by curtains of bed sheets, where the dining table was the top of a box, and the chairs were cottonwood stumps.

The comfort and luxury of the Greeley mansion were exchanged in 1885-1887 for that of the Cornelius Ferris mansion at 37 Grant Avenue in Denver, which served as the executive mansion during most of the governorship of Benjamin Harrison Eaton.³⁵ Following the inauguration ceremony and reception on Tuesday, January 13, 1885, a local newspaper editorially commented:³⁶

Governor and Mrs. Eaton are just the kind of people who please the masses by their sincere and kindly ways, and it is safe to predict that Denver society will be made better, purer, and more sincere by their presence here.

This proved to be an accurate characterization and prediction. Governor Eaton gave to the affairs of the state the same common sense, business-like, and honest administration that marked his personal business career. This won for him the title "Honest

²⁹ Elizabeth Fraser came to Denver, Colorado, as an agent for the Singer Sewing Machine Company in July, 1868. In 1870 she married John Wesley Iliff, the millionaire "Cattle King of Colorado." After his death in 1878, she married Bishop Henry W. Warren of the Methodist Church in December, 1883. Iliff Theological Seminary, established in Denver in 1892, which she generously endowed, is named for her first husband.

³⁰ B. H. Eaton and his mother, Hannah Smith Eaton, appear on the list of colonists who joined Union Colony during the first year at Greeley, Colorado. David Boyd, *A History: Greeley and the Union Colony of Colorado* (Greeley: Greeley Tribune Press, 1890), p. 436.

³¹ Sources differ as to the number of acres of land owned and the price paid by B. H. Eaton. The figures used here are those most often quoted in standard reference books on Colorado history.

³² The address later became 805 Twelfth Street.

³³ *The Colorado Sun* (Greeley), July 2, 1881, p. 2.

³⁴ George A. Carlson, Governor of Colorado 1915-1917, lived in these quarters and milked the cow, tended the horses, and hoed the gardens when he was a student at State Normal School (now Colorado State College), about 1898. *The Greeley Daily Tribune*, November 21, 1946, p. 20.

³⁵ The residence of Governor Eaton was listed in the *Denver City Directory* in 1886 as 37 Grant Avenue, and in 1887 as 1854 Grant Avenue. 37 Grant Avenue was changed to 1854 Grant Avenue in 1887. The residence of Cornelius Ferris was listed in the 1885 *Denver City Directory* as 37 Grant Avenue. Mrs. Eaton gave a reception on January 14, 1886, in the Ferris residence. *Denver Tribune*, January 15, 1886, p. 6.

³⁶ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 14, 1885, p. 8.

Ben." The word "purer" used by the editor doubtlessly refers to the fact that both he and Mrs. Eaton were strong temperance advocates. Their personal and social life was marked by simplicity, unpretentiousness, and in the language of the era, "shrinking from the vanities of the world." In a period when the clothes of fashionable women were extravagant and ornate almost to the point of being grotesque, and when it was the custom for the newspapers to give lengthy, embellished descriptions of the toilettes of the ladies after an elegant social affair, the usual comment on the First Lady's costume was: "Mrs. Eaton wore black silk." A friend who knew Mrs. Eaton as First Lady has said of her personal appearance:³⁷

Mrs. Eaton was a plain little woman; blue eyes; light complexioned—more on the sandy order. She was not very large. Her clothes were just common; just the same as the rest of us wore; I never saw anything different about them.

As Benjamin Harrison Eaton's heart was not in mining when he was a Fifty-Niner, it was not in politics in the 1880's. On the expiration of his two-year term of office, he was glad to retire from public life and return to his real life-work—farming and irrigation; and Mrs. Eaton was happy to return to the life she knew best—her family, her home, and her garden. When the Governor left office, he was reputedly managing between eighty and ninety farms with about sixteen thousand acres under cultivation by tenant farmers. He now devoted more time to his experimental garden in conjunction with the Greeley residence, proving his agricultural theories and demonstrating them



Governor
Benjamin H. Eaton

to his tenants; while Mrs. Eaton's gardening talents were devoted to beautifying the yard and growing fine fruits and vegetables, the latter endeavor often winning for her a blue ribbon in the garden and pantry division of the annual Weld County Fair. Her specialty was vines, all types, but her particular favorite was the lavender wisteria brought from her girlhood home in Wapello, Iowa. Another specialty was what she called her "hit-and-miss bed," a gaily colored arrangement of many varieties. The attractive residence became the show place of the town and a center for large social and civic meetings and entertainments. Mrs. Eaton was a founder in 1890 and a charter member of the city's first women's literary club, W. T. K., which means "Want to Know."³⁷ She regularly attended the Congregational Church³⁸ and was a member of the Society of Union Colony Pioneers.⁴⁰ The former First Lady was honored in 1911 by being chosen one of the representative women of Colorado.⁴¹

After the Governor's death on October 10, 1904, Bruce and Mary (Hogarty) Eaton and children moved from their country home west of Eaton, Colorado, into the Greeley residence to keep Mrs. Eaton company and assume some of the responsibility for the care of the big house and the large estate. The flower gardens now received less devotion and the grandchildren more, but as Mrs. Eaton often reminded her friends: "Children are nicer than flowers." Shortly, she turned her attention to the selection and planning of a suitable memorial to the Governor. Aware of the valiant and successful effort the town was making to establish a free public library, in 1910 she offered to the town of Eaton the gift of a public library building. The Eaton Public Library was formally dedicated as a memorial to Benjamin Harrison Eaton on December 5, 1911. Bruce G. Eaton, on behalf of his mother, presented Mayor T. C. Phillips the deed to the property and building, including the furnishings and equipment. Constructed of brown pressed-brick with marble trimming, it is small but commodious with sufficient ground for future expansion.⁴²

³⁷ Interview with Mrs. W. W. Brown, January 4, 1964.

³⁸ Information from the "Memorabilia Book," W. T. K., Greeley, Colorado, given by Mrs. Norman Dean, Greeley, in letter of May 11, 1964.

³⁹ Neither the records of the First Congregational, St. Paul's Congregational, First United Presbyterian, First Methodist, or Trinity Episcopal churches in Greeley, Colorado, nor the records of First Congregational or Methodist churches of Eaton, Colorado, show that Governor and Mrs. Eaton were members; likewise, the records of the Presbyterian and Methodist churches of Wapello, Iowa, do not show that Rebecca Jane Hill was a member before marrying and coming to Colorado.

⁴⁰ Correspondence with Mrs. Helen Larson, curator of the Greeley Museum and Meeker Home, Greeley, Colorado.

⁴¹ *Representative Women of Colorado* (Denver: Alexander Art Publishing Company, Denver, 1911), p. 242.

⁴² "Fiftieth Anniversary of the Eaton Public Library," Eaton Public Library,

Rebecca Hill Eaton died April 16, 1914, at the age of seventy-five while visiting in San Diego, California.⁴³ The funeral service held in the Greeley home on April 22 was conducted by Dr. B. T. Vincent of Denver, a former minister of the Methodist Church of Greeley and a personal friend of Mrs. Eaton for forty-five years.⁴⁴ She is buried in Linn Grove Cemetery, Greeley, Colorado, as are Governor Eaton and their three children. Abraham Lincoln Eaton died December 26, 1879; Bruce Grant Eaton died November 11, 1947; and Jennie Bell Eaton (Mrs. John M. B. Petrikin) died September 11, 1906.⁴⁵ Aaron James Eaton, the son of Governor Eaton and his first wife, Delilah Wolfe Eaton, died October 28, 1922,⁴⁶ and is also buried in Linn Grove Cemetery.⁴⁷

Scattered over the countryside of Weld County, Colorado, may still be seen a few of the two-story red brick tenant farm houses which were a landmark of the "Eaton Farm Empire" conceived and built by Colorado's "Agrarian Governor"; while the stately mansion he built, a unique example of residential architecture, is a fast-fading memory of a few old-time citizens of the state. A year after Mrs. Eaton's death, it was sold to C. H. Ramsay, whose family lived in it until about 1950. In November, 1953, it was torn down for its valuable salvage and the use of the land as a business site.⁴⁸

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Eaton, Colorado, 1961 (mimeographed).

⁴³ Certificate of death of Rebecca Jane Hill Eaton, Bureau of Vital Statistics, San Diego, California.

⁴⁴ *Greeley Daily Tribune*, April 23, 1914, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Gravestones, Linn Grove Cemetery, Greeley, Colorado.

⁴⁶ Records, Linn Grove Cemetery.

⁴⁷ Hannah Smith Eaton, mother of Governor Eaton, is buried on the same lot with Governor and Mrs. Eaton in Linn Grove Cemetery. Her gravestone gives the dates of her birth and death as 1812 and 1887. According to the records of the cemetery, the date of her death or burial was November 16, 1887.

⁴⁸ *Greeley Daily Tribune*, November 27, 1953, p. 9.

DUGGER'S GROCERY

BY WILLIAM L. MYATT

It was just another corner grocery operated by a man and wife, similar to many throughout the country. Then, some seventy years ago, the automobile wasn't congesting the streets and delivery by horse-drawn vehicle was essential, as was credit. William S. Dugger moved from a downtown location to 2201 Washington Avenue in 1895. He and his wife Emma, with the help of a deliveryman, C. A. Verrey, ran the store. Mrs. Dugger did the bookkeeping and also waited on customers. She was extremely popular with the trade. Verrey clerked, took care of the horse Dolly, and each Sunday washed and greased the wagon.

The store was closed on Sunday. Saturday was the big business day even as now, and the delivery was supplemented by a boy-drawn red wagon. The boy also clerked and did odd jobs such as grinding coffee, resacking potatoes and sugar, and sorting

The Dugger store at 2201 Washington. Mrs. Dugger, William L. Myatt, and Mr. Dugger are standing on the porch.



eggs. Most items came in bulk, such as bushel bags of potatoes and hundred-pound sacks of sugar. Eggs came in thirty-dozen crates, and the trick was to sort them into two sizes. One box would contain the small, soiled ones, the other the large, clean ones. The small eggs sold at 10¢ per dozen, the large at 15¢.

One Saturday the regular boy failed to appear, and I, having a little red wagon and an urge to work, got the job at 50¢ per day. Our day lasted from 7 A.M. until about 10 P.M. Trade fell off about 8 P.M. although often customers came in to settle their accounts. The remainder of the evening was spent cleaning up the store, wetting down the vegetables that were left over, covering the fruit, and doing other chores always present in a grocery store. The next summer when school was out I was taken on for a full-time job until the following September.

The store was small but carried a line of "staple and fancy groceries" according to a sign on the building. The fancy groceries consisted mainly of French sardines (Jockey Club), French *petit pois*, and champignons in plain tin cans bearing small rectangular brass labels. These tins had no sales appeal other than the fact that the goods were imported. The Jockey Club sardine cans were attractive but sales were limited due to price. Customers bought domestic (Maine) sardines instead.

The business prospered so that in 1899 Mr. Dugger built a two-story building on a corner across the street at 1 East Twenty-second Avenue. He had astutely acquired the corner earlier. This was a larger and better-equipped grocery and had nice living rooms upstairs, which the Duggers occupied. The store was lighted with gas fixtures equipped with the new Welsbach mantles.

With enlarged quarters a limited line of meats was carried, including pork loins, smoked meats, wieners, salt pork, and sausages. Beef and other fresh meats were not carried, although on Thursdays salmon and halibut and sometimes catfish were bought for the Friday trade. There was a first-class meat market a half-block down the street operated by Mr. E. W. Pauley. The Pauley store was a two-story frame building owned by Mr. William H. Falke. He ran a respectable saloon next door, where a generous schooner of Zang's beer and free lunch were available for a nickel.

In the winter months a coop of live chickens was kept outside the grocery, from which the housewife would make her selection. Some would take the bird "on the hoof," but the majority had it beheaded. Next to waiting on cantankerous customers, this decapitation of the chickens was the most dis-



The new Dugger Grocery on E. 22nd Avenue

tasteful task the boy performed.

One of the early-morning chores performed by Dugger himself was a trip to the City Market, then located on Twenty-third Street between California and Stout, to pick up the fresh fruits and vegetables for the day's business. It was necessary to be there between 5 and 6 A.M. as the local grocers arrived early, and a late comer might find the choice produce all gone. The housewives depended on Dugger to keep them informed as to the best time to buy their berries, peaches, and tomatoes for canning. It meant, too, increased sales on sugar, spices, jars, and jar-rings, as well as wax for sealing the jelly glasses.

A larger store and more business necessitated an additional delivery wagon drawn by a spirited gray named Dewey. He once ran away, scattering groceries as he went, because the driver had neglected to toss out the drop-weight. A neighbor stopped him a few blocks away. I was never allowed to drive Dewey, but docile Dolly I hitched and unhitched and even drove on a route to West Denver once a week. I was then attending Manual Training High School and so was out early. Since there were no house numbers given ("next to the corner" or "on the alley"), I had to depend on Dolly to follow the route. This was routine for her, and worked fine except when some customer had no order. She would stop anyway, and it took some persuasion to get her started.

Apparently my services were satisfactory, as I worked for Dugger three summers and after school hours during the winter. When more help was needed, I suggested a schoolboy friend, but the old man (Dugger was nearly forty) said: "No, one boy's a



Dugger's potbellied stove was not for cracker barrel philosophers.

boy, two boys a half-a-boy, and three boys no boy at all." So he hired Walter McNair, a young man who had had grocery experience, as a full-time helper, and he was permitted to drive Dewey. Another full-time groceryman, M. B. Traylor, was also employed. After I left to pursue the wholesale business his son, Frank A. Traylor, came to work during the summer.

Although the secret ambition to hold the reins on Dewey never came my way, more responsibility did gravitate to me. I had a key to the front door and occasionally opened up. I also had charge of the candy case (no doubt under the watchful eye of the proprietor). I ordered the jelly beans, jawbreakers, all-day suckers, "lickerish," marshmallow bananas, and other penny candies. What a job for a young boy!

The Grocers' Picnic gave us a day off each summer, and the tab was picked up by Dugger. We took a generous lunch, and usually went on the train to such places as Meadow Park (Lyons) on the CB&Q or Mont Alto Park or Glacier Park on the then comparatively new Colorado and Northwestern. In later years these picnics were held at Lakeside Park.

Dugger was frugal and economy-minded, although not stingy. You were to give accurate weight but not a hair over, and only sufficient twine was used to secure the package. I recall one example of economy: in filling the match tray on the cigar case I thought if I filled it to overflowing with those big kitchen matches (then labeled Parlor Matches), it wouldn't have to be done so often. I was promptly told that this was false economy, and I had to put most of those matches back in the box. A large pile encouraged the customer to take a handful, whereas if there

were just a few, he would take only two or three. After all, a box of three hundred of those matches cost 4¢ and retailed at 5¢.

Another money-saving idea was to wrap vegetables, such as lettuce, radishes, and "cukes" (cucumbers), in newspapers which were begged from the customers, instead of using fresh, clean paper. It was a good method as the newspapers absorbed more moisture than would regular white store paper.

While the new store had a large potbellied stove, the "cracker barrel" philosophers and gossips were strictly *verboten*. There were no empty boxes to sit on and the crackers were in large covered bins out of easy access. Goods came in bags, barrels, and wooden boxes, as the corrugated carton had not yet made its appearance. The boxes were opened carefully and the covers tacked back on, and when a wagon load had accumulated they were sold to wholesale grocers at 5¢ each. They used them for repacks for shipment to customers in the small towns. There was salvage also on empty egg crates, barrels, gunny sacks, and white cotton sugar bags, which were in constant demand by housewives for dish towels.

This economy plus good management (and isn't economy an integral part of good management?) paid off, and the Duggers were able to build a two-story residence next to the new store and acquire some adjacent houses. They also built a home at 2055 Ogden Street away from the store. This was a credit to them, as the food business was and still is highly competitive.

The new store prospered. Mr. Dugger was aggressive and adopted automation as then known. There was a cheese cutter that could be set for pounds or half-pounds, which would accurately measure and cut a wedge out of hoop-cheese. The only packaged cheese we had was MacLarens, a high-grade, soft, sharp Cheddar that came in nice white porcelain jars. It was not a large seller in our store as it was a little high-priced for our trade.

An early model computing scale was a welcome addition. Of course, this was a far cry from the present-day scales, but it did save time and enhance accuracy. A cash register was installed, replacing the till which was under the counter and had a trick opening. The new shiny machine had a bronze plate at the top, reading DUGGERS GROCERY, and it was beautiful to behold. Imagine my surprise when, at the close of the first day, the money was removed and the register left open. I thought a cash register was for keeping the cash in. We never balanced. Almost never. Once Mr. Dugger went "back East" to visit relatives, and the very next day the cash balanced to a penny. A

coincidence, but he was irritated a bit on his return.

Among other new things, we took on S&H Green Trading Stamps. This trade stimulator was in its infancy then, but as every housewife knows, it is universal practice now. The idea, so the promoters said, was to increase the cash business. The scheme backfired, however, when we refused to give them to credit customers who really bought more than the cash customers, so the stamps were discontinued.

We sold cigars, tobacco, cigarettes, "eatin' tobacco" (plug), and corncob pipes. The latter cost us 40¢ per dozen and retailed at a nickel each. The big seller in 5¢ cigars was Morey's Cabinet, a local favorite then, although we carried others such as Silver Pick, Anthony J. Drexel and Henry George. Ten cent cigars were a luxury, so only one brand was carried. The only cigarettes sold were Sweet Caporal. The tobaccos were Duke's Mixture, Bull Durham, and a less expensive grade, Beck's Hunting. These were a nickel a bag, but the Beck's Hunting bags were larger. In the plugs we had Star, Horse Shoe, Climax, and Piper Heidsieck, which we cut from the plugs as wanted by the customer. Today the plug tobacco cutter is a collector's item as is the cheese cutter.

Bananas came by the bunch and were hung on a wire suspended from the ceiling. They were cut off with a curved knife made for that purpose. Oranges and lemons came in wooden slatted boxes and were wrapped individually in tissue paper. The apples came in barrels, as did the cranberries in the fall. Cranberries were measured out in a pint tin scoop.

The Frank Dean Collection of glass negatives includes a number of grocery stores. This is the Entwistle Grocery at Eldora.



Coffee came from the roaster in the whole bean. While many customers preferred to grind it fresh in their own small kitchen mills, some wanted us to do it. So the boy would open the one-pound paper wrappers of Arbuckle's Ariosa, McLaughlin's XXXX, and Lion, the popular low-priced coffees (10¢ per pound), grind them in a mill taller than he, and re-bag and tie them, ready for the rush hours. About 1898 a new brand in one-pound flat tins, the forerunner of the present one-pound vaccum tins, came on the market. Although it had to retail at 25¢ per pound, being a higher grade coffee, it went well. It was inspirationally named "Wedding Breakfast," and was roasted and packed by Nash Smith Company in Denver.

Sugar was resacked from hundred-pound bags into four- and eight-pound and a few sixteen-pound packages. This, of course, was cane sugar. Around the turn of the century Colorado beet sugar appeared and was priced a little lower to induce consumers to use it. The early product didn't look too good, since it frequently had a blue cast. There is no comparison with today's beautiful beet sugar, but it took years to overcome the prejudice created by the appearance and by the erroneous claim that jelly couldn't be made with beet sugar.

Molasses, vinegar, cider (in the fall), sauerkraut, pickles, olives, lard, and some other items came in barrels and were ladled or drawn out to suit the customer. Coal oil (kerosene) for lamps came in a steel drum and was measured out as needed. It was poured into the customer's oil can and the spout was then capped with a potato. One item, and one only, would absolutely not be delivered—milk. It was ladled out of the ten-gallon milk cans into a pail or pitcher, and the customer had to carry it home.

Selling prices were not marked on the goods. Clerks depended on memory, but this was not difficult, as the store did not carry a large number of items. Those we did have were usually price in round numbers, such as 10¢, 15¢, and 25¢. We had little use for pennies except for Fleischmann's yeast—2¢ per cake—and penny candies.

Packaged goods began to appear. Uneeda Biscuit was an early brand of crackers. Scotch Oats and Quaker Oats were on the market in square cartons. When Quaker absorbed Scotch Oats, for a time the label had Quaker on one face and Scotch on the other. Later, the Scotch name was abandoned.

An early ready-cooked cereal (one of the first) was Shredded Wheat Biscuit. The package bore the legend on the back, "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are." Interestingly enough, Shredded Wheat Biscuit originated in Denver. Some



A grocery interior from the Frank Dean Collection

seventy years ago, one Henry D. Perky, stopping at a small hotel in Nebraska, noticed a man at breakfast eating an unfamiliar food which turned out to be boiled wheat and milk. The man explained that he suffered from indigestion and boiled wheat was the only thing that set right with him. Now, Mr. Perky suffered from indigestion and found that boiled wheat helped him considerably, so his thoughts turned to introducing the wheat commercially. He developed a small shredding machine and in 1893 went to Denver to interest his brother in manufacturing it.

The Perky brothers organized the Cereal Machine Company, intending to manufacture a hand shredding machine for family use. The big problem was that practically no one had tasted boiled shredded wheat, and consequently there was no demand for the shredding machine. Henry Perky soon realized that a much larger market existed for shredded wheat itself than for his shredding machine, but that it would have to be distributed in a dry state either as a biscuit or cracker.

Perky made the first shredded wheat biscuit by holding a small board under the shredder and moving it back and forth until a layer of shreds an inch thick had collected. He then used a square tin biscuit cutter and baked the biscuit in an ordinary gas oven. To test mass production, he decided to experiment in a cracker bakery and selected the Crocker-Malone Bakery in Denver. By coincidence, this was one of the original bakeries which merged and formed the National Biscuit Company in 1898.

Perky opened his first bakery in Denver in 1893 but he moved to Boston the following year. The business grew and in the early 1900's the famous many-windowed Shredded Wheat

Bakery was opened in Niagara Falls. The many tourists who visited there took advantage of Perky's invitation to visit the bakery and spread the word of Shredded Wheat Biscuit. The National Biscuit Company acquired the product in 1928, and the package still reads: "The Original Shredded Wheat."

Other packaged goods began to appear, gradually reducing the work necessary in repacking. The store carried perhaps some five hundred items, while today a supermarket carries an average of seventy-five hundred different products. We had no frozen foods, cake mixes, or other quick-fix foods. We did have Jello and other gelatin-base desserts such as Jellycon and Bro-man-ge-lon, most of which have disappeared from the market.

The increase in the number of items was also brought about by new items and new packages of old items. We had one fifty-gallon barrel of vinegar, bought from the Kuner Pickle Company. Today, even a small store will have ten to fifteen bottled vinegars on the shelf. Fifty-gallon barrels of sauerkraut also came from Kuner in the fall.

Some "senior citizens" may get a touch of nostalgia looking back at those open barrels of pickles and sauerkraut, but undoubtedly the packaged food of today is much more sanitary. Consider bread. It was 5¢ per loaf, six for a quarter, but it was unwrapped, brought in a horse-drawn vehicle, and then maybe sold by a clerk who had just handled a salt mackerel or filled a gallon can of coal oil.

The business continued to grow and then suddenly Mr. Dugger died in 1906 at the early age of forty-eight. Mrs. Dugger sold the business but kept the real estate for income. She later sold the store property and adjoining houses and continued to live on Ogden Street until her death in 1947.

Individually owned corner groceries exist today, but the majority of the successful ones are part of a voluntary group. Such affiliation enables them to purchase their merchandise so they can sell in competition with the national chains.

Nothing is permanent but change.

WILLIAM L. MYATT *was with the Morey Mercantile Company for more than fifty years. His history of that firm appeared in the October, 1961, issue of CM.*

Marching to Cuba

BY BEN GRAY LUMPKIN

The Colorado Folksong Collection at the University of Colorado contains over three hundred songs that have been brought into Colorado and kept alive in oral circulation for a number of years (most of them for twenty or more). But folksongs that have originated in Colorado are rare. Indeed, our collection so far contains only one song that clearly originated in Colorado and circulated orally for a limited period of time.

That old song is "Marching to Cuba," sung to the tune of "Marching Through Georgia." It grew out of the patriotic fervor which boiled high in Colorado immediately after the USS *Maine* was blown up in Havana Harbor on February 15, 1898. The song boasts of how the boys of the Silver State will march to Cuba, tear down the yellow rag (flag) of Spain, and free the people of that enslaved island. However, according to Baker and Hafen's *History of Colorado*, only twenty-five Colorado officers and enlisted men saw action in Cuba because most of them were sent to the Philippine Islands.¹

The first version of "Marching to Cuba" came to the Colorado collection during 1961 from Mrs. O. C. Frantz, of Rocky Ford. She wrote out for us what she remembered of the song as she and other children in her school learned it during the Spanish-American War from their teacher, Mr. O. J. Baxter. His school was about four miles southeast of Rocky Ford. Another version came from Mr. William Reck, now living near Wiggins, Colorado. He recalls that he learned the song soon after he arrived in Denver during June, 1898. Both Mrs. Frantz and Mr. Reck say that the song was popular during the war. Their combined versions result in the following words—one stanza and the chorus of the original:

¹ James H. Baker and LeRoy R. Hafen, *History of Colorado* (Denver: Linderman Co., Inc., 1927), III, 979-990.

Colorado's Battle Song.

Air: "Marching through Georgia."

-Dedicated to Colorado's Home Soldiers-

We're soldiers from the Silver State—
Centennial boys are we—
Here children of Old Glory
From a mile above the sea
And all the Sons of Cuba's star
Forever shall be free
As we go marching to Cuba.

Chorus.

Hurrah! Hurrah! We won't forget the Maine!
Goodbye! Goodbye! Old yellow rag of Spain!
Let us swell the chorus from the mountain to the plain.
As we go marching to Cuba!

We'll bear the starry banner
From the land of Columbine
And plant her on the battlements
Across the Spanish line
So Cuba's star may brighter glow—
Forever may she shine!
As we go marching to Cuba!

Let every son of freedom's cause
Sing Cuba's glad refrain!
Let subjects of Old Glory
Sing it o'er and o'er again!
We'll bear our flag to victory
And bury Spanish reign
As we go marching to Cuba!

Fred Shaffer

We're children of the Silver State.
Centennial boys are we.
We're children of Old Glory,
From a mile above the sea.
And all the Sons of Cuba's stars
Forever shall be free

As we go marching to Cuba.
Hurrah! Hurrah! We'll not forget the *Maine*.
Good-bye! Good-bye! old yellow rag of Spain.
We all shall swell the chorus of the
Mountain and the plain,
As we go marching to Cuba.²

The recollections of Mrs. Frantz and Mr. Reck are accurate down through the first part of the original version as composed by Fred G. Shaffer of the *Denver Times* and published in that paper for April 23, 1898—the same day as President McKinley's call for volunteers. Entitled "Colorado's Battle Song," it was dedicated to "Colorado's Home Soldier."³ Mr. Shaffer's poem was again published in the *Times* on June 12.⁴ The paper reported that the song "is being generally sung in schools and churches throughout the state, and was this morning a feature of the services at Broadway temple. It will be sung on Flag day, and by general request *The Times* reprints it."⁵

The three stanzas and a chorus as composed by Mr. Shaffer are spirited, and are smooth in rhythm and rhyme:

We're soldiers from the Silver State—
Centennial boys are we—
We're children of Old Glory
From a mile above the sea
And all the Sons of Cuba's star
Forever shall be free
As we go marching to Cuba!

² Text of "Marching to Cuba" is reprinted here as published in *Colorado Folk-song Bulletin*, I (January, 1962), 6.

³ *Denver Times*, April 23, 1898, p. 5.

⁴ There were some minor differences from the song published on April 23. In the version published June 12, there was a comma, not a dash, after the words "Silver State" in the first line. In the second verse, the fifth line reads "Cuba's Star," not "Cuba's star." In the sixth line of this stanza there is no exclamation point after "shine." Finally, the last line reads "While we go marching to Cuba," not "As we go marching to Cuba." *Ibid.*, June 12, 1898, 1.

⁵ Services were held at the Broadway Theater on Sundays by an assembly under the leadership of Rev. Myron W. Reed, which was known as the Broadway Temple. *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 31, 1899, Pt. 1, p. 10.

Chorus:

Hurrah! Hurrah! We won't forget the Maine!
 Goodbye! Goodbye! Old yellow rag of Spain!
 Let us swell the chorus from the mountain and the plain
 As we go marching to Cuba!

We'll bear the starry banner
 From the land of Columbine
 And plant her on the battlements
 Across the Spanish line
 So Cuba's star may brighter glow—
 Forever may she shine!
 As we go marching to Cuba!

Let every son of freedom's cause
 Sing Cuba's glad refrain!
 Let subjects of Old Glory
 Sing it o'er and o'er again!
 We'll bear our flag to victory
 And bury Spanish reign
 As we go marching to Cuba!

Even though only a part of this song has survived in oral circulation, it is an important historical sidelight on the spirit of the times. It, along with a score of other songs charged with patriotic enthusiasm, have been collected from western newspapers and published by Clifford P. Westermeier in his volume on the Cowboy Volunteers of 1898—all published during the five months from April through August, 1898.⁶

Colorado's troops saw action in the Philippines, where they participated in the Battle of Manila and the Philippine insurrection.⁷ In addition, a small unit of twenty-five men from Colorado managed to get into the First Regiment of United States Volunteer Cavalry, known as "Roosevelt's Rough Riders." For this group, the promise of the song became literally true. It reached Santiago Harbor on June 22, 1898, just in time to help tear down the "yellow rag of Spain" during the battles of Las Guasimas and Santiago.⁸

Marching to Cuba

We're child - ren of the Sil - ver State, Cen - ten - nial boys are we We're
 child - ren of Old Glory, from a mile a - bove the sea, And
 all the sons of Cu - ba's stars For - ev - er shall be free
 As we go marching to Cu - ba, Hurrah! Hurrah! We'll not forget the Maine, Good -
 bye! Goodbye! old yel - low rag of Spain, We all shall swell the chorus of the
 mountain and the plain, As we go march - ing to Cu - ba.

Thus, for most of the Colorado volunteers, the title and refrain of "Marching to Cuba" were ironical: they started out with a stout will, but most of them, because the war was short, had to perform their services inside the continental United States or in the Philippines. However, the spirit of the whole song, with its promise of freeing Cuba from Spanish domination, was fortunately not an empty boast.

BEN GRAY LUMPKIN of the University of Colorado department of English received an AASLH award in 1963 for his work in collecting Colorado folksongs.

⁶ *Who Rush to Glory: The Cowboy Volunteers of 1898* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1958), pp. 145-169. "Colorado's Battle Song" is on pp. 162-63.

⁷ See John H. Nankivell, *History of the Military Organizations of the State of Colorado 1860-1935* (Denver: The W. H. Kistler Stationery Co., 1935), pp. 112-152.

⁸ Baker and Hafen, *History of Colorado*, III, 989-990.