

# Fort Wise

BY MORRIS F. TAYLOR

By command of Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, commander of the United States Army, the War Department's plans for a military post at Big Timbers on the upper Arkansas River were initiated by General Orders No. 8 issued from the Headquarters of the Army, New York, June 30, 1860.<sup>1</sup> The post was to be called Fort Wise,<sup>2</sup> and it was the department's intention that the required buildings for it and for Fort Larned,<sup>3</sup> on the Pawnee Fork of the Arkansas, should be completed, if possible, before winter set in.<sup>4</sup> Both locations were in Kansas Territory.

The orders were transmitted to Colonel Edwin Vose Sumner, First Cavalry, commanding the Department of the West with headquarters at St. Louis. He was an experienced hand in the business of planning frontier fortifications,<sup>5</sup> and the fulfillment of General Orders No. 8 was left to his direction, within the guidelines set forth by the War Department.

The third and last person in the devolution of responsibility for location and construction of the new fort was Major John Sedgwick, First Cavalry. He was a former commandant at Fort Riley, Kansas, and was currently in the field in command of the Kiowa expedition, an extensive campaign across Kansas into Indian Territory (Oklahoma Panhandle) and the Texas Pan-

<sup>1</sup> LeRoy R. and Ann W. Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians of the Plains, 1857-1861: A Documentary Account of the Military Campaigns, and Negotiations of Indian Agents—With Reports and Journals of P. G. Lowe, R. M. Peck, J. E. B. Stuart, S. D. Sturgis, and Other Official Papers*, Vol. IX of *The Far West and the Rockies Historical Series* (Glendale, Calif.: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1959), pp. 259-60.

<sup>2</sup> Named in honor of Henry A. Wise, Governor of Virginia.

<sup>3</sup> Named for Colonel Benjamin F. Larned, Paymaster General. Originally the post was known as Camp on Pawnee Fork and then as Camp Alert. Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios and Posts Commonly Called Forts West of the Mississippi to 1898* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 55.

<sup>4</sup> Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 259.

<sup>5</sup> Among others, he was instrumental in the establishment of Fort Union (1851) and Fort Massachusetts (1852), both at the time in New Mexico. Robert M. Utley, *Fort Union National Monument, New Mexico* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962), and Morris F. Taylor, "Fort Massachusetts," *The Colorado Magazine*, XLV (Spring, 1968), 120-42.

handle. He was astonished and thoroughly disgusted when he came into Fort Larned, after the grueling months of July and August, 1860, to find Colonel Sumner's orders that he should proceed westward at once some 230 miles to establish Fort Wise. He was tired, and he found the expectation that he would have the new post habitable by winter particularly vexatious.<sup>6</sup>

If Major Sedgwick was surprised at the orders for the new post, it was only because he had been out of touch in the remoteness of the south-central plains chasing Indians. The decision to build a new fort at or near Big Timbers<sup>7</sup> was common knowledge even before General Orders No. 8 went out from army headquarters. The *Daily Kansas City Journal of Commerce* of June 28, 1860, said, for example, that Alexander Majors had left on the previous Monday for Big Timbers with 50 wagons which were to load with corn at Topeka for the new post.<sup>8</sup> About three weeks later it was reported from Council Grove, Kansas, that trains belonging to Majors (76 wagons, 936 oxen, 12 mules, and 8,000 bushels of corn) passed through on their way to the Arkansas.<sup>9</sup> Another Majors train was loaded on August 1 at McCarty and Barkeley's warehouse, Kansas City; in it there were 25 wagons, each carrying about 5,500 pounds for a total of about 140,000 pounds.<sup>10</sup> That train, together with another 25 wagons belonging to J. C. Irwin and Company, headed for Fort Wise; the wagonload average was 6,000 pounds of corn, and 520 head of cattle (oxen) provided the locomotion.<sup>11</sup> In the forepart of September, Judge Thompson, of Clay, Missouri, started 25 ox-drawn wagons loaded with 137,000 pounds of freight for Fort Wise.<sup>12</sup> The government was moving quickly to have enough feed on hand for the cavalry horses, at least. While still in camp at Fort Larned, Major Sedgwick heard that shipments of corn were on their way, consigned to Colonel Bent.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Major Sedgwick's letter to his sister, August 8, 1860, Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, pp. 260-61.

<sup>7</sup> The locale was so-called because of heavy stands of cottonwoods for miles along the bottoms of the Arkansas from a point not far west of the Cimarron Crossing to the location of Bent's New Fort.

<sup>8</sup> *Daily Kansas City Journal of Commerce*, June 28, 1860, p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, July 25, 1860, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, August 2, 1860, p. 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Daily Kansas City Western Journal of Commerce*, August 24, 1860, p. 3. The paper altered its name with addition of *Western* in the edition of August 3, 1860.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, September 14, 1860, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Major Sedgwick to the Assistant Adjutant General, August 11, 1860, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1822-60, Microcopy 567, Roll 633, National Archives Microfilm Publications (referred to hereafter as *Adjutant General, Letters Received*); Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 262.

His reference was, of course, to William Bent, well-known Indian trader and agent for the Upper Arkansas Indian Agency, which was based upon Bent's New Fort on the north bank of the Arkansas River near the upper end of Big Timbers.<sup>14</sup> Sedgwick thought he would store the corn in the trading post, and he asked Sumner's approval of renting the place for storage also of commissary and quartermaster supplies as well as for a hospital.<sup>15</sup> The Major's mind was far up the Arkansas, planning in every way he could to beat the advent of winter. He had already decided to construct Fort Wise near Bent's New Fort,<sup>16</sup> a proximity suggested, but by no means insisted upon, by Colonel Sumner.<sup>17</sup> The vicinity was a logical and well-supported choice. The fact that such a knowledgeable frontiersman as Bent had chosen the location testified to its centrality as a contact point with Indians, and Bent had expressed the belief that a military presence was essential both on Pawnee Fork and at Big Timbers.<sup>18</sup>

The stone Bent's New Fort lay on its low bluff beside the Arkansas, and the government had been considering its acquisition for a military post. Negotiations with William Bent were slow and indecisive, however, and by the summer of 1860 new construction nearby had been planned. Sumner told Sedgwick that he expected the purchase of Bent's trading post

*Bent's New Fort was situated on the low bluff at the left.*



to have been consummated,<sup>19</sup> but it was not until very late in the summer that a rental agreement was concluded with Bent.<sup>20</sup> Sedgwick preferred that it be purchased, and he informed Sumner that it was for sale at \$12,000, a price which he believed would be less than the cost of a new building.<sup>21</sup>

Major Sedgwick also let Colonel Sumner know of his misgivings about getting quarters ready before winter, nor did he hesitate to tell his superior that his men were tired and ill-equipped, that his animals were thin, and that the severe summer's drouth made an ample hay supply extremely unlikely. But he seems to have unburdened himself of those points as a matter of conscience and principle and not because he thought he might alter the War Department's plans. In the same communication, Sedgwick reported that the four cavalry companies (F, G, H, and K, First Cavalry) were ready in accordance with General Orders No. 8. He felt that a site east of Bent's New Fort might be more suitable than one upstream, but he concurred in the rightness of the general vicinity because of good grass and timber. Also, Sedgwick anticipated a military reservation large enough to prevent a clustering of small towns around the new post, a point that was bound to find favor with Colonel Sumner.<sup>22</sup> The cavalry major urged that Fort Wise be made a mail station as soon as possible, saying that the Santa Fe mail could easily be diverted a few miles to place the post on its line without significantly adding to distance or expense.<sup>23</sup>

About the time that Sedgwick's letters were on the way to St. Louis, the preliminary plans for both Forts Larned and Wise struck a big snag. In Washington, Colonel Sumner's

<sup>14</sup> Bent's Old Fort, farther up the Arkansas above the mouth of the Purgatoire, was abandoned in 1849, and the New Fort was built in 1852.

<sup>15</sup> Letter from Sedgwick to the Assistant Adjutant General, August 11, 1860, Adjutant General, Letters Received; Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 262.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, pp. 257-58.

<sup>18</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Accompanying the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, for the Year 1859* (Washington: George W. Bowman, Printer, 1860), p. 138; Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 186.

<sup>19</sup> Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, pp. 257-58.

<sup>20</sup> David Lavender, *Bent's Fort* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1954), pp. 345, 417, n. 3; Le Roy Boyd, *Fort Lyon, Colorado: One Hundred Years of Service* (Colorado Springs: H & H Printing Company, 1967), p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Sedgwick to the Assistant Adjutant General, August 11, 1860, Adjutant General, Letters Received; Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 262.

<sup>22</sup> Sumner's belief that towns were bad influences on garrisons had been amply demonstrated in the 1850's in his plans for location of fortifications in New Mexico. See William A. Keleher, *Turmoil in New Mexico, 1846-1868* (Santa Fe: The Rydal Press, 1962), p. 56.

<sup>23</sup> Letter from Sedgwick to the Assistant Adjutant General, August 11, 1860, Letters Received; Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, pp. 263-64.

plans for post buildings were countermanded. Economy may be conjectured as the reason since only \$15,000 was to be allowed for construction at the two posts. At any rate, the departmental commander's intention of using logs in the buildings at Fort Wise was overruled, and he was instructed to arrange for "Mexican huts," i.e., buildings of adobe mud. Sumner was quite familiar with that type of material in New Mexico, but he did not think it was appropriate for military posts on the Arkansas. What he thought mattered little, however, in view of the quartermaster general's order to stop shipment of shingles, doors, and other heavy articles, allowing only such things to be sent as would be useful in adobe construction.<sup>24</sup> Sumner really had no choice.

It is possible that Major Sedgwick did not know of the change in plans until some time after he left Fort Larned for the unselected site of Fort Wise, which was on August 18, 1860. He told his sister that it was a pleasant march of 235 miles; the site he chose on September 1 was a tract of bottom land on the north side of the Arkansas River, a half mile west of Bent's New Fort at about longitude 103° and latitude 38°. <sup>25</sup> With him were four companies of the First Cavalry totaling 218 men: F, Captain William D. De Saussure; G, Captain William S. Walker; H, Captain E. W. B. Newby; K, Captain George H. Stuart. Company F had also First Lieutenant Elmer Otis and Second Lieutenant John A. Thompson, the latter serving as post adjutant. Companies H and K had Second Lieutenants Eli Long and Joseph H. Taylor, respectively. Serving with those officers and their men was Surgeon Thomas C. Madison.<sup>26</sup>

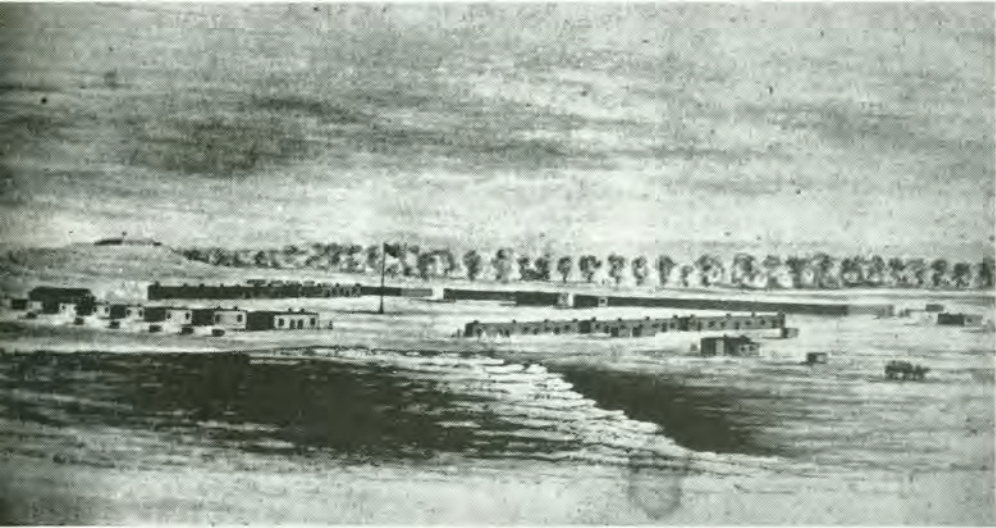
Military stores were on their way, Sedgwick learned, in three hundred wagons with an average load of six thousand pounds. The primary job, of course, was to get shelter ready for animals and men as soon as possible. When it came to actual construction work, the term "Mexican huts" was interpreted, doubtless from necessity, broadly. Evidently Sedgwick thought first in terms of quarters made of sod but rejected this idea,

<sup>24</sup> Letter from Lieutenant A. V. Colburn to Major Sedgwick, August 21, 1860; Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, pp. 266-67.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from Sedgwick to his sister, September 12, 1860; Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 268; Post Return, Fort Wise, August, 1860, Returns from U. S. Military Posts, 1800-1916: Fort Lyon, Microcopy 617, Roll 659, National Archives Microfilm Publications: Record of Medical History of Fort Lyon, Colorado, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Record Group 94, National Archives. The latter two sources will be referred to hereafter as Post Return (with date) and Record of Medical History, respectively. The Record of Medical History was kindly loaned to me by Dr. V. Lentini, Fort Lyon Veterans' Hospital.

<sup>26</sup> Post Return, August, 1860; Boyd, *Fort Lyon, Colorado*, p. 23.

because the long drouth had made that material impracticable. For that reason, stone quarries were chosen and timber marked. The first target date was November 15 for completion of quarters with stone walls laid with mud, such structures to be eighteen feet wide with a cumulative length of more than a mile. Roofs and floors of dirt, and doors and windows made of



The fort as it looked in 1863.

beef hides stretched on frames would give the finishing touch.<sup>27</sup> At this point it is pertinent to observe that photographic and other evidence shows that the various structures were not joined together in their arrangement around a rectangular parade ground, nor was there a wall or stockade enclosing all the installations. Modifications appeared as construction proceeded; canvas, for example, took the place of beef hides. With 350 men hard at work during bright, warm days, optimism looked for completion by November 1.<sup>28</sup> Civilians employed by the quartermaster's department in August consisted of one wagonmaster and twenty-nine teamsters. In early September the garrison was augmented by the arrival from Fort Riley of First Lieutenant Robert Ransom, Jr., First Cavalry, and Second Lieutenant Edward G. Bush, Tenth Infantry, with the First

Cavalry band and seventy-seven recruits for the cavalry companies, and from Fort Laramie, Nebraska Territory, came Company C, Tenth Infantry, Captain John Dunovant.<sup>29</sup>

In a report to departmental headquarters dated October 22, 1860 (Monday), Sedgwick stated that four good cavalry stables and two sets of company quarters were ready, and three more sets of the latter would be completed by the end of the week. Scheduled for completion within several days also was a stone stable-corral for the quartermaster's animals, a guardhouse, and a stone bakehouse. Under way was a twenty-six-bed hospital for which there was already ample need. The post's sick report averaged about twenty-four men; many on the list were there because of injuries received in heavy manual labor. More serious was the presence of scurvy in the command, particularly among the cavalry companies, because of a dearth of fresh vegetables. Those men had had none since May 15.<sup>30</sup>

An unofficial progress report came to the editor of the Denver *Rocky Mountain News* in late October. James H. Haynes, an Arkansas Valley pioneer, who had recently finished cutting some four hundred tons of hay for the post, gave rather detailed information. He correctly stated that there were six companies at Fort Wise, but he was way off on the number of men. He said there were six hundred, a considerable exaggeration even if the civilian wagonmaster, the assistant wagonmaster, and the thirty-one teamsters were included.<sup>31</sup> He described the five stables as measuring 250 x 150 feet with stone walls 9 feet high and 2 feet thick, and he spoke of six barracks and twelve sets of officers' quarters, as well as the hospital, guardhouse and bakehouse. During the first two weeks, according to Haynes, 165 six-mule loads of stone were quarried, hauled, and placed, and in a little more than six weeks 128,000 cubic feet of stone were placed in construction. For most of the work makeshift tools of varied origins were used because the government issue did not arrive until about a week before Haynes departed. He mentioned old axes and cottonwood crowbars, trowels made of old stovepipe, and handsaws of superannuated tin plates.<sup>32</sup> The ingenuity of the improvised implements was attested to by Major Sedgwick, who spoke of old axes and hatchets being used

<sup>27</sup> Sedgwick's letter to his sister, September 12, 1860, Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, pp. 268-69.

<sup>28</sup> Sedgwick's letter to his sister, September 19, 1860, *ibid.*, 269.

<sup>29</sup> Post Returns, August and September, 1860. Orders awaited Lieutenant Bush directing him to report to West Point, New York, and he left on September 26. Post Return, September, 1860.

<sup>30</sup> Sedgwick's report, October 22, 1860, Adjutant General, Letters Received; Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 273.

<sup>31</sup> Post Return, October, 1860.

<sup>32</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 31, 1860, p. 2.

for stone hammers, wood and old camp kettles for trowels, and wagon tires for crowbars.<sup>33</sup>

Neither November deadline was met, but by the middle of the month Major Sedgwick was satisfied that the winter comfort of the men was arranged for. All soldiers' quarters were well enough along to be occupied, and the officers' accommodations could be finished within two weeks. He was justifiably proud of what had been accomplished, and he was elated to have received a complimentary letter from the Secretary of War in President Buchanan's cabinet, John B. Floyd.<sup>34</sup> Two rooms were reserved for Sedgwick in the officers' quarters, but he seemed really to prefer living in a tent, where he expected to stay all winter unless the weather became unusually severe.<sup>35</sup>

Also living in a tent, of course, was the only officers' lady at the post, the wife of Lieutenant Ransom. It was Major Sedgwick's opinion, rather ambiguously expressed, that she had all the comforts of home except the house and did not seem to mind the hardship.<sup>36</sup> We do not have the lady's assessment of the situation.

A notable addition to the officers' roster was First Lieutenant James Ewell Brown Stuart, First Cavalry, who had been



with Major Sedgwick in the summer scouting expedition against the Kiowas as official journalist, and he put the concluding touches on his account at Fort Wise, Big Timbers, September 12, 1860.<sup>37</sup> It is probable that Lieutenant Stuart came into Fort Wise on September 8 with A. B. Greenwood, Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

It was the commissioner's hope to conclude a treaty with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes, for which purpose the Congress of the United States had appropriated \$35,000. Indian Agent William Bent had been alerted to have those tribes (really the southern Arapahoes and southern Cheyennes) gathered at the Upper Arkansas Agency ready to talk with Greenwood.<sup>38</sup> Evidently Bent favored a reservation for them that would extend westward along the Arkansas River and north along its tributary, the Fontaine Qui Bouille (Fountain), which idea drew the acid comment that since that included the best agricultural land in the Pikes Peak country, the commissioner no doubt would give it to them.<sup>39</sup> There was some contemporary opinion that the Comanches would have a large turnout to talk with Greenwood, but there was no prior indication that the Kiowas, among the most hostile along the Trail, were expected.

When Commissioner Greenwood reached "Bent's Fort, *alias* Fort Wise"<sup>40</sup> he found only the Arapahoes camped there in force, with a few lodges of Cheyennes. Little Raven and Left Hand were prominent among the Arapaho chiefs, and two or three days later about a dozen of the principal Cheyenne chiefs came in, among whom Black Kettle and White Antelope were conspicuous.<sup>41</sup> During the "talk" a few Kiowa warriors under Satank appeared and expressed a desire for peace,<sup>42</sup> and some

<sup>33</sup> Sedgwick's report, October 22, 1860, Adjutant General, Letters Received; Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 272.

<sup>34</sup> Sedgwick's letter to his sister, November 17, 1860, Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 276.

<sup>35</sup> Sedgwick's letters to his sister, September 25 and October 22, 1860, *ibid.*, 270, 274.

<sup>36</sup> Sedgwick's letter to his sister, September 12, 1860, *ibid.*, 268-69.

<sup>37</sup> "J. E. B. Stuart's Official Journal," *ibid.*, 244.

<sup>38</sup> Greenwood's report may be found in the *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Accompanying the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior, for the Year 1860* (Washington: George W. Bowman, Printer, 1861), pp. 228-30, and in Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, pp. 264-89.

<sup>39</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 14, 1860, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, September 19, 1860, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, October 3, 1860, p. 1; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs . . . 1860*, p. 226.

<sup>42</sup> The paper spelled the name as "Sartac," undoubtedly a typographical error. In his journal, Stuart spelled it "Sotanke." Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 233. Major Sedgwick, Captain William Steele, and Lieutenant Stuart in separate earlier reports referred to the Kiowa as "Litarki." *Ibid.*, 208-12. Sedgwick's and Steele's reports may be found also in Adjutant General, Letters Received, under dates of July 24 and July 14, respectively.

Comanches from Old Woman's band came to the council ground professing friendly feelings.<sup>43</sup>

An extended hunt on the plains was the reason given for the failure of so many Cheyennes to show up, and the few present were reluctant to sign for their absent brethren. Greenwood's plan, a modification of Bent's, would have settled the Cheyennes and Arapahoes south of the Arkansas from the Purgatoire nearly to the mouth of the Huerfano and south to the New Mexico line (then the thirty-eighth parallel of north latitude), and north of the Arkansas to Sand Creek. But no firm agreement was reached. Commissioner Greenwood left for the States on September 20,<sup>44</sup> accompanied by William Bent.<sup>45</sup>

Poor health had fastened onto William Bent, and at the time of the council there was talk of his resignation from the Upper Arkansas Agency.<sup>46</sup> Rumors of his death circulating in Kansas City were effectively scotched when he arrived there with Greenwood, and the *Daily Kansas City Western Journal of Commerce* denied reports of his resignation.<sup>47</sup> Bent, however, had resigned on September 19,<sup>48</sup> and the fact soon became known in the Denver area, at least, through the columns of the *Rocky Mountain News*.<sup>49</sup> Also, the name of Bent's probable successor, Colonel Albert Gallatin Boone, grandson of Daniel Boone, was making the rounds.<sup>50</sup> The speculation turned out to be correct; Boone's commission as agent was transmitted to Greenwood by Jacob Thompson, secretary of the interior, on October 19.<sup>51</sup>

During the autumn of 1860 numerous parties of emigrants traveled over the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail, passing and often stopping at Bent's New Fort and the developing military post a short distance upstream. In remarking about this traffic in the latter part of October, Major Sedgwick observed that no depredations had been committed by Indians in the vicinity; in fact, no hostile ones had even been seen.<sup>52</sup> He was skeptical of many of the alleged slayings by Indians along

the trail: "Half the murders that are committed on the plains, and laid to the Indians, are committed by white men. I am convinced of this."<sup>53</sup>

Contact from the fort with the rest of the world was slow and infrequent. Passing wagon trains were the chief means, with occasional messengers to and from Denver City.<sup>54</sup> The government had granted \$100 per year to carry the mail to the Cimarron Crossing of the Arkansas and return, a round trip of about 240 miles to connect with the Independence-Santa Fe mail; Sedgwick was very disdainful of that, saying that no one could carry for less than that per trip.<sup>55</sup> Only by being on a regular mail route could the people at Fort Wise be relieved of the uncertainty.

On October 20, First Lieutenant James Deshler with Company H, Tenth Infantry, arrived from Fort Garland in the San Luis Valley, west of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and marched into Fort Wise. Arrival of that unit brought the strength of the garrison to 445 men; at the same time the cavalry companies had 282 serviceable horses and only 16 unfit ones. Lieutenant Deshler found orders awaiting him to report for duty at West Point, New York,<sup>56</sup> a transfer which he found very distasteful.<sup>57</sup>

An encouraging sign for the future was given to Sedgwick. A runner came in from the hostile Kiowas and Comanches seeking a council, to which the Major acceded. Several chiefs of the two tribes appeared on November 11, and Sedgwick forwarded the gist of their discussion to Washington with the recommendation that the Indians be granted generous peace terms.<sup>58</sup> Then the beautiful fall weather ended with a drizzling rain on November 16,<sup>59</sup> and toward the end of the month a heavy snow and severe cold seized upon the land.<sup>60</sup> Even with that, a messenger sloshed through the snow from Denver City, bringing news of Abraham Lincoln's election to the Presidency of the United States. Of this Sedgwick approved, but he lamented the probable disruption of the Union resulting from that political development.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 3, 1860, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, September 19, 1860, p. 2, and October 3, 1860, p. 1; *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs . . . 1860*, pp. 228-30; Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, pp. 284-89.

<sup>45</sup> *Daily Kansas City Western Journal of Commerce*, October 7, 1860, p. 3.

<sup>46</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 13, 1860, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> *Daily Kansas City Western Journal of Commerce*, October 7, 1860, p. 3.

<sup>48</sup> *Lavender, Bent's Fort*, p. 346.

<sup>49</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 3, 1860, p. 1.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*; *Daily Kansas City Western Journal of Commerce*, October 13, 1860, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> Letter from Jacob Thompson to A. B. Greenwood, October 19, 1860, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs 1824-91: Upper Arkansas Agency, 1855-64, Microcopy 234, Roll 878, National Archives Microfilm Publications, referred to hereafter as Upper Arkansas Agency, Letters Received.

<sup>52</sup> Sedgwick's report, October 22, 1860, Adjutant General, Letters Received; Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, pp. 273-74.

<sup>53</sup> Sedgwick's letter to his sister, September 25, 1860, Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 271.

<sup>54</sup> Sedgwick's letters to his sister, September 25, 1860, and November 30, 1860, *ibid.*, 270 and 277-78.

<sup>55</sup> Sedgwick's letter to his sister, October 22, 1860, *ibid.*, 274.

<sup>56</sup> Post Return, October, 1860.

<sup>57</sup> Sedgwick's report, October 22, 1860, Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 273.

<sup>58</sup> Sedgwick's letter to his sister, November 17, 1860, *ibid.*, 276-77.

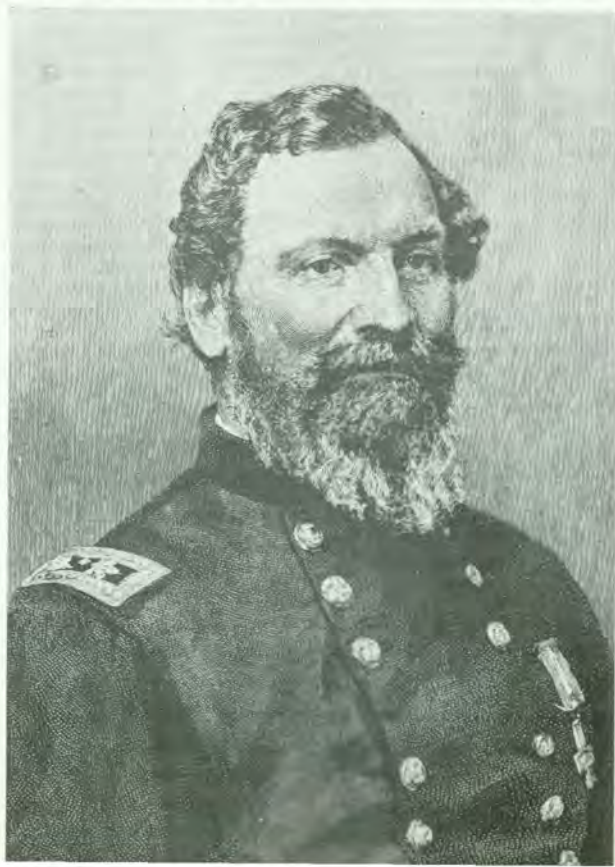
<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Sedgwick's letter to his sister, November 30, 1860, *ibid.*, 277.

<sup>61</sup> Sedgwick's letter to his sister, December 10, 1860, *ibid.*, 279.

The secretary of war, on December 21, endorsed Sedgwick's proposal to make Fort Wise a double-ration post.<sup>62</sup> Absences of some company commanders on leave, on detached service, or in arrest caused some temporary shuffling of positions among the lieutenants at the fort, putting young cavalry officers in command of infantry units for the time being.<sup>63</sup> On January 10, 1861, arrived Special Orders No. 138 from the Headquarters of the Army, New York, designating Fort Wise as temporary regimental headquarters of the First Cavalry, and on the same day Sedgwick received a copy of orders directing the regimental adjutant, the sergeant major, and the regimental clerk to proceed to the post.<sup>64</sup> In the same mail was announcement of a change at departmental headquarters. Brigadier General William S. Harney succeeded Colonel Edwin V. Sumner as commander, the latter going on leave for several months. That left Major Sedgwick as the only field officer with the regiment.<sup>65</sup>

*Major John Sedgwick died in 1864 at Spotsylvania.*



Winter's intensity mounted. Heavy snow southwest of Fort Wise stranded four wagons belonging to the government contracting firm of Russell, Majors, and Company in the Raton Pass on the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. That firm was shipping three hundred tons of provisions and groceries, one hundred tons of which were destined for Fort Union, New Mexico, while the rest were in search of a market. The wagons were put under guard, and the oxen were taken back to Fort Wise. The unseasonal presence of wagon trains in the Raton Mountains in December evidently was explained by the fantastic prices of such commodities in New Mexico and the mining camps of the San Juan Mountains. For example, flour was bringing \$20-\$30 a sack; bacon was selling for \$1 per pound; and it was estimated that if Alexander Majors could get the wagons through to the Mexican settlements and the mining camps he would clear \$100,000.<sup>66</sup>

Toward the end of January, 1861, an item appeared in a paper published in Canon City and copied in the *Daily Kansas City Western Journal of Commerce* telling of a fight between United States troops from Fort Wise and a band of Arapahoes near the Raton Mountains on the Picket-Wah (Purgatoire) River, a southern tributary of the Arkansas. Twelve Indians were said to have been killed and their lodges burned, while one soldier lost his life. Either the story was a fabrication or the troops involved were not part of the Fort Wise garrison. There is no record in the post returns of any fatality among the men, nor is there any indication that a detachment was in the field.<sup>67</sup> If something of that nature happened, it might have befallen some troops on their way to or from New Mexico.

The post of Fort Wise was thought to be well located both in terms of location for dealing with the Plains tribes and for sustaining itself with food raised for men and animals in the fertile bottom lands.<sup>68</sup> Certainly the former was borne out by

<sup>62</sup> Letter from Major Sedgwick to the Assistant Adjutant General, November 8, 1860, Adjutant General, Letters Received; Hafen and Hafen (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 275.

<sup>63</sup> Post Returns, November and December, 1860.

<sup>64</sup> Post Return, January, 1861. It does not appear that those individuals ever came to Fort Wise. The changes induced by the Civil War probably prevented them.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*; Sedgwick's letter to his sister, January 16, 1861, Hafen and Hafen (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, p. 281.

<sup>66</sup> *Daily Kansas City Western Journal of Commerce*, December 27, 1860, p. 2. Alexander Majors built two small stone rooms near Fort Wise the next spring for business premises. Letter from F. B. Culver to William P. Dole, April 18, 1861, Upper Arkansas Agency, Letters Received.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, February 26, 1861, p. 2; *Canon City Times*, February 2, 1861, p. 2; Post Returns, January and February, 1861.

<sup>68</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 3, 1860, p. 2; Leo E. Oliva



Albert G. Boone

the important gathering of Cheyennes and Arapahoes to parley with their new agent, A. G. Boone, in February, along lines already laid down in the council with Commissioner Greenwood. The Treaty of Fort Wise was signed on February 18, 1861, by which agreement the Cheyennes and Arapahoes ceded their traditional hunting grounds for a reservation along the Arkansas between the Sandy Fork (Sand Creek, a northern tributary) and the Purgatoire. Boone was assisted in the negotiations by Dr. F. B. Culver, commissioner and special agent; the Indians' representatives were the (southern) Cheyennes Black Kettle, White Antelope, Lean Bear, Little Wolf, and Left Hand, and the (southern) Arapaho chiefs Little Raven, Storm, Shave Head, and Big Mouth. Among the witnesses were Major John Sedgwick, Lieutenant Robert Ransom, Jr., and Lieutenant J. E. B. Stuart.<sup>69</sup> Boone has been criticized for his handling

*Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), p. 129, citing a letter from Captain William S. Walker to the Quartermaster General, January 15, 1861.

<sup>69</sup> Charles J. Kappler (ed.), *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), II, 807-11; Hafén and Hafén (eds.), *Relations with the Indians*, pp. 289-99.

of the negotiations, especially for his failure to have a broader Cheyenne delegation present, thereby laying his treaty open to future repudiation by bands of that tribe.<sup>70</sup> The document, whatever its flaws, was started on its way to Washington with Dr. Culver on the regular Santa Fe-Independence mail coach, which stopped with its military escort at the fort on February 22.<sup>71</sup>

Major Sedgwick and his men, as well as Agent Boone and his employees, had been given great satisfaction a short time before when the Post Office Department authorized Slemmons, Roberts and Company, carriers of the Santa Fe mail, to make their runs via Fort Wise and the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail instead of using the Cimarron Cutoff.<sup>72</sup> Regular mail service brought relief from the annoyances of slow, unscheduled conveyances and roundabout routes. Ten days after the signing of the treaty, Fort Wise was given a new mail address, so to speak. The Congress of the United States created Colorado Territory, and, by dropping the boundary line with New Mexico Territory southward from the thirty-eighth to the thirty-seventh parallel of north latitude, put the fort within the new political subdivision.

On the evening of the day that the mail coach took the treaty there was celebration at the fort, presumably in observance of the event, provided by the Sons of Temperance, Washington Lodge No. 1, Military. The immense Canvas Hall was decorated with flags and banners, and the members of the order were dressed in full regalia. All the ladies of the post were present, and Lieutenant J. E. B. Stuart, First Sergeant Claude Robertson, and Private Hutchison (the latter two from Company H, Tenth Infantry), gave fluent addresses. Then bountiful refreshments were served, followed by dancing.<sup>73</sup>

Abraham Lincoln's election to the presidency of the United States contributed to the tensions that were destroying the Union. South Carolina seceded on December 20, 1860. In February, 1861, five Deep South states withdrew, and the government of the Confederate States of America was organized; later that month Texas joined them. The fateful firing on Fort Sumter

<sup>70</sup> *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year 1863* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), p. 16; Lavender, *Bent's Fort*, p. 346; George E. Hyde, *Life of George Bent, Written from His Letters*, ed. by Savoie Lottinville (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), pp. 113-14.

<sup>71</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), March 6, 1861, p. 2; letter from A. G. Boone to A. B. Greenwood, February 23, 1861, Upper Arkansas Agency, Letters Received.

<sup>72</sup> *Daily Kansas City Western Journal of Commerce*, February 16, 1861, p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), March 6, 1861, p. 2.





Before his election as governor of Virginia, Henry Wise had served as the U.S. minister to Brazil, 1844-47.

occurred on April 12, and shortly thereafter Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina became members of the Confederacy.

Virginia's secession meant that Fort Wise was named for a man who was a strong advocate of the Confederacy. Henry A. Wise, close associate of Presidents John Tyler and James Buchanan, and governor of Virginia (1856-1860), volunteered for military service in 1861 and was given the rank of brigadier general in the Confederate Army. General Robert E. Lee promoted Wise to the rank of major general on April 6, 1865.<sup>74</sup>

Reverberations of the growing conflict were felt on the south-central plains remarkably soon. Apparently the Texans were driving the Comanches northward to the Arkansas and beyond, causing consternation along that stream and the South Platte. Indian Agent Boone reported this from Denver on April 25, adding that he had asked Major Sedgwick to hold two companies of cavalry at Fort Wise in readiness to stave off any clashes between settlers and immigrants on the one hand and the Comanches on the other. It was Boone's opinion that in most cases of friction the whites were largely to blame because they persisted in selling liquor to the Indians, but that, of course, did not make violence any the less imminent.<sup>75</sup>

Other aspects of the seemingly inexorable drift into civil war were gleaned by Major Sedgwick from the military com-

munications which came to him, and there were signs within Fort Wise of the impending catastrophe. It is not certain that he was entirely privy to their causes, but he could not help but have had a pretty good idea. One of the first Southerners to be granted a leave of absence that probably was in preparation for the great decision that he would have to make was Marylander Captain George H. Steuart in December, 1860.<sup>76</sup> Captain William De Saussure, First Cavalry, left the fort under similar circumstances on January 19, 1861. As a South Carolinian and former captain in the Palmetto Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, during the War with Mexico,<sup>77</sup> he was hearing the call from his state, the first to secede from the Union. Another First Cavalry captain, William S. Walker, a Mississippian, was granted leave commencing February 1, the first step in his response to the summons from Dixie.<sup>78</sup> There was no doubt in the mind of the editor of the *Rocky Mountain News* about what De Saussure and Walker were doing, pointing out that "their residence is in the Chivalric South."<sup>79</sup> And late in February, First Lieutenant J. E. B. Stuart, First Cavalry, received word that his sixty-day leave had been approved;<sup>80</sup> the young Virginian was thinking about resigning his commission.

There were promotions and other changes at Fort Wise also. Lieutenant Robert Ransom, Jr. was advanced to the rank of captain in the First Cavalry and transferred, leaving the post March 31, 1861. The commandant, Major Sedgwick, was promoted to lieutenant colonel of the Second Cavalry, but he had no immediate orders to transfer.<sup>81</sup> The process of upgrading officers and stripping the frontier military posts of regular troops was beginning to set in, although in both the North and South hopes of compromise were still high.

For the moment, transfers into Fort Wise kept ahead of the departures. First Lieutenant William Clinton, Tenth Cavalry, joined in mid-January.<sup>82</sup> Of the same regiment were First Lieutenant James Deshler, who returned from West Point, and Second Lieutenant Albert M. Powell, from detached service,

<sup>74</sup> Post Return, December, 1860.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, January, 1861; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, From Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), I, 369.

<sup>76</sup> Post Return, January, 1861; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 997.

<sup>77</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 23, 1861, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> Post Return, February, 1861.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, April, 1861. The Second Regiment of Cavalry, of which Sedgwick became Lieutenant Colonel, was the one organized on March 3, 1855. Sedgwick succeeded Robert E. Lee, who had been the regiment's lieutenant colonel since its inception. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 71.

<sup>80</sup> Post Return, February, 1861.

<sup>74</sup> Robert Douthat Meade, "Henry Alexander Wise," *Dictionary of American Biography*, ed. by Dumas Malone (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), XX, 423-25.

<sup>75</sup> Letter from A. G. Boone to A. M. Robinson, April 25, 1861, Upper Arkansas Agency, Letters Received.

both of whom joined in March, followed by Second Lieutenant Edward G. Bush in April, also from West Point.<sup>83</sup> And Captain E. W. B. Newby, First Cavalry, returned to duty from his period of arrest.<sup>84</sup>

What was happening in the regular army of the United States as a result of convulsions among the States was made very clear at Fort Wise in March, April, and May, 1861, by successive resignations of four captains of the First Cavalry, all of whom had served there: William De Saussure,<sup>85</sup> George H. Stuart,<sup>86</sup> William S. Walker,<sup>87</sup> and J. E. B. Stuart.<sup>88</sup> Another



George H. Stuart later became a brigadier general in the Confederate Army.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, March and April, 1861.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, May, 1861.

<sup>85</sup> De Saussure served as colonel of the Fifteenth South Carolina Infantry. He was killed at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 369.

<sup>86</sup> Stuart became a brigadier general in the Confederate Army. *Ibid.*, 922.

<sup>87</sup> Walker also served as a brigadier general in the Confederate Army. *Ibid.*, 997.

<sup>88</sup> Stuart was promoted to captain on April 22, 1861. He was, of course, the famous Southern cavalry leader, "Jeb" Stuart. He became a major general and was mortally wounded in the Battle of Yellow Tavern, Virginia, May 10, 1864. *Ibid.*, 933-34.

dispatch showed that great discord permeated the higher ranks as well with the announcement that Brigadier General William S. Harney had relinquished command of the Department of the West to Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon. Harney was suspected of pro-Southern sympathies and had been vigorously opposed by Lyon, who was noted for his strong pro-Lincoln proclivity. The serious disruptions of the service were underscored when, in May, Lieutenant Colonel Sedgwick received General Orders No. 13 requiring all officers, except those who had entered service since April 1, 1861, to take an oath of allegiance.<sup>89</sup> And the deterioration at Fort Wise continued with Lieutenant James Deshler, Tenth Infantry, going on leave to await acceptance of his resignation.<sup>90</sup>

On June 4, 1861, the first important reduction of garrison at Fort Wise was carried out when Companies H and F, First Cavalry, commanded by Captain E. W. B. Newby, rode out en route to Fort Kearny, Nebraska Territory. Less than a week later, Lieutenant Colonel John Sedgwick left for Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, after relinquishing command of Fort Wise to Captain Elmer Otis.<sup>91</sup> The new commandant had been promoted to captain, First Cavalry, on May 1.<sup>92</sup> He had to go to Denver City in July to attend a civil court,<sup>93</sup> and while there he stayed with Colonel Boone, the Indian agent,<sup>94</sup> who seems to have spent much of his time in that town. During the Captain's absence, First Lieutenant Eli Long was in command of the post from July 28 to August 6. Second Lieutenant Joseph H. Taylor was promoted to the next rank and left the post. First Lieutenant Clarence Mauck assumed command of Company G, First Cavalry, on July 23.<sup>95</sup>

Precautionary measures were taken in August to protect government wagon trains on the road to New Mexico against Indians and Southern guerrilla activity. Lieutenant Long with

<sup>89</sup> Post Return, May, 1861; Frank Lawrence Owsley, "William Selby Harney," *Dictionary of American Biography*, VIII, 280-81; H. Edward Nettles, "Nathaniel Lyon," *ibid.*, I, 534-35.

<sup>90</sup> Deshler became a brigadier general in the Confederate Army and was killed September 20, 1863, in the Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 369.

<sup>91</sup> Post Return, June, 1861. Newby became a major in 1862 and retired in 1863. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 744. Sedgwick became a colonel of cavalry and a major general of volunteers. He was killed in the Battle of Spotsylvania, Virginia, May 9, 1864. *Ibid.*, I, 872.

<sup>92</sup> Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 762.

<sup>93</sup> Post Return, July, 1861.

<sup>94</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 31, 1861, p. 3.

<sup>95</sup> Post Return, July, 1861. Taylor served the Union during the Civil War. He was given the rank of lieutenant colonel for gallant and meritorious service in the Battle of Antietam, Maryland, and was promoted to colonel in 1866. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 947.

Company K, First Cavalry, was assigned to escort wagons from Fort Larned to Fort Wise. A few days later, Captain Otis opened a communication from Santa Fe warning him of a possible Confederate attack on his post and the one on Pawnee Fork, Kansas. Long and his men remained on their detached service for a month.<sup>96</sup>

The danger of the Confederates attacking from Texas into New Mexico and then fanning out from there north and west to secure as much of the Southwest as possible was very real by the summer of 1861. The big post of Fort Union, New Mexico, was a key point. It, like Fort Wise and other frontier posts, experienced the divisiveness of the Civil War among its officers, its last pre-war commandant being Major Henry H. Sibley, First Dragoons, who had defected to the Confederacy, and was mounting its campaign against the Southwest.<sup>97</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Edward R. S. Canby, new commander of the Department of New Mexico, had among his many concerns that of keeping open the supply and communication route of the Santa



E. R. S. Canby

Fe Trail. He asked New Mexico's Governor Abraham Rencher to raise three companies of volunteers to patrol the Cimarron Cutoff, and requested the commanding officer of Fort Larned, Kansas, to recommend to all trains passing his post to use the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail past Fort Wise and over the Raton Pass because it was safer.<sup>98</sup>

The Arapahoes became extremely active in August around Fort Larned, which did not have a garrison sufficient to cope. They were attacking wagon trains for their supplies.<sup>99</sup> Early in September word was brought into Denver that large numbers of Indians, presumably Arapahoes, were at Fort Wise, the Upper Arkansas Agency, clamoring for their annuities because they were suffering from hunger. Captain Otis distributed some rations, but there was fear for the fort because it was so feebly garrisoned. Rumor had it that Otis had been given ten days to pay out the demanded goods or be attacked.<sup>100</sup>

The threat was not fulfilled, perhaps because the return of Captain Eli Long (promoted to captain, Fourth Cavalry) and Company K, First Cavalry,<sup>101</sup> eased the situation. Interestingly enough, the Kiowas, considered to be the most dangerous and recalcitrant of the Plains tribes along the Santa Fe Trail, were at this time working as spies for Captain Otis, keeping him apprised of the movements in New Mexico of the Texans, their old enemies. About seventy-five warriors performed this service.<sup>102</sup> Agent Boone went down to Fort Wise early in September and soon was convinced that Texans were tampering with the Kiowas and Comanches. He was able to satisfy them with a draft treaty promising permanent agreement with annuities in return for promises not to molest white people on any of the overland routes for the next year.<sup>103</sup>

Around the middle of October, a party of eight Comanches from Texas came into Fort Wise bearing a United States flag. Agent Boone thought they were devoted to the Union cause although it was evident that the Texans had been working on them. He saw an opportunity to bind that tribe to the Northern side and wrote to Washington, suggesting a treaty and annui-

<sup>96</sup> Post Return, September, 1861.

<sup>97</sup> Utley, *Fort Union National Monument*, pp. 23, 64.

<sup>98</sup> Oliva, *Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail*, pp. 140-42.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 141-42.

<sup>100</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 11, 1861, p. 2.

<sup>101</sup> Post Return, September, 1861.

<sup>102</sup> *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Vol. IV, p. 67.

<sup>103</sup> Letter from A. G. Boone to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, September 7, 1861, Upper Arkansas Agency, Letters Received; Oliva, *Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail*, p. 142.

ties. The eight Comanches, while awaiting instructions from Washington, agreed to act as spies and report to the commanding officer of the post the presence of any Texans who might be discovered north of the Dry Cimarron. Captain Otis signified his full concurrence with Boone's ideas.<sup>104</sup>

A few days later Comanches came to Fort Wise in large numbers (five or six hundred lodges) to express their desire to enter in the Upper Arkansas Agency. Boone naturally was anxious to accommodate them, especially when he saw a copy of "letters of safeguard" granted to several chiefs by Albert Pike, commissioner of the Confederate States to the Indian nations and tribes west of the Arkansas. The document was dated August 12, 1861, from Pike's agency for the Comanches, Wichitas, and other bands near the False Washita River. The letters were an outgrowth of a treaty signed on the same date by principal chief Bis-te-va-na, of the Ya-pa-rich-ca band of Comanches, agreeing that they and others would settle between the Red and Canadian Rivers on lands leased from the Choctaws and Chickasaws. Boone, to counter this, promised the Comanches that they "would hear from their great father at Washington within thirty days."<sup>105</sup>

Changes were taking place at Fort Wise in the meantime. Fear of Confederate attacks in New Mexico increased, and the demand for additional troops there expanded. First Lieutenant Mauck, Company H, Tenth Infantry, rode out of Fort Wise on September 16, 1861, headed for Santa Fe under orders from departmental headquarters.<sup>106</sup> It was directed also that other companies were to follow as soon as they were relieved by troops from Denver,<sup>107</sup> really meaning Camp Weld near Denver, where the companies of the First Regiment of Colorado Infantry Volunteers were assembling from recruitment under the direction of William Gilpin, Colorado's first territorial governor.<sup>108</sup> In addition to those major garrison changes, the post of Fort Wise re-

ceived a new medical officer in the person of Assistant Surgeon John T. Janeway, who joined September 27. Surgeon Thomas Madison had been relieved of duty four days previously and left for Fort Riley.<sup>109</sup> Fort Wise was being drawn more and more into the orbit of the military Department of New Mexico by the Confederacy's menace to the posts in that territory. The vital link of the Santa Fe Trail had to be kept open. Headquarters of that department requested that Governor Gilpin, of Colorado Territory, send companies of volunteer troops to Fort Wise; the company of the Tenth Infantry stationed there would be sent to Santa Fe as soon as possible.<sup>110</sup>

Suddenly, Confederate guerrilla activity broke out within striking distance of Fort Wise in October. A detachment of fifty-five cavalymen followed Captain Eli Long out of the post on the evening of October 18 in pursuit of marauders, coming upon them the following evening. Thirty-seven prisoners were taken together with arms, horses, and equipment. It is not known exactly where they were apprehended, but it was not at a great distance from the fort<sup>111</sup> since the total march was only 110 miles. Another foray led by Lieutenant J. M. Warner, with thirty-two men, left on October 20 and returned on October 23, bringing in three secessionists and their effects. Distance marched was 175 miles.<sup>112</sup>

The batch of prisoners was too large to be held easily or safely at Fort Wise. To relieve Captain Otis of that responsibility, one of the companies of the new First Regiment of Colorado Volunteer Infantry, that of Captain Samuel H. Cook (recruited in the South Clear Creek mining district),<sup>113</sup> was ordered to Fort Wise to bring the prisoners to Denver. The *Rocky Mountain News* expressed the hope that they might have the chance "to thrash some guerrilla band of Secessionists."<sup>114</sup>

The company of Colorado Volunteers did not have an opportunity to trounce any guerrillas on the way down to Fort Wise. The return trip with the prisoners (including one taken at Colorado City on the way through), however, was reported to have been one of forced marches, with daily reports of pursuit by the enemy. But Denver was reached without mishap,

<sup>104</sup> Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Accompanying the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1861 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1861), pp. 104-05. This source refers to Otis as captain in the Fourth Artillery. This is an error. He was promoted to captain in the Fourth Cavalry on August 3, 1861. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 762.

<sup>105</sup> Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs . . . 1861, pp. 105-06; letter from A. G. Boone to William P. Dole, October 26, 1861, Upper Arkansas Agency, Letters Received.

<sup>106</sup> Mauck served as a Union cavalry officer during the war, being promoted to major for gallant and meritorious service in the Atlanta campaign. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 697.

<sup>107</sup> Post Return, September, 1861.

<sup>108</sup> William Clarke Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War: The New Mexico Campaign of 1862* (Denver: The State Historical and Natural History Society, 1906), p. 45.

<sup>109</sup> Post Return, September, 1861. Madison resigned August 17, 1861, and served as a surgeon with the Confederate Army. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 683.

<sup>110</sup> Post Return, October, 1861; Martin Hardwick Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960), pp. 65-66.

<sup>111</sup> Heitman, *Historical Register*, II, 407.

<sup>112</sup> Post Return, October, 1861; *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), November 23, 1861, p. 2.

<sup>113</sup> Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers*, p. 49.

<sup>114</sup> *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 30, 1861, p. 2.

and the secessionists were placed under guard at Camp Weld.<sup>115</sup>

In the late autumn of 1861, three companies of the First Regiment of Colorado Volunteer Infantry, all commanded by Colonel Samuel F. Tappan, marched to Fort Wise to reinforce the garrison,<sup>116</sup> which was necessary if the post were to retain any real effectiveness. The two remaining companies of the Fourth Cavalry, G and K (the First Cavalry had become the Fourth Cavalry by Act of Congress, August 3, 1861),<sup>117</sup> rode out under the command of Captain Elmer Otis en route to Washington, D. C., on November 24.<sup>118</sup> That compliance with orders depleted the garrison from 114 to 46 men, the latter comprising Company C, Tenth Infantry, whose commanding officer, Second Lieutenant Reese E. Fleeson, became commandant of the post.<sup>119</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Tappan, Colorado Volunteers, did not assume command of the post; it always remained in the hands of regular army officers, whatever their rank.

The regular garrison was temporarily increased to 117 men with the arrival of First Lieutenant Sidney Banks, Company E, Third Cavalry, and a detachment of New Mexico Volunteers, First Lieutenant H. P. Martin.<sup>120</sup> The little force came up from Fort Union and was under the command of First Lieutenant John Ritter, Fifteenth Infantry, who assumed command of Fort Wise on December 22.<sup>121</sup> But those units stayed only until January 13, 1862, when they returned to Fort Union.<sup>122</sup> During that period, command of the post was given to First Lieutenant James M. Warner, Eighth Infantry, who was temporarily attached.<sup>123</sup>

In New Mexico the Confederate forces under Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley advanced up the valley of the Rio



Grande, where they defeated the Union troops commanded by Colonel Edward R. S. Canby at Valverde, near Fort Craig, on February 21, 1862. Although they had not heard of the engagement, of course, it happened that the companies of the First Regiment of Colorado Volunteer Infantry started for New Mexico the next day to reinforce Colonel Canby. They moved out from Camp Weld and Fort Wise, merging into one column in the snow at Gray's Ranch on the Purgatoire River near the little settlement of Trinidad. Both contingents had heard of the defeat at Valverde by the time they joined forces.<sup>124</sup>

Fort Wise was left with only Company C, Tenth Infantry, for garrison duty, again a dangerously weak circumstance tempting to Indians or guerrillas. Lieutenant Warner received word that Captain Clark's Company of the Sixth Kansas Volunteers would be sent out, but the post returns show nothing of their arrival.<sup>125</sup> All was quiet and routine at the post on the Arkansas as if everyone were waiting for a report of battle in New Mexico that probably would determine whether the fort would become a bastion of the Confederacy. At last the news came of the decisive battles at Apache Canyon and Glorieta (March 26-28), in which the combined force of federal regular army units and volunteers destroyed Sibley's northward thrust and saved New Mexico, and probably much more, for the Union.<sup>126</sup> Perhaps those victories made orders and letters from more distant theaters of the Civil War seem more real and relevant to the small garrison on the plains of southeastern Colorado. At least, one may wonder what was his reaction when Lieutenant Warner read Presidential War Order No. 3, dated from the Executive Mansion, March 11, 1862, directing that Major General George B. McClellan take command of the De-

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, November 23, 1861, p. 2.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, March 22, 1862, p. 2; Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers*, p. 50.

<sup>117</sup> Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 70.

<sup>118</sup> Otis served with distinction during the Civil War and retired as colonel of the Eighth Cavalry in 1891. *Ibid.*, I, 762.

<sup>119</sup> Post Return, November, 1861.

<sup>120</sup> Post Return, December, 1861. The Third Cavalry was formerly the Regiment of Mounted Riflemen, companies of which had been part of the Fort Union garrison since 1856. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 68; Utley, *Fort Union National Monument*, p. 68.

<sup>121</sup> Ritter was transferred to the Fifteenth Infantry on May 14, 1861. He had been with the Fifth Infantry, which was part of the garrison of Fort Union, and he evidently stayed there on detached service. He participated in the battle of Apache Canyon, New Mexico, in March, for which he was made brevet major. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 833; Utley, *Fort Union National Monument*, p. 68.

<sup>122</sup> Post Return, January, 1862.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers*, pp. 58, 75-77.

<sup>125</sup> Post Returns, February and March, 1862.

<sup>126</sup> Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers*, pp. 85-127; Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign*, pp. 124-60.

partment of the Potomac,<sup>127</sup> a demotion of the over-cautious McClellan from his position as commander of the Army of the United States. Certainly of more direct import at Fort Wise was General Orders No. 1, May 5, from headquarters of the District of Kansas within the newly organized Department of the Mississippi, announcing Brigadier General James G. Blunt as commander of the new district.<sup>128</sup> And when Warner received a letter from Santa Fe on May 26, telling him that Confederate prisoners were on their way through to Fort Larned and he should furnish them with rations,<sup>129</sup> Fort Wise seemed for a while a little closer to the mainstream of that massive and bloody war.

More changes came in June. One section of the Ninth Battery, Wisconsin Volunteers, First Lieutenant W. D. Crocker, came to Fort Wise, and Assistant Surgeon John H. Janeway terminated his services there because he was ordered to the Surgeon General's Office in Washington.<sup>130</sup> But the most important development was the change of the post's name from Fort Wise to Fort Lyon,<sup>131</sup> from honoring the now Confederate

former Governor of Virginia to commemorating an early, high-ranking Union casualty, Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon, killed in the Battle of Wilson's Creek, Missouri, August 10, 1861.<sup>132</sup> Brigadier General Blunt at Fort Leavenworth, June 5, 1862, ordered the change in these words:

As it is not the intention of the Genl Commanding, to perpetuate the memory of men who have rendered themselves infamous as traitors to the Government, it is therefore ordered that the Military Post, within this Department, known as Fort Wise, shall hereafter be known and designated as Fort Lyon.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Post Return for the week ending April 12, 1862. In February weekly post returns were ordered from Fort Wise. Post Return, February, 1862.

<sup>128</sup> Post Return for the last week in May, 1862.

<sup>129</sup> Post Return for the week ending May 17, 1862.

<sup>130</sup> It appears that assignment to Fort Wise was Janeway's first tour of duty. He served during the Civil War, and became a lieutenant colonel deputy surgeon general in 1893, retiring that same year. Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 570.

<sup>131</sup> Post Return, June, 1862.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 650.

<sup>133</sup> Record of Medical History.

# First Ladies of Colorado: Celia O. Crane Waite

BY HELEN CANNON

Davis Hanson Waite, Colorado's Populist Party governor from 1893 to 1895, is still one of the most controversial political figures in the state's history. An easterner by birth and background, an aristocrat, an intellectual, and a "rugged individualist," he came to Leadville, Colorado, in 1879 as a practicing lawyer. In 1881 he moved to Aspen, where, in addition to his law practice, he became active in the newspaper business and soon found himself deeply involved in politics. He was accompanied to Leadville by his first wife, Frances Eliza Russell Waite, and four of their five children.<sup>1</sup> Frances Eliza Waite died of pneumonia on November 7, 1880. Five years later Waite married Mrs. Celia O. Crane Maltby, a widow with three children and a cousin of the first Mrs. Waite.

Celia O. Crane was born in Sauquoit, Oneida County, New York, on October 18, 1845.<sup>2</sup> She was one of three children of John M. Crane and Jane E. Cook Crane.<sup>3</sup> The present descendants of Celia Crane Waite claim their ancestry back to John

Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and son of Edward III of England.<sup>4</sup> The published Crane genealogy shows that they are descendants of Henry Crane, of the first generation of Cranes in America, who was in Wethersfield, Connecticut, by 1655. It was Henry Crane of the fourth generation, a thrifty, well-to-do farmer, who was the first Crane to settle in Oneida County, New York. John M. Crane, Celia's father, was one of the sixth generation of Cranes. He was born in Oneida County, New York, and like his predecessors was a well-to-do farmer.<sup>5</sup> Jane E. Cook, Celia's mother, was a daughter of Archibald Cook and Betsy Mosher Cook, originally of New York State and later of Knox County, Illinois. It is through the Josiah Mosher family that the present descendants of Celia and Davis Hanson Waite trace their ancestry to John Gaunt.<sup>6</sup>

Very little is known about the childhood and girlhood of Celia O. Crane other than that they were spent on the family farm near Sauquoit. Her elementary education was received in the local village school, and she later attended and was graduated from Jamestown Academy in Jamestown, New York, a school probably comparable to our present-day high schools.<sup>7</sup> According to family legend, she lived in the home of her cousin, Mrs. Davis Hanson Waite, while attending the academy.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Waite was born in Jamestown, New York, and was likewise a graduate of Jamestown Academy. From the outbreak of the Civil War until 1876, he lived in Jamestown, being proprietor and editor of the *Chautauqua Democrat* and the *Jamestown Journal*. It must have been sometime during this period that Celia attended the academy.

Girls in the 1860's were likely to marry very young, but this was not true of Celia O. Crane. She was twenty-four when she married Daniel Webster Maltby, also of Sauquoit, on January 8, 1868, at Sauquoit.<sup>9</sup> Maltby was born in 1838/39 in Herkimer County, New York, the son of Isaac M. and Lucinda Steadman Maltby. Both Isaac and Lucinda Maltby were born in 1808: he in Oneida County and she in Otsego County, New York. This branch of the Maltby family was descended from Morris and Sibil/Sybil Todd Maltby. Morris Maltby was born in 1772, and came from Bradford, Connecticut, to Paris, Oneida County, New York, when Paris was a new town.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Russell Waite, born December 20, 1853, Princeton, Green Lake County, Wisconsin, and living in Washington, D. C., November 28, 1901; Jessie Francelia Waite (Mrs. T. Frank Allen), born July 26, 1856, Princeton, Green Lake County, Wisconsin, and died September 30, 1880, Leadville, Colorado; Olive Isabel Waite (Mrs. B. Clark Wheeler), born April 4, 1861, Warren County, Pennsylvania, and died May 13, 1898, Denver, Colorado; Ernest Kimball Waite, born November 29, 1864, Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York, and died August 21, 1865; May Josephine Waite (Mrs. Joseph Andrews Garrison and later Mrs. Constantine Quilez), born December 24, 1873, Jamestown, Chautauqua County, New York, and committed suicide on March 2, 1911, Los Angeles, California (Certificate of Death No. 1072, Los Angeles County). See Quantrille McClung, "Governors of Colorado: Davis Hanson Waite," *Colorado Genealogist*, XXI (October, 1960), 101-09, and papers of Mrs. Frank Hanson Waite, copies in the possession of the author, hereafter referred to as the Frank Hanson Waite Papers.

<sup>2</sup> Ellery Bicknell Crane, *Genealogy of the Crane Family* (Worcester, Mass.: Press of Charles Hamilton, 1895), I, 139-40; Frank Hanson Waite Papers; gravestone in Red Butte Cemetery, Aspen, Colorado.

<sup>3</sup> The other children were Francis Marion Crane, born August 3, 1839, Oneida County, New York, and died September 27, 1885, Nebraska; Cornelia E. Crane, born October 21, 1846, Oneida County, New York, and died January 16, 1866, Oneida County, New York. Crane, *Genealogy of the Crane Family*, I, 139-40; Frank Hanson Waite Papers.

<sup>4</sup> Frank Hanson Waite Papers.

<sup>5</sup> Crane, *Genealogy of the Crane Family*, I, 103; 139-40.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Hanson Waite Papers.

<sup>7</sup> *Aspen Times*, January 14, 1937, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Mrs. Frank Hanson Waite, Palisade, Colorado, June 12, 1967.

<sup>9</sup> *Utica Morning Herald* (New York), January 9, 1868, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> 1865 census, Paris, Oneida County, New York; Frank Hanson Waite Papers.

Before he married Celia O. Crane, Daniel Webster Maltby had served as a sergeant in the Twenty-third Illinois Infantry and had been taken prisoner on September 20, 1861, at the battle between Colonel James Mulligan and General Sterling Price at Lexington, Missouri. He was discharged from the army on June 18, 1864.<sup>11</sup> Again, according to family hearsay, the marriage was not a happy one. Maltby was a ne'er-do-well, opposed to work and willing to live on his wife's money. Three children were born of this marriage, all in Oneida County, New York: Arthur C. on December 28, 1868; Corneila C. (Kitty) on September 19, 1871, and Harry W. on April 5, 1873.<sup>12</sup> Just when and how the marriage was dissolved is not known, but Celia was listed in the 1875 census of Paris as a widow. Maltby supposedly died in Galesburg, Illinois.<sup>13</sup>

In 1872 two tragedies occurred in the John M. Crane family which may have influenced the direction of Celia's future life and mental attitude. On May 1 the family residence and main barn were burned to ashes.<sup>14</sup> At first her father seemed to take the loss well, but within a few days he became melancholy and depressed, talking much to himself and thinking constantly of his troubles. Then on the night of May 9 he hung himself. He had in the past suffered from periods of mental derangement and had attempted suicide by taking poison.<sup>15</sup> After her husband's death Mrs. Crane made her home with Celia until she died in Colorado on March 24, 1895.<sup>16</sup>

"For better or for worse," Celia O. Crane Maltby and Davis Hanson Waite were married at Ontario, Knox County, Illinois, on January 8, 1885.<sup>17</sup> She was forty and he was sixty years old. What brought them together after their acquaintance some twenty-odd years earlier in New York State is not known. It could be that Celia and her mother were living in Knox County, for Celia's cousin, James W. Mosher, was at the time of the marriage a prosperous landowner and farmer living on the "Old Mosher" homestead which had belonged to Emerson and Mary Crane Mosher. (Mary Crane Mosher was a sister of Celia's father.)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Henry C. Rogers, *History of the Town of Paris* (Utica, N. Y.: White & Floyd, 1881), p. 242.

<sup>12</sup> Frank Hanson Waite Papers. Arthur C. Maltby died May 6, 1914/15, in Colorado; Cornelia C. Maltby (Mrs. Daniel H. Bruce) was living in 1937; Harry W. Maltby died September 27, 1927.

<sup>13</sup> Obituary of Celia O. Waite, *Aspen Times*, January 14, 1937, p. 1. The author has been unable to verify this statement. The death records of Knox County, Illinois, start in 1878; they have been checked for the years 1878-1933.

<sup>14</sup> *Utica Morning Herald* (New York), May 2, 1872, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, May 10, 1872, p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Frank Hanson Waite Papers.

The newly married couple arrived in Aspen, Colorado, by stagecoach on January 18, 1885, accompanied by two of the Maltby children and Celia's mother. They settled in a log house on Durant Street until their two-story red-brick home was erected in 1890 at 234 West Francis Street. The house is still standing, and is in good condition and occupied. Their son, Frank Hanson Waite, was born in Aspen on January 16, 1886.<sup>19</sup>

Seven years after her arrival in the isolated village of Aspen, high in the Rocky Mountains, Celia Crane Waite became First Lady of Colorado with the election of her husband as governor. The very popular and society-oriented outgoing First Lady, Mrs. John Long Routt, introduced Mrs. Waite to Denver's fashionable society with an elegantly appointed tea for five hundred at her handsome mansion on the corner of Fourteenth and Welton Streets. As usual, Eliza Pickrell Routt was the center of attraction and received more lines in the newspaper accounts of the affair than Mrs. Waite.

... [Mrs. Routt] never looked lovelier. In lieu of the rich dark velvets which form her favorite toilettes for state occasions, she wore a clinging gown of silver-gray crepe, in such perfect harmony with the soft waves of hair framing her sunny face, that one would infer an artist framed the combination. Her costume was flecked with touches of foamy lace; her large, dark eyes sparkled with pleasurable excitement as she presented one friend after another to the wife of the governor-elect, and, taken altogether, the impression made was one of which her friends are proud.

Mrs. Waite appeared as much at ease in her somewhat trying position as though receiving friends in her own private parlor. Her slender figure was handsomely costumed in a perfectly fitted gown of gray bengaline, with Persian bands and point lace. Although the strain upon her nervous strength must have been severe, excitement only lent a most becoming color to her cheeks, and every guest received a cordial greeting.<sup>20</sup>

The other leading newspapers of the capital city likewise spoke in glowing terms of Mrs. Routt and referred to Mrs. Waite as the "modest little lady." The commentators could find nothing unusual in the toilettes of the important ladies at the inauguration ceremony on January 10, 1893, and there was no inaugural ball on which to lavish their writing skills.

<sup>19</sup> *Aspen Times*, January 24, 1885.

<sup>20</sup> *Portrait and Biographical Album of Knox County, Illinois* (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Company, 1886), pp. 826-27; Crane, *Genealogy of the Crane Family*, I, 139.

<sup>19</sup> McClung, "Governors of Colorado: Davis Hanson Waite," p. 103.

<sup>20</sup> *Denver Republican*, January 8, 1893, p. 11.





It soon became evident that Mrs. Waite was not to be a conventional First Lady. The Populist Party on whose ticket Davis Hanson Waite became governor of Colorado was a reform party, with the nation's monetary standard and labor reform the chief issues of the platform. Waite ardently believed in the principles of the party. He was a fighter and used every available means to establish his reform views. Mrs. Waite shared her husband's ideas and gave her time and energy to aiding and protecting him rather than to what are often called "women's interests." Both became the target of harsh personal criticism in the newspapers of Colorado and other regions where the Populist Party was active. Finally, a friend in New York came to her defense in an article published in the *Utica Press*, which was reprinted by the *Rocky Mountain News*. It was a naive bit of journalism hardly worthy of a first-rate newspaper, but worthwhile to reprint again in part for its indication of the character of Mrs. Waite and for the revelation that her First Ladyship could not have been a very pleasant one.

There is an old saying that "it is always the best fruit that the birds are picking at," and there has been so much "picking" of late at the wife of Governor Waite, it seems time that some one among her many old friends should say a few words in her defense. In the village of Sauquoit, where she was born and brought up and where she resided for many

years, she is much beloved and has many warm personal friends who know her to be a noble, kind-hearted woman, one of "the salt of the earth," frugal, industrious, full of "vim," energy and vivacity; ever ready to lend a helping hand in "every good word and work." Mrs. Waite comes from an excellent family, her maternal ancestors, the Moshers, being related to General Warren, of revolutionary fame. She is also a model housekeeper, descended from generations of notable housekeepers famed for neatness, skill and ingenuity. In fact, Mrs. Waite seems to possess exactly the right qualities to make her a fitting help-meet for Governor Waite in his work of state housekeeping, his Herculean task of cleaning up and purifying Colorado, and making it as bright and clean as its own new silver. It is not to be wondered at that when gambling and intemperance are interferred with, it is something like stirring up a hornets' nest, and from the multitude of stinging newspaper articles, it would seem as though all the hornets in the United States from Maine to California were attacking the governor and Mrs. Waite. It has been said of her that "she is the governor's prime minister." Surely he could never find a better one, and how blessed the world would be if all men would make their wives their prime ministers and heed their advice. It has also been said that "she has snubbed Denver society," it being stated as a reason for her action that she could not afford "to entertain nor dress like the women of Capitol Hill." If such be the case, is it not to her credit that she has the moral courage to set the good example of living within her means? . . . It is reported that "Mrs. Waite makes her own clothes in order to have more money to spend on charity." Is not that a lovely thing for her, or any other woman to do? And if callers crowd upon the governor at unseasonable hours, does she not do well, and show herself to be a good wife in having an eye to his comfort by telling them the truth, that "he is busy," or "he is indisposed," or "he is asleep"? . . .

If Mrs. Waite has shown "with clinched hands," that she desires her husband's authority should be maintained, is she not right in that? . . . "They say, too, that she talks very rapidly and very loudly." "Well, is there not a crying need in our country today of at least a hundred thousand more women like Mrs. Waite to "clinch" their hands if need be, and raise their voices and "talk very rapidly and very loudly" against gambling, intemperance, bribery, corruption, extravagance, and other evils of our times, for how else shall the evils be put away from our midst? . . . A number of years ago, when Mrs. Waite's older children were small, some of her neighbors were speaking of her good government over them, and one woman remarked: "Her children have to mind for she does not give them any peace until they do." If the same policy might prevail in enforcing the laws of our land, we should doubtless have fewer saloons, more happy homes and less of hard times, for is it not well known that often the law breakers are allowed to go on unmolested, no one taking the trouble to make them obey the laws? During Mrs. Waite's visit to her native town last August she was heard to remark . . . that when Mr. Waite was traveling through the State of Colorado addressing the people previous to his election, he would not "treat" or be "treated." Surely our country has need of men who can be elected to office without the use of strong drink. . . . At the time of his inauguration, being questioned as to his views on the subject of society and matters naturally pertaining thereto,

he replied that society was very well for those who enjoyed those things. He had no objection to people disposing of their time as it pleased them, but added that if the matter were left to him there would be no inauguration ball, as it would only entail an unnecessary expense and be of no possible benefit to anyone. Would it not be a blessed thing for our country if there were more governors and government officials who were equally as willing to dispense with show, and were endeavoring to avoid "entailing unnecessary expense?" Do we not more and more feel the need of good management at our national capital, and the need of temperate people at the head of each and every department of our government?<sup>21</sup>

Mrs. Waite was the acknowledged leader of the Populist women in the state and took almost as active a part in Waite's campaign for re-election in 1894 as did the governor himself. The amendment to the constitution of Colorado granting the franchise to women had been ratified during the Waite administration, and although the mandate for the act had been included in the original constitution and much work toward its adoption had been accomplished during previous administrations, Governor and Mrs. Waite had reason to be hopeful that the Populist Party would carry the women's vote. Contrarily, it did not happen that way; the women voted heavily against the party that had enfranchised them. Several days after their bitter defeat, a reporter held an interview with Mrs. Waite in the governor's private parlor in the Earl Hotel to get her opinion on some of the major issues of the past campaign, in particular, her views on the part played by the women of the state in the election. Unfortunately, she expressed her opinion freely and rather tactlessly:

Why, yes . . . if you would like to know of what I think of the women at the election I think it was simply disgraceful. The behavior of the women of Capitol hill, both before and after the election, has been perfectly scandalous and would have disgraced the residents of Market st. It amazed me that any woman who pretended to be decent should come down on the public streets and conduct themselves as the women of the hill have done at this election. The idea of their coming down and acting as they did in their silks and satins and diamonds . . . I never was so disgusted with anything in my life as I am at the results of the equal suffrage movement.

I favored it before it passed the legislature and worked for it all I could and it was due entirely to the efforts of the Populist party that they were given the ballot at all. They have simply gone and cut the throat of the party which gave them the right to vote and have disgraced their womanhood. The governor also opposes the enfranchisement of women as

<sup>21</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), April 22, 1894, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Denver Times-Sun*, November 13, 1894, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Jerome C. Smiley, *History of Denver* (Denver: The Times-Sun Publishing Company, 1901), p. 927.

much as I do now, and if he had his own way they would never get it again. They have shown that they are no more fit for the ballot than children under 16 years of age. I don't think the governor is absolutely against giving them the right to vote in other states, but I think he thinks they should receive some kind of education in politics before they get the full privilege of American citizenship. Why, they have come down around here and acted like a lot of hoodlums, blowing horns and showing that they know no more of the political questions than foreigners ignorant of the English language. . . .

. . . Then I know of lots of them who sold their vote as the men did, and were not ashamed of it, either. There were numbers of them who sold out for a package of chewing gum and a carriage. Oh, how ashamed I would be of a thing like that.

The women of Denver and Capitol Hill especially have voted for the return of the saloon element to power, and this is what they have pretended to be so much against. . . . The women will be responsible for this state of things, for they went right against the man who has brought the city up to what it is. The victory is not a Republican one, for all three of the old parties entered into a combine to down the governor. . . .<sup>22</sup>

After his defeat for a second term, Waite continued to live in Denver. For two years he attempted to establish himself in the mining industry but his ventures were not successful. He did some lecturing and writing on many of the reform issues he had sponsored as governor, but neither he nor Mrs. Waite remained active in the local Populist Party. In 1897 they returned to their home in Aspen which had been rented during their absence. Three years later, on November 27, 1901, Waite died of a heart attack while sitting quietly in the kitchen peeling apples. He was vigorous and active to the end, even though as one historian records, he had been "quiescent" after many years of involvement in stormy politics.<sup>23</sup>

On Decoration Day of 1907, the Western Federation of Miners unveiled and dedicated a monument over the unmarked



grave of former Governor Waite in Red Butte Cemetery, Aspen, in commemoration of his friendship and aid during the great strike in the Cripple Creek mining district in 1894. It is an impressive marker of Colorado granite with a life-sized engraved bust of the governor on one side. This grateful tribute to her husband, it is hoped, partially compensated for the criticisms Mrs. Waite had endured in past years.

A poem composed by Mrs. Waite in memory of Governor Waite is among her personal papers. It is undated, but the reader senses that it was written immediately after the dedication ceremony while the events of the day as well as the memories of the past were still vivid in her mind.

IN MEMORY OF GOVERNOR WAITE

- 1 This granite structure deftly hewn  
By sculptor's magic hand,  
Breathes out the very life of him,  
So plain, and yet so grand.
- 2 The face so grave and yet serene  
Where every smile has fled,  
Ere they had closed those wistful eyes,  
And left him with the dead.
- 3 That brow so broad and finely knit  
Where memory built its nest,  
To give new thought, to every form  
Cherished within that breast.
- 4 We gaze into those thoughtful eyes,  
To catch each outward look,  
That we may read those truthful words  
As written in a book.
- 8 Those ringing words were, "do your best,  
Live out the life you crave,  
By doing good to all mankind,  
From the cradle to the grave."
- 15 We bid you now a sad adieu,  
Lest silence break the spell,  
And we the living, to the dead  
Would say, farewell, farewell.<sup>24</sup>

After Governor Waite's death, Mrs. Waite continued to live in the family home. He had been thrifty but not prudent in the use of money, and much of Mrs. Waite's inheritance had been spent on the two campaigns. She converted the large old home into a rooming-and-boarding house for teachers in the Aspen schools. Her contemporaries recall that the household was run in the same efficient, methodical, and disciplined manner as it was during the years it housed the children of three marriages.

<sup>24</sup> Frank Hanson Waite Papers.

The small town of Aspen in the early 1900's offered very little in the way of society and entertainment. But, Mrs. Waite had spent most of her life in small villages and had developed her own inner resources. She was an inveterate reader and an analytical observer of the current news. For diversion, she played an expert game of bridge and cribbage. When she was approximately eighty years old, Mrs. Waite had a photograph made which shows her still a frail, modest-appearing little lady but much mellowed by time. She suffered from arthritis for many years, and in the photograph she wears gloves to hide the crippling effects of the disease. At eighty was she also mellow toward the vanities of the ladies of Capitol Hill?



During the last decade of her life, Mrs. Waite was once again grandmother to another family of grandchildren. Frank Hanson Waite, the only child of her marriage to Davis Hanson Waite, married Maud Baron, a widow with one child, on August 23, 1928.<sup>25</sup> They had three children, two girls and a boy.<sup>26</sup> Celia O. Crane Maltby Waite died in their home in Basalt, Colorado, on January 6, 1937.<sup>27</sup> The cause of death would be termed natural, that is, due to age. A simple funeral service was held in the Aspen Community Church, and she was buried in the Red Butte Cemetery beside Governor Waite.

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<sup>25</sup> Frank Hanson Waite married Minda White on June 25, 1911, in Denver; they had no children and were divorced on May 28, 1928. Divorce and alimony proceedings, File No. 99404, District Court, Denver; *Denver Post*, July 22, 1932, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> McClung, "Governors of Colorado: Davis Hanson Waite," p. 103.

<sup>27</sup> *Aspen Times*, January 14, 1937, p. 1.

# William Gilpin and the Destruction of the Desert Myth

BY J. CHRISTOPHER SCHNELL

Studies on the influence of the urban promoter in the rise of the West are conspicuously absent in the annals of American history. Consequently, the roles that metropolitan boosters played in building an attractive image for the American West are left unrecognized. During the nineteenth century these urban promoters enticed thousands of Americans to the great West beyond the Appalachian Mountains, past the Mississippi River, to the base of the Rocky Mountains and on to the shores of the Pacific. William Gilpin (1813-1894) was one of America's most colorful urban promoters. Gilpin's major achievement was his contribution to the destruction of the desert myth.

For nearly three hundred years, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, the vast expanse of territory extending from the one hundredth meridian westward to the Rocky Mountains was characterized as dry, sterile desert. This notion, originated by Spanish and French explorers and perpetuated by later American reports, greatly hindered settlement of the cis-Rocky Mountain West. The first description of this area as lifeless and arid came from Cabeza de Vaca, a Spaniard who explored southern Texas around 1530. De Vaca's report emphasized that, according to the Indians, the land to the north contained little food or water. In 1541 this theme recurred in the writings of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, who pushed as far north as northeastern Kansas in search of gold and found what he called an immense desert.<sup>1</sup>

Later Spanish explorations exhibited little optimism. Both Pedro Vial (1793) and James Mackay (1796) expressed their

<sup>1</sup> G. Malcolm Lewis, "Three Centuries of Desert Concepts in the Cis-Rocky Mountain West," *Journal of the West*, IV (July, 1965), 457-59. See also W. Eugene Hollon, *The Great American Desert* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 1-8.

disappointment in the cis-Rocky Mountain region. Vial related that during his trip from St. Louis to Santa Fe, he traversed a plain without trees or water. Mackay, a naturalized Spaniard, traveled deep into north-central Nebraska where, according to his report, he found a great desert of drifting sand without trees, fertile soil, water, rocks, or animals.<sup>2</sup> Most seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers who described the cis-Rocky Mountain area agreed with the desert theory, and many early American explorers concluded that the territory was indeed a desert.

By 1803 President Thomas Jefferson, in an attempt to uncover the land's hidden secrets, commissioned Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to head an exploratory expedition into the area. They returned in 1806 with the report that a lack of water and total absence of timber characterized major portions of the land west of the Missouri River. That same year, when Captain Zebulon Pike proceeded with his force beyond the one hundredth meridian, he noted increased aridity and observed that the area "might become in time equally celebrated as the sandy deserts [*sic*] of Africa."<sup>3</sup>

The greatest contribution to the desert myth appeared in the writings of Edwin James, who prepared the account of the Stephen H. Long expedition (1819-20). James's writings proved far more damaging to western settlement than any of the preceding ones. He and Long found the area composed of sterile, dreary plains entirely unfit for agricultural purposes. The serious lack of fertile land and navigable streams made what

*The Great American Desert, as shown on the Long expedition's map.*



later became Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado Territories unsuitable for any civilized existence except for nomadic Indian tribes.<sup>4</sup> Thus by 1830 the notion of the "Great American Desert" was firmly entrenched, and this characterization severely damaged the prospects of economic investment in the cis-Rocky Mountain West. The task of transforming this image for thousands of prospective farmers and entrepreneurs fell to promoters like William Gilpin.

Gilpin recognized the importance of this formidable task. He realized that success in this endeavor required varying amounts of persuasiveness, rhetorical and written skill, and an element of chicanery. He attacked the desert fallacy with the ferocity of a man possessed with an insight into the area's future economic wealth. He argued that the nation's mid-section consisted of plains, not deserts, and pressed his point at every conceivable opportunity. Gilpin's speeches and writings figured prominently in the historical transformation that changed desert to garden and led to an increased plains promotion.

As early as 1836 Gilpin expressed a strong desire to visit the West, for he felt that it held the secret to the nation's prosperity. On October 4, Gilpin wrote to his mother from St. Louis that the eastern image of the West drastically needed revision. "I often think (and not without reason) that the part of the Valley which lies on the Mississippi River and West of it, must one day surpass aught now existing or which has existed, in all that constitutes national resources—hence my strong desire [is] to see and learn all I can—indeed one who has not seen the Valley of the Mississippi can hardly be said to have been in America—he knows not what a Heart and Sinews she has." De-emphasizing the prairie's handicaps, Gilpin wrote: "Its beauty cannot be excelled, free from timber or shrubs of any sort and covered with a most luxuriant grass, it is so gently rolling as to be effectually drained yet not break its perfect smoothness, having the appearance of fields of grain of velvet brown color and aspect."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Lewis, "Three Centuries of Desert Concepts," pp. 462-68.

<sup>3</sup> Ralph C. Morris, "The Notion of a Great American Desert East of the Rockies," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XIII (September, 1926), 190-200. For Pike's opinion see Zebulon M. Pike, *An Account of Expeditions to the Sources of the Mississippi and Through the Western Parts of Louisiana* (Philadelphia: C. & A. Conrad, 1810), Appendix to Part II, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Edwin James (ed.), *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains Performed in the Years 1819 and '20* (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey and I. Lea, 1823), II, 360-70.

<sup>5</sup> This quote is from a letter of October 4, 1836, that Gilpin wrote to his mother Elizabeth. It may be found in "The Early Papers of Lieutenant William Gilpin Narrating Experiences with the Dragoons Protecting the Western Frontier: Mostly from St. Louis and Jefferson Barracks, 1835-1838," Manuscript Collection, State Historical Society of Missouri, St. Louis.

Gilpin probably formed his early Great Plains concepts from information gathered from the fur traders and soldiers who lived in St. Louis. In 1841 Gilpin left St. Louis for Independence, Missouri, and from 1843 to 1848 he crossed the trans-Missouri West. Finally Gilpin returned to Independence—ill with malaria, yet eager to preach his themes of urban promotion and western publicity that made him one of the West's foremost spokesmen.

After his expeditions to the West, Gilpin's fame increased and his opinions came to national attention. In 1846 Senator James Semple asked him for a report on the West. In his reply, Gilpin stated that the Mississippi Valley easily surpassed Europe in "climate, fertility, and excellence, and [was] bound together by rivers greater in number, of superior navigation, and uniting in one common channel to the ocean!"<sup>6</sup>

In April of 1853 Gilpin began his first public thrust against the image of the desert. In an article entitled "Slopes and Valleys of the Rocky Mountains," he claimed that the cis-Rocky Mountain West contained the great pastoral belt of the continent. Like most shrewd promoters, he turned liabilities into assets, asserting that "the wonderful *buffalo-grass*, which, growing during the evaporations from the rivers in the hot months, cures into hay when that ceases, and furnishes winter pasture for millions of these *aboriginal* cattle, for the wild horse, for the antelope, and for venison. . . . The absence of timber is no drawback—it is a supreme advantage. For fuel there is coal—for buildings the healthy *adobie* house is here dictated by the climate; the *adobie* fence combines economy and permanence."<sup>7</sup>

Behind Gilpin's eloquent words, on this and many other occasions, lay the profit motive. His consistent praise for the continent's interior coincided conspicuously with his personal economic interests. In 1846 he had advocated the establishment of a transcontinental mail service, not coincidentally designed to serve Independence, Missouri. Gilpin's projected mail route would have brought increased real estate rates to that section of Independence which he owned—Gilpintown. Tied as it was to his real estate promotion, Gilpin's Great Plains literature attracted the immigrants who eventually populated a commercial and agricultural hinterland west of Kansas City. In his publicity, Gilpin focused on the city that would dominate the trans-

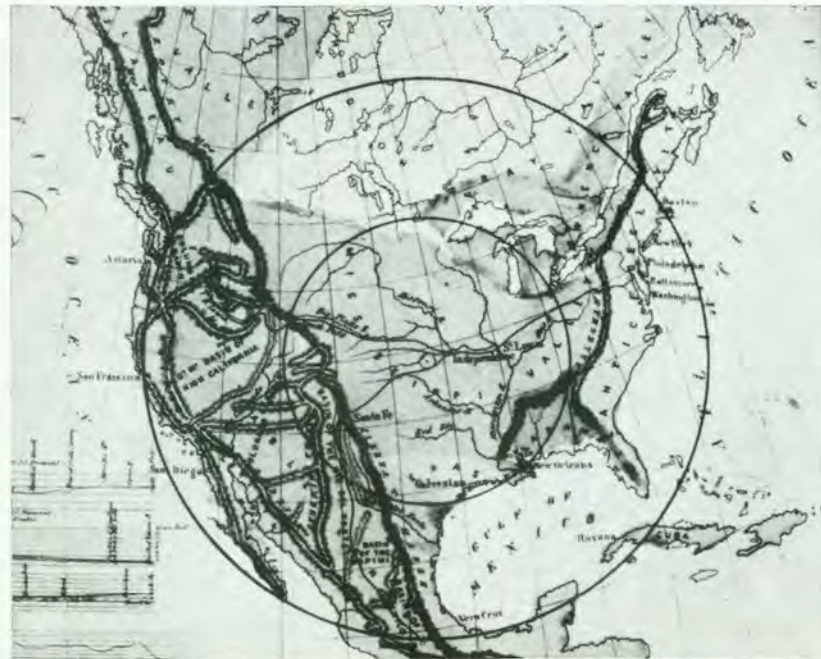
<sup>6</sup> U. S., Congress, Senate, *Report of the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads*, S. Ex. Doc. 306, 29th Cong., 1st Sess., 1846, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> William Gilpin, "Slopes and Valleys of the Rocky Mountains," *The Western Journal and Civilian*, X (April, 1853), 3, 5.

Missouri region—a metropolis which would be located in the Kaws-Mouth region. He did not entirely rely on personality or rhetoric to sell this area to immigrants who came West, but usually buttressed his arguments with "scientific" data obtained from leading promoters such as S. H. Goodin.

Goodin, a mid-nineteenth-century Cincinnati promoter, had developed the theory of concentric circles. He felt that within the Ohio Valley there was an excellent example of commercial gravitation, as exhibited by Cincinnati's dominance over various satellite cities. His theory of gravitation placed smaller cities around Cincinnati, each dependent on their "grand centre." He believed that slowly these cities would come into the inner circle of Cincinnati's commercial, cultural, and political influence. Thus the city that occupied the center of the gravitational circle would dominate a wealthy hinterland.<sup>8</sup>

Goodin's concentric circle theory of city location figured largely in Gilpin's Kaws-Mouth promotion. Gilpin's circles indicated the inevitable rise of a great central city located near the juncture of the Kansas and Missouri Rivers. In April of 1853, he coordinated this plan with the promotion of the Kansas Basin as this city's natural market area. This hinterland would provide gold, silver, and salt mines, grazing land for farm animals, and business for the transcontinental railroad. Gilpin informed immigrants through *The Western Journal and Civilian* that "the Kansas basin ought to rise to an exalted position in favor of the whole American people . . . [because] it is the GEOGRAPHICAL CENTRE of their country." Using Goodin's cir-



cles as proof, he continued: "If from the forks of the Kansas river as a centre, a circle can be described, it will touch New Orleans and Galveston upon the Gulf frontier—the same circle will touch the 49th degree on the North, as a tangent. . . . It is wonderfully the centre of our territory, both present and prospective. Here is the exact geographical centre of the continent, of the Union, of the Valley of the Mississippi to the North and South, East and West."<sup>9</sup>

In his promotion of the Kaws-Mouth region, Gilpin realized that the lucrative enticement of railroads to that country was a vital prerequisite. For some time he had worked with Senator Thomas Hart Benton to bring the transcontinental railroad through Independence, and Gilpin's effective tactics persuaded Benton to favor the central route. To accomplish this task, Gilpin made use of another weapon in his arsenal of scientific arguments—Alexander von Humboldt's theory of the Isothermal Zodiac. Developed by the nineteenth-century German geographer, the Zodiac was a climatic belt of even temperature which encircled the earth and determined the development of sophisticated civilization and migration of population. Within the Zodiac was Humboldt's Axis of Intensity which roughly

followed the thirty-ninth parallel of latitude in the western hemisphere. This undulating line of concentrated human progress had witnessed and could forecast the emergence of the world's greatest cities.<sup>10</sup>

Gilpin's final series of Great Plains promotional tracts appeared in several publications from 1857 to 1860. These theories enjoyed wide circulation and exerted a considerable influence on the American public's image of the West. In January of 1858, Gilpin praised the commercial potential of the Missouri River in an article entitled "Hemp Growing Region of the United States," comparing the Missouri to the Nile in its life-giving qualities. However, he made clear that the temperature, climate, and physical features of the cis-Rocky Mountain West differed considerably from those of Egypt. In picturesque language Gilpin described the Basin of the Mississippi. "This undulating plain has an area equal in capacity to all the other river basins in the world, and combines all their varieties."<sup>11</sup>

Gilpin's Kansas City hinterland promotion reached its peak in 1858 when he wrote his most famous Great Plains publicity tract which appeared in Charles C. Spalding's *Annals of the*

*The shaded area represents Humboldt's Isothermal Zodiac.*





*City of Kansas.* In an article entitled "The Pastoral Region of the World," Gilpin attacked the dreadful image of the sterile desert and replaced it with his grand conception—"the Garden of the World!" There was "a radical misapprehension in the popular mind as to the true character of the 'Great Plains of America,'" he wrote. "These Plains are not DESERTS but the opposite, and are the cardinal basin of the future empire of commerce and industry now erecting itself on the North American continent. They are calcareous, and form the Pastoral Garden of the World."<sup>12</sup>

Gilpin continued in this vein, saying that while there was little timber on the plains, the grass was nutritive and the land abounded with animal life. He stated that although the climate was comparatively rainless, it would respond to river irrigation. Gilpin pictured the Great Plains as the "pasture fields of the world. Upon them PASTORAL AGRICULTURE will become a separate grand department of national industry." He asserted that immigrants would find ample farmland. The truth was, Gilpin reiterated, that the land could be cheaply "saturated" through various types of irrigation. He reminded his readers that the plains' climate was healthful and well-suited to the development of a refined civilization. To dismiss the nation's heartland as desert would be to disagree with the "supreme engineering of God."<sup>13</sup>

In 1858 a second vital element in western promotion appeared—gold! Several Rocky Mountain traders returned to Kansas City from the Pikes Peak diggings displaying ounces of the precious mineral uncovered in Colorado, and suddenly Gilpin's promotional emphasis shifted from pastoral to mineral. In his most famous speech, delivered November 15, 1858, Gilpin outlined his vision of the West's future greatness. In conjunction with this address he exhibited three maps: one showing the physical divisions of "our continent," a world map placing America between Asia and Europe, and a map of the Mississippi

<sup>8</sup> Goodin's theories concerning urban location and gravitational control can be found in S. H. Goodin, "Cincinnati—Its Destiny," *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1851*, ed. by Charles Cist (Cincinnati: W. H. Moore and Company, 1851), pp. 306-20.

<sup>9</sup> Gilpin, "Slopes and Valleys," p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1950), pp. 42-44.

<sup>11</sup> William Gilpin, "Hemp Growing Region of the United States," *De Bow's Commercial Review*, XLV (January, 1858), 56-68.

<sup>12</sup> William Gilpin, "The Pastoral Region of the World," in Charles C. Spalding, *Annals of the City of Kansas, Embracing Full Details of the Trade and Commerce of the Great Western Plains* (Kansas City, Mo.: Van Horn and Abeel's Printing House, 1858), p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.

Basin. Gilpin emphasized the importance of heavy settlement in the Mississippi Valley, since it occupied the "heart and splendours of our continent and is the most magnificent dwelling place marked out by God for man's abode."<sup>14</sup>

After explaining the facts of the West's mountain system, Gilpin related that his personal experiences on three military expeditions during the years 1843-48 caused him to believe that gold "in mass and in position and infinite in quantity would reveal itself to the pioneers" who would venture out to the plains, on the plateau, and finally to the base of the Rocky Mountains. Such a development, Gilpin maintained, was not at all speculative or theoretical. His words rang out with the clarity that characterized effective nineteenth-century public speakers: "It is manifest with what ease the pioneers, already engaged in mining at the entrance of the Bayou Salado, will, in another season, ascend through it to the Cordillera, surmount its crests and descent into the Bayou San Luis. They will develop at every step, gold in new and increasing abundance."<sup>15</sup>

Passionately urging immigrants to follow the lines of the Isothermal Zodiac to the Kansas and Colorado gold fields, Gilpin declared that "along this axis have risen successively the great cities of China and of India, of Babylon, Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Paris, London, in the old continents—and upon our continent the seaboard cities, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore; Pittsburg, Cincinnati, St. Louis. . . . We, then, the people of the Centre, are upon the lines of intense and intelligent energy, where civilization has its largest field, its highest developments, its inspired form."<sup>16</sup>

This speech was one of Gilpin's finest. The western promoter did not omit a single advantage—geographical, theoretical, or economic. A new weapon had been added to his promotional arsenal. Now there would be little problem bringing immigrants to Kansas Territory. In 1860 Gilpin capped his Midwest promotional campaign with the publication of *The Central Gold Region*, a collection of articles, speeches, and notes that

<sup>14</sup> The quote is from William Gilpin, "Pike's Peak and the Sierra San Juan," *Daily Western Journal of Commerce*, November 17, 1858.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* This speech also appeared in various promotional tracts including E. Mendenhall, *Guide to the Kansas Gold Mines at Pike's Peak, Describing the Routes, Camping Places, Tools, Outfits, etc.* (Cincinnati: Privately published, 1859), pp. 26-40, and W. B. Horner, *Kansas and Nebraska Gold Regions* (Chicago: William H. Tobey and Company, 1859), pp. 19-30.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* See also Charles N. Glaab, "Visions of Metropolis: William Gilpin and Theories of City Growth in the American West," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, XLV (Autumn, 1961), 21-31. Blaab points out that Gilpin had formed his western promotional theories by 1846, and though he frequently traveled in the trans-Missouri region, he seldom corrected any inaccurate information he had.

the promoter had gathered since the first days of his western travels with John C. Frémont. In the Preface, Gilpin suggested that the pioneers must unite the continent, accomplishing this goal through settlement of the Kansas Basin. Up to the present time, he admitted, settlement had been retarded. But two "auspicious" elements, the discovery of gold and the construction of the transcontinental railroad, had fixed the nation's attention on its geographic "Centre." In the long run, Americans, by settling this area, would place the United States in the leadership of the world community by bridging the continent.<sup>17</sup>

In one brief paragraph this promoter-intellectual offered evidence that proved he had few peers in the field of promotional oratory and theory. "Human society is then upon the



William Gilpin,  
Colorado's first  
territorial governor.

brink of a new order of arrangement, inspired by the universal instincts of peace, and is about to assume the grandest dimensions. Fascinated by this vision, which I have seen appear and assume the solid form of a reality in less than half a generation, I discern in it a new power, *the People* occupied in the wilderness, engaged at once in extracting from its recesses the omnipotent element of *gold coin*, and disbursing it immediately for the *industrial* conquest of the world."<sup>18</sup>

But an infinite amount of gold coin would not fascinate William Gilpin if he gathered no profit from it. In fact, such a personal dilemma appeared imminent with the embarrassing failure of his Kansas City promotion. Rather than discard his truly effective theories, Gilpin adroitly shifted the emphasis of the promotional campaign. He recognized that the same hinterland which served Kansas City also applied to the rapidly growing town at the base of the Rocky Mountains—Denver. The Isothermal Zodiac, as delineated by the eminent Humboldt, undulated westward toward Denver, and Gilpin accordingly effected a change in plans to incorporate the Rocky Mountain city. This transition required a switch in political allegiances. As a life-long Jacksonian Democrat with political connections in Washington, Gilpin made his new association with the Free Soilers. Hopeful of success, he offered his services as a bodyguard to the new Republican President, Abraham Lincoln. He traveled with Lincoln's entourage from Springfield, Illinois, to Washington, where his efforts for political support paid off. Not long after his inauguration, Lincoln offered Gilpin a gubernatorial appointment in Colorado Territory.<sup>19</sup>

As governor of Colorado, Gilpin did little to promote the West. However, once his tenure was over, he surged into a campaign that featured the promotion of Colorado real estate, focusing on Denver as a transportation center. In *The Central Gold Region*, Gilpin waxed eloquent on the natural and "supernatural" advantages that Colorado possessed. In his Colorado publicity he stressed several points: (1) the necessity of bringing the continental railroad through Denver; (2) the natural advantages possessed by the Rocky Mountains and their corresponding parks; (3) the "infinite" supply of precious minerals

<sup>17</sup> This quote is taken from a speech made by Gilpin at Independence, Missouri, on April 7, 1860. It appeared in William Gilpin, *The Central Gold Region: The Grain, Pastoral, and Gold Regions of North America, with Some New Views of Its Physical Geography; and Observations on the Pacific Railroad* (Philadelphia: Sower, Barnes & Co., 1860), pp. v-vi.

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

<sup>19</sup> See Gilpin's interview with Will C. Ferril, as reprinted in the *Rocky Mountain Herald* (Denver), January 4, 1913.

and metals; (4) the fertility that characterized the mountains and the plateau; (5) a climate that surpassed any and all; and (6) the duty of every pioneer and immigrant to settle the area that spread from the one-hundredth meridian to the Rocky Mountains. Perhaps the strongest or most persuasive point that Gilpin established regarded the Rocky Mountains and their corresponding parks. He felt that "nature here, more perfectly than at any other point upon the globe, unites into one grand *coup d'oeil* all her grandest features, which, harmoniously grouped, present to the mind a combination of superlative sublimity."<sup>20</sup>

Gilpin made Colorado seem like a paradise to his readers, contrasting the beauty of the parks to the immense mountains and magnificent rivers. Fertility was the prominent feature of the Rocky Mountains and their corresponding plateaus and parks. The Colorado terrain abounded with fruits and vegetables; it swarmed with animal life and buffalo. A perpetual sun and systematic irrigation would lighten the work load for the hardy pioneers. Gilpin probably surprised readers who lived in that part of the West when he claimed that one could till the soil without the use of a plow.<sup>21</sup>

By the late 1860's William Gilpin had invested a great deal of time and money into Colorado real estate. Besides holding considerable areas of land in Denver, Gilpin also owned a 600,000-acre tract in the San Luis Valley. Accordingly, he promoted it much in the same style that had graced his Kansas City and Denver campaigns. Gilpin slyly indicated that gold layers filled every crack and crevice in the largest of the Colorado parks, particularly in the Sangre de Cristo grant. "This is the region of rocks where the metals, especially gold and silver, abound in crevices charged and infused with the richest ores," he asserted. "It is from hence that the gold of gulches is disintegrated and descends. It is here . . . that the thread of the 'gold belt' is revealed and found." Eventually the promoter owned a mining company that worked the gold and silver deposits on the San Luis grant.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Gilpin, *Central Gold Region*, pp. 64-65. According to Gilpin, a park was a "concave area" or "scooped-out" section of land. Colorado's parks were rich in minerals and beauty—a prime promotional weapon.

<sup>21</sup> William Gilpin, *Mission of the North American People, Geographical, Social and Political: Illustrated by Six Charts Delineating the Physical Architecture and Thermal Laws of All the Continents* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1874), p. 39. See also Gilpin, *Central Gold Region*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>22</sup> William Gilpin, "Description of the San Luis Park," in *Colorado: Its Resources, Parks, and Prospects as a New Field for Emigration with an Account of the Trenchera and Costilla Estates in the San Luis Park*, ed. by William Blackmore (London: Sampson Low, Son and Marston, 1870), pp. 188-90.

Throughout the 1870's and 1880's William Gilpin spent much time lecturing and writing about Colorado's natural wealth. In 1870 he carried his promotion to Liverpool in an address to the British Association of Science which indicated nineteenth-century American thought during the Gilded Age. "The American realizes that 'Progress is God.' He clearly recognizes and accepts the *continental* mission of his country and his people. His faith is impregnably fortified by this vision of power, unity, and forward motion." Gilpin's speech evidenced the fact that behind his promotion one could usually find the promise of quick financial return. His Denver and San Luis Valley holdings received his concentrated attention. Colorado's parks were important because they occupied a prime position in "the line of way-travel of mankind at a point of paramount control." Using the same "centre" theory that publicized Independence, Kansas City, and Denver, Gilpin stated that the parks occupied Colorado's geographical center, and asserted that the Rocky Mountains even shamed the Swiss Alps in comparison.<sup>23</sup>

Although Gilpin's Colorado promotion certainly reflected contemporary nineteenth-century expansionism, it also was part of the era's characteristic attitudes that progress means monetary and material wealth. With much land in the San Luis Valley and real estate in Denver, Gilpin strove to open up his holdings to the world's highest bidders. His special interest centered on the immigrants, for he realized that the pioneers would not march toward Colorado on their own accord. Someone had to sell it to them. In grandiose language Gilpin carried his Colorado campaign to the people, and through his promotional fervor, thousands became acquainted with the West. Any visitor to Colorado, he wrote, would be enchanted by its astonishing beauty. His more sophisticated Colorado promotion enjoyed more success and reached greater numbers of people than did his Kansas City plan.<sup>24</sup>

William Gilpin's dreams for the West, although exaggerated for purposes of promotion, came to be realized in more than one instance. His type of promotional literature, widely read in his time, composed a vital and persuasive segment that significantly contributed to the American westward movement. Not original in content nor always particularly interesting in style, Gilpin's writing was significant in fashioning an opti-

<sup>23</sup> William Gilpin, *Notes on Colorado; and Its Inscription in the Physical Geography of the North American Continent* (London: Witherby and Company, 1870), pp. 3-6, 11.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

mistic outlook for interior America. Although profit-oriented, he played an important role in American expansionism and western sectionalism. It was Gilpin who first enlightened the nation as to the West's resources and described its geography in more realistic terms than his predecessors. In spite of some error concerning the West's geography, his cis-Rocky Mountain concepts eventually found wide acceptance because the man was a promoter par excellence.

Within a few years the region previously known as the Great American Desert became recognized as the Great Plains, and by 1890, most easterners pictured Colorado as a state typified by scenic beauty and enormous amounts of raw materials. William Gilpin did as much as anyone and more than most to promote a new and attractive image for the American West. His numerous speeches, articles, and books—employed for promotional purposes from 1853 to his death in 1894—served to make him the West's most ardent promoter.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>James C. Malin, in *The Grassland of North America, Prolegomena to Its History* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1947), pp. 173-92, argues that Gilpin played a significant role in promoting the West. In summation, Malin asserts that Gilpin's ideas constituted "the most provocative and significant estimate of the North American grassland interior written during the middle period of the nineteenth century." Both Glaab and Lewis reinforce the thesis that Gilpin's promotional work was quite effective as a factor that induced settlement of the cis-Rocky Mountain West. That his promotion reached thousands of immigrants is evidenced by the fact that he wrote so many promotional tracts in numerous gold handbooks, emigrant guides, and other pieces. The amount of his material is impressive in itself. Added to this literature are his basic promotional books, pamphlets, letters, and speeches.

# Jerome B. Chaffee and the McCook-Elbert Fight

BY ELLIOTT WEST

On the afternoon of January 27, 1874, important news tapped over the telegraph wires connecting Denver with the national capital:

The President sent to the Senate to-day the following nominations: Edward M. McCook, of Colorado, to be governor of Colorado; John W. Jenkins, of Virginia, to be secretary of Colorado; L. B. Searight, to be surveyor general. . . .

The message struck "like a thunderclap in a clear sky" and soon spread through the Denver business district until men stood talking excitedly in groups along the streets. In Washington, even members of the Senate were surprised by the nominations to replace Governor Sam Elbert, Secretary Frank Hall, and Surveyor General W. H. Lessig.<sup>1</sup> Mass meetings were called in Denver, Boulder, and other towns. The scene in the territorial capital was described by an unknown poet:

Great was the row in Denver that day,  
When the news came into the town.  
The donkies set up a horrible bray,  
The roosters crowed out a merry roundelay,  
And reporters ran up and down.<sup>2</sup>

Such excitement was generated because the news presented prospects not only of a change in government officers but also of a political coup. The ruling "Denver ring" led by Jerome B. Chaffee apparently had fallen from the favor it had enjoyed since Chaffee's election as delegate to Congress in 1872. When President Ulysses S. Grant requested the Senate to confirm Edward Moody McCook as governor and thereby remove Elbert, Chaffee's friend and political ally, the delegate understood the meaning of the move: a threat to his position as leader of the

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Schuyler Colfax to Frank Hall, February 20, 1874, Frank Hall Collection, State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Times* (Denver), January 28, 1874, p. 2; *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 28, 1874, p. 1; *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), February 5, 1874, p. 1.

Colorado Republicans. Instead of yielding to executive decree, Chaffee chose to challenge the nomination of McCook in the Senate. The battle which followed, often called the "McCook-Elbert fight," was directed mainly by neither of its namesakes but by Chaffee.

Prospects of victory for the Denver politician seemed dim in January. The nominations shook Chaffee's prestige and power, and the party he had ruled cracked and split. During the spring of 1874, however, as the improbable showdown between a president and a territorial delegate occurred in Washington, Chaffee held the chief executive to a standstill before being defeated by a single vote in late June.

The fight emphasized the volatile issues and emotions of the territory and illustrated how a politician might use them to advantage. Chaffee's tenacity aroused in his constituents their admiration for the underdog. He was aided, moreover, by his adversary, for Grant nominated in McCook a man toward whom many Coloradoans seem to have felt definite dislike, distrust, or at best only lukewarm acceptance. McCook's unpopularity and Chaffee's charges against him revived the reliable issue of carpetbaggism, and Chaffee emerged as the leading advocate of the ultimate answer to the problem—statehood. Although the Senate confirmed McCook, Chaffee's supporters in the territorial press made the party feud the main issue of the summer campaign for the delegate seat their champion had decided to vacate. Democratic victory in this election in effect meant triumph for Chaffee. He could argue that Coloradoans had repudiated McCook and had voted confidence in Chaffee and his battle. By September, the boss of the Denver "ring" had gone far toward repairing his public image and reasserting his power since scandal and apparent political disaster had befallen him in late January. The McCook-Elbert fight had been won by Chaffee, and the way lay open for greater achievement and honor.

Power struggles such as that of 1874 were not unusual in the territory, for Colorado politics had developed early into an arena of competing cliques and spirited battles. In these conflicts, two issues, carpetbaggism and statehood, had dominated much of the political dialogue. Few accusations could arouse Coloradoans more than the charge that competent local men were being passed over for, as one political commentator later wrote, "crippled and superannuated henchmen" of eastern politicians.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup>R. G. Dill, *The Political Campaigns of Colorado* (Denver: John Dove, 1895), p. 35.

The territorial legislature had sent memorials to Congress asking that Colorado residents be appointed as chief justice and governor.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it has been written that officials supplied from the outside were so unpopular that "carpetbaggism was the principal issue in politics."<sup>5</sup> Advocates of admission to the union argued that any such corruption would end when officials were chosen not by Washington politicians but by popular vote under home rule. Federal support of the territorial government, however, appealed to others. Opponents of statehood claimed admission would load Colorado's small population with burdensome taxes and debts. The two sides went before the voters twice during the futile statehood movement at the end of the Civil War; Coloradoans first rejected a state constitution in September, 1864, then accepted one a year later. Although Andrew Johnson's veto of the 1866 enabling bill blocked the first campaign for admission, a vigorous debate continued.

Jerome Bunty Chaffee had played a prominent role in the political frays of the territory. His public career began when he was elected to the lower house of the territorial legislature in



*Jerome B. Chaffee later became one of the first two United States senators from Colorado.*

1861 and 1863, then was named speaker in 1864. After failure of the early statehood movements two years later, he retired from politics until his election as delegate in 1870. If Chaffee was no stranger to public life, neither was McCook. The war veteran once before had been appointed governor of Colorado by Grant in the spring of 1869, a year and a few months before Chaffee's first election as delegate.

The Colorado political scene had been rent by factions since the earliest days of territorial government. Since most spoils of office depended ultimately on one man, the chief executive, the Republican leadership tended to fragment into cabals which intrigued for presidential favor. The most persistent split divided the party into groups centered around Chaffee and the "Denver crowd" and Henry M. and Willard Teller and the "mountain crowd." In 1872, a splinter Liberal-Republican ticket was formed in response to Horace Greeley's national movement. Willard Teller resigned as chairman of the Colorado Republican central committee to back A. C. Hunt for delegate against the incumbent Chaffee. When Chaffee won by a large majority, the Liberal challenge was crushed, and the Teller faction was banished, at least temporarily. A grateful Grant gave the victor, his close friend and poker partner, a free rein in territorial appointments.<sup>6</sup> Recalling political conditions of the time, a disgruntled opponent of the "ring" wrote the *News*:

Everybody who knows anything of Colorado knows that Jerome B. Chaffee was the hub of the Republican wheel—that his brains, his money, his intrigues combined, consolidated and kept the radical Republican machine always squared to the front. . . . But Chaffee's success to a large degree depended on his distribution of the federal patronage in Colorado.<sup>7</sup>

Other key leaders in the close-knit group were John Evans, former governor who with Chaffee had been elected senator in the abortive statehood movement of 1865, and Samuel Hitt Elbert, Evans' son-in-law and former territorial secretary.

Consolidating his position, Chaffee took advantage of popular feeling against McCook and chose Elbert to replace the gov-

ernor. After gathering petitions in his nominee's behalf, Chaffee secured the appointment in March, 1873.<sup>8</sup> When word of McCook's renomination came without warning ten months later, Chaffee considered the action a personal rebuff. He wired the governor that he would meet the challenge in the Senate, and "If defeated [I] shall resign immediately."<sup>9</sup>

Grant's renomination of McCook, however, was not the opening bell of the fight, for the first round already had been fought. When Chaffee secured the governor's post for Elbert, the ousted McCook apparently considered himself betrayed and set about to deliver retribution. In happier days, he had written to Chaffee in a friendly and confidential letter: "Mine enemies politically are not so bad as my friends, some of them at least, and I am becoming thoroughly disgusted."<sup>10</sup> Now the Denver boss had turned on him, but he was one of the "fighting McCooks of Ohio" and, as his brother-in-law described him, "he did not know the meaning of the word surrender."<sup>11</sup> A brevet major general who had fought under Grant at Shiloh, McCook began to appeal to his former commander. Although Grant's personal secretary claimed McCook knew nothing of his nomination until the president submitted it, the Senate grapevine reported that the ex-governor had been with Grant most of the summer of 1873 working toward a triumphant return to the territory.<sup>12</sup> He was aided by a beautiful wife dedicated to furthering her husband's career.

McCook's supplications probably would not have been enough to persuade the president to repudiate Chaffee's leadership, but a persistent scandal pursued the Denver "ring." Late in 1873, the Denver *Mirror* began publishing stories which claimed citizens of Bent County had been victims of a land fraud. Chaffee and his business partner, David H. Moffat, according to the charges, had discovered the Kansas Pacific Railroad planned a line to West Las Animas and had determined to grab the choicest town lots, lately opened to pre-emption and homestead as part of the Vigil and St. Vrain Grant. Accordingly, they persuaded Irving Stanton and Charles Cook of the

<sup>4</sup> *General Laws, Joint Resolutions, Memorials, and Private Acts, Passed at the Fifth Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Colorado* (Central City: Printed by David C. Collier, Miners' Register Office, 1866), pp. 181-82; George W. Collins, "Colorado's Territorial Secretaries," *The Colorado Magazine*, XLIII (Summer, 1966), 201.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas F. Dawson, "Teller and Wolcott in Colorado Politics," unpublished manuscript, State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

<sup>6</sup> For an excellent account of these developments see Walter Lumley Shelly, "The Colorado Republican Party: The Formative Years, 1861-1876" (unpublished masters thesis, University of Colorado, 1963).

<sup>7</sup> Clipping from the *Rocky Mountain News*, date unknown, Jerome B. Chaffee Papers, First National Bank of Denver.

<sup>8</sup> See the letter from Samuel Elbert to Harper Orahoad, February 9, 1873, Harper Orahoad Papers, Western Historical Collections, University of Colorado Library, Boulder.

<sup>9</sup> Telegram from Jerome B. Chaffee to Samuel Elbert, January 27, 1874, Frank Hall Collection.

<sup>10</sup> Letter from Edward McCook to Jerome Chaffee, January 22, 1870, Edward M. McCook Letters, Western History Department, Denver Public Library.

<sup>11</sup> Interview of Thomas F. Dawson with James B. Thompson, May 23, 1921, State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

<sup>12</sup> Letters from Colfax to Hall, February 20, 1874, and from O. E. Babcock to Hall, February 4, 1874, Frank Hall Collection.

Pueblo land office to file the land under false names. Chaffee, claimed the *Mirror*, eventually had the titles transferred to Moffat and Robert E. Carr, president of the Kansas Pacific.<sup>13</sup>

The rumors persisted. On December 9 and January 12 Senator Matthew Carpenter of Wisconsin presented petitions from Bent County complaining of fraudulent land transactions.<sup>14</sup> In the territorial legislature, William H. Meyer of the committee on federal relations reported without recommendation a petition from Las Animas asking for a memorial to Congress to investigate the titles.<sup>15</sup> Other papers began to take more notice. The *Boulder County News* considered Chaffee and Moffat guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, and the German-language *Colorado Journal* expressed hope that its delegate was innocent, but stated that a "diabolical villainy" had been perpetrated.<sup>16</sup>

Washington finally reacted. Around the first of the year, Willis Drummond, commissioner general of the General Land Office, sent M. B. Robinson to look into the charges. Although Robinson's report produced no direct evidence against Chaffee or Moffat, it left them in a suspicious light. Personal examination of the lots in question turned up none of the improvements required by law, and Robinson did not hesitate to describe the original claims as "frauds of the most palpable character."

Since Moffat had received the titles third hand, this evidence had no bearing on him, for he could not be held accountable for irregularities in the original claim. But the most damning portion of the report was yet to come. Robinson did not limit his remarks to cases in question, but rather gave his impression of the general character of Colorado land distribution:

... the largest share of all pre-emptions made in this territory are fraudulent. This has been going on it would seem for years. All the lands about Denver, for miles, have been entered [without improvements]. As near as I can learn, these pre-emptions that are being made are made in the interest of some capitalist clique or ring. I speak of these things to show that

<sup>13</sup> *Denver Mirror*, December 28, 1873, p. 1; January 11, 1874, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Congressional Record*, 43d Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. II, Pt. 1, December 9, 1873, p. 102; January 12, 1874, p. 603.

<sup>15</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 24, 1874, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Denver Mirror*, January 11, 1874, p. 1; *Colorado Journal*, reprinted in the *Denver Mirror*, January 18, 1874, p. 4; *Boulder County News*, January 2, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> According to First National Bank of Denver records, Cook bought one hundred shares when the bank was founded, June 20, 1865, and sold them December 13, 1866.

<sup>18</sup> Copy of report of M. B. Robinson, Jerome B. Chaffee Papers.

<sup>19</sup> Copy of letter from Willis Drummond to Columbus Delano, January 27, 1874, *ibid.*

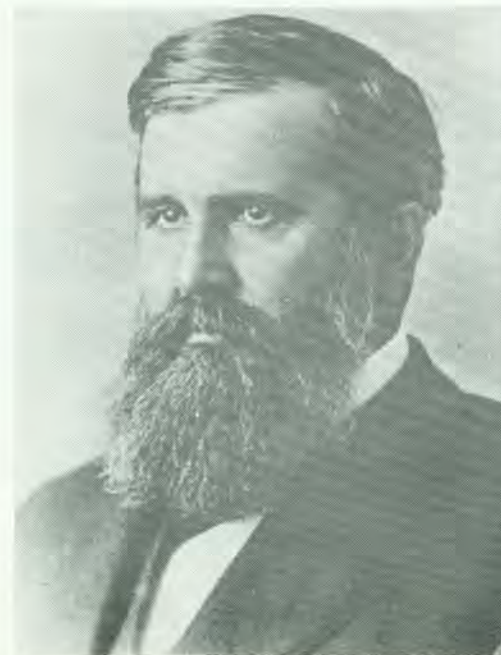
<sup>20</sup> Samuel H. Elbert Letterbooks, p. 268, State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

the frauds at Las Animas are not isolated cases. . . . These lands . . . were pre-empted in the interests of parties in Denver; eventually conveyed to Moffat, who conveyed half-interest to Carr.

He went on to report that Cook, whose habits and character were "notorious throughout Colorado," was a former banking partner of Chaffee and Moffat<sup>17</sup> and reportedly owed the men \$8,000 when appointed at Pueblo.<sup>18</sup>

Commissioner General Drummond forwarded the report to Secretary of the Interior Columbus Delano with recommendations that both Cook and Stanton be removed and Justice Department investigations be started to set aside the illegal patents.<sup>19</sup> Thus a cabinet member and almost certainly Grant himself were presented with a report which linked, albeit without specific evidence, massive land steals with Moffat and a Denver capitalist "ring."

In the midst of the controversy, Governor Elbert added to doubts of the Colorado administration's integrity when he nominated Moffat as territorial treasurer on January 7. The opposition press raised the expected outcry. Council members hesitated, but finally voted confirmation by a nine-to-four ballot, and Elbert sent Moffat his official appointment January 26.<sup>20</sup>



Samuel H. Elbert later became Colorado's first state supreme court justice.



Two days later President Grant notified Elbert of his impending replacement by McCook. Moffat's confirmation apparently was an important catalyst in the president's nomination of McCook and break with Chaffee. When a senator approached his colleague, Arthur I. Boreman, chairman of the committee on territories, and asked the reason for Elbert's removal, Boreman answered that the governor had nominated for treasurer a man unacceptable "because of his prominence in the ring."<sup>21</sup> Defenders of the governor speculated that the choice of Moffat had been a vote of confidence in a trusted friend, but a letter from Elbert to Chaffee reveals that Elbert had promised Moffat's nomination the previous summer for "the earnest effort you made for my appointment as governor." But for this, Elbert would not have chosen Chaffee's partner as treasurer.<sup>22</sup>

The telegram which brought frenzied speculation to Denver, therefore, followed both a personal campaign by McCook to regain the governorship and also rumblings of land fraud involving the ruling Colorado Republicans. Senators reported that the president had been planning a broad turnover in Colorado for at least a month because of a land steal, and that Elbert was compromised by Moffat's nomination.<sup>23</sup> Although Chaffee was not as closely linked to the scandal as Moffat, close business connections with his partner and his leadership of the Denver "ring" made him suspicious by association. The president's move was clearly a blow at Chaffee's power and reputation, and it could not be ignored if the delegate hoped to remain high in the political councils of the territory.

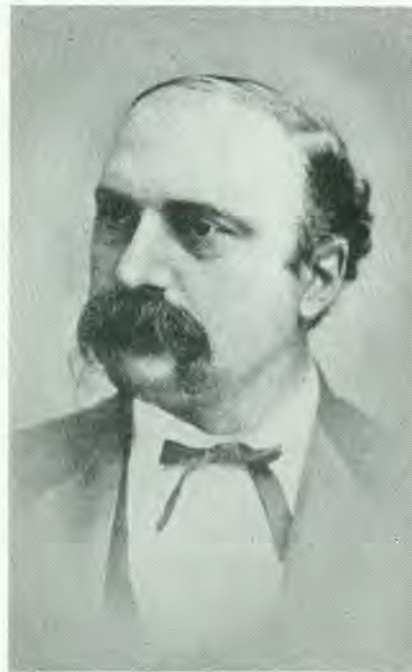
Chaffee met the challenge in Washington before the Senate committee on territories, which had the job of considering McCook's nomination and sending it, thumbs up or thumbs down, to the Senate floor, where it would be considered in secret executive session. The nominations of Jenkins and Searight soon were confirmed. The Colorado delegate, however, charged McCook with corruption during his previous term as governor and produced evidence and witnesses against Grant's nominee. The committee could not ignore the accusations, and the seven members began sifting through charges and countercharges, a task eventually drawn out until June.

The antagonists presented an impressive appearance. Chaffee was more than six feet tall, with broad shoulders and a

<sup>21</sup> Letter from Colfax to Hall, February 20, 1873, Frank Hall Collection.

<sup>22</sup> Elbert Letterbooks, p. 117.

<sup>23</sup> Letter from Colfax to Hall, February 20, 1874, Frank Hall Collection.



*During the Civil War Edward M. McCook fought for the Union at such sites as Shiloh and Chickamauga.*

neatly trimmed beard. McCook had a stockier frame held with military bearing and a head with piercing eyes and as much hair in its drooping mustache as on top. Although both men were famous as determined battlers, only once, near the end, does the testimony reveal a loss of temper:

McCook: I shall not answer any question put to me by Mr. Chaffee at all. I will not recognize his right here or any place else to catechise me unless it is on the street.<sup>24</sup>

The evidence and testimony eventually filled more than two hundred pages and can only be sketched here. Chaffee began on February 4 by presenting petitions with four thousand names protesting McCook's nomination, and then went on to lay before the committee three of his four basic charges: (1) McCook extorted \$1,000 from W. H. Lessig for using his influence to save the latter's job as surveyor general; (2) McCook signed and antedated a bill granting a divorce months after the

<sup>24</sup> U. S., Congress, Senate, *Evidence taken before the Committee on Territories while having under consideration the nomination of Edward M. McCook to be governor of the Territory of Colorado*, Executive G, Confidential, 43d Cong., 1st Sess., 1874, Part 2, p. 73, copy in State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

deadline for his signature; (3) McCook had refused to approve a voucher to reimburse Otto Mears for supplying the lower Ute agency with \$5,000 in goods. James B. Thompson, brother-in-law and personal secretary of the governor, the charge continued, then persuaded David Moffat, cashier of the First National Bank of Denver, to offer Mears only \$2,000 for the paper. After this sale was made, McCook approved the voucher at its full value, and the three men divided the \$3,000 lost by Mears, famous later as a road and railway builder.<sup>25</sup>

McCook answered the first three charges. Flatly denying that the \$1,000 payment from Lessig was extortion, he then produced a letter from Chaffee stating that Lessig was "treacherous" and a poor officer. Next, the general submitted the territorial *House Journal* which showed he had signed the divorce bill of William and Sarah Bailey at the proper time. When Mears presented his voucher for payment, McCook said, sufficient funds were not available to pay it. Mears, anxious to be on his way, sold the voucher to Moffat for \$3,400 and Moffat split the profit with Thompson after the bill had cleared for the full amount. No deception had occurred, and the transaction had been legal and ethical.<sup>26</sup>

During the weeks of hearings, the bulk of the testimony revealed the complex controversy of the Ute cattle contract, the fourth and most important of the charges. In 1869, McCook had approved a contract by which the upper and lower Ute agencies, in accordance with treaty, were to be provided with 750 "good American cows." Charles F. Holt and Henry C. Fursman, his bondsman, were awarded the job. Chaffee charged first that the animals delivered were "wild Texas cattle" worth only a third of the superior stock. Next, David Moffat testified that bank records showed Fursman deposited as payment for 450 cattle a voucher for \$16,638.75, drew two checks against it for himself totaling \$9,100, then gave a check to McCook's secretary, Thompson, for the remainder. Chaffee continued that on November 19, a voucher for the rest of the herd was issued by McCook for \$13,996.44. Eventually deposited in the First National of Denver, the money was claimed by McCook and placed in his personal account. Thus, Chaffee charged, more than \$21,000 of the contract payment could be traced to the ex-governor or to Thompson.<sup>27</sup>

McCook's answer to this testimony suffered from little documentation and a serious contradiction which his accuser quickly grasped. An army lieutenant testified the cattle he inspected were not of "wild Texas" stock but were half-breeds worth the price paid. Concerning the payment, Fursman recalled he had been bedridden and had given Thompson a check so the latter could withdraw and bring the money in question to the sick bondsman. As for the second voucher, Fursman had been anxious to return East and be married, so rather than wait for the voucher to be cleared, he signed it over to McCook about November 27 in exchange for \$10,000 and a due bill for the rest.<sup>28</sup>

On the basis of letters of Fursman, however, Chaffee established that he had left Denver almost a month before issuance of the voucher he claimed to have endorsed to McCook. Fursman then changed his story and claimed he had never seen the elusive second voucher but had been paid in full by McCook the following spring in a Washington hotel room. A new witness, Hamilton Bingham, appeared to testify he had been present when the money was handed over.<sup>29</sup> Chaffee countered with a private investigator's report (not accepted as evidence) that Bingham was a clerk in a liquor store owned by McCook's legal adviser as well as a moonshiner and frequenter of grog shops.<sup>30</sup>

Adding to the confusing clash of witnesses, McCook brought in the Las Animas scandal, "perpetrated by parties whose hands, covered with fraud, are now raised against me."<sup>31</sup> Much maneuvering and pressure remained hidden. An eight-man Denver delegation headed by Elbert arrived early in the battle, and Evans passed through the city but denied any part in the grappling. Others appeared looking for offices amid the turmoil. Chaffee reportedly reached deep into his purse to finance telegrams, private investigations, legal advice, and trips of witnesses.<sup>32</sup> Pressure also was coming from above. When Grant first submitted his nominations, a senator reported that "Chaffee and the President had quarreled over McCook and I am told the President is to make it a personal matter in the Senate."<sup>33</sup> Gossip had it that on the committee, Senators Boreman of West Virginia and John J. Patterson of New Jersey were for McCook from the start and Powell Clayton of Arkansas and

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-73.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-18, 125-32.

<sup>27</sup> *Abstract of Testimony on Second Charge*, Jerome B. Chaffee Papers.

<sup>28</sup> *Evidence*, Part 1, p. 9.

<sup>29</sup> *Daily Times* (Denver), March 3, 1874, p. 4; March 6, 1874, p. 1; May 27, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Letter from Colfax to Hall, February 20, 1874, Frank Hall Collection.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Part 1, pp. 1-6.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-10.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-27.

Phineas W. Hitchcock of Nebraska opposed him. Executive pressure finally drove New Hampshire Senator Aaron H. Cragin and Henry Cooper of Tennessee to support McCook, reported the *Rocky Mountain News*, and John S. Hager of California voted with the majority.<sup>34</sup> On April 17, Chaffee's forty-ninth birthday, the committee sent McCook's nomination to the Senate with recommendation that it be approved.

This apparent defeat for Chaffee and his supporters, however, was followed with cause for rejoicing on May 7, when the Senate returned the nomination to the committee for reconsideration. Chaffee's press support trumpeted conquest: "The president is defeated; Mr. Chaffee is victorious."<sup>35</sup> Many considered the Senate's action notice to Grant to choose another nominee.<sup>36</sup> Study of the testimony in the reconvened hearings, however, indicates further charges against McCook had appeared as the Senate debated the nomination in secret session.

Senator Stephen W. Dorsey reported that while in London late in 1871 he had heard that McCook had demanded \$25,000 from English land speculators in return for not voicing doubt on their title to part of the Maxwell Land Grant. The senator added that he had confronted McCook with the rumor two years later; the general did not deny the charges and claimed to have made some money from the grant. After the committee had recommended McCook's appointment, Dorsey passed the story on to Senators Logan, Boutwell, and Hamlin. In addition, a letter to Senator H. B. Anthony was submitted charging the ex-governor with blackmail and with demanding payment for lobbying in Washington while governor.<sup>37</sup>

In his reply, McCook admitted interest in the Maxwell Grant but vigorously denied any attempt at blackmail in connection with either charge. He turned on Chaffee, producing a letter in which his accuser offered him a one-third profit in the Maxwell deal for using his influence with the secretary of interior. He also established that Chaffee had solicited the letter to Senator Anthony and had conferred with Senator Dorsey about the legislator's charges.<sup>38</sup>

The Washington mudslinging finally was drawing to a close. On June 9, the committee again recommended McCook's confirmation, and at midnight of the nineteenth, after several

<sup>34</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), April 23, 1874, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, May 8, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>36</sup> *Daily Times* (Denver), May 8, 1874, p. 2; Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado* (Chicago: The Blakely Printing Company, 1890), II, 172.

<sup>37</sup> *Evidence*, Part 2, pp. 1-22, 34-35.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-71.

hours of debate, the Senate approved Grant's nominee by a majority of one—twenty-seven to twenty-six. When the news reached Denver, the new governor's supporters gathered to light candles, explode firecrackers in a nail keg, and beat an anvil until dawn. A handbill appeared on the streets crowing victory and taunting the defeated with doggerel verse:

One by one the Ring thieves Fall,  
Dime by dime their Purse runs dry,  
Their Glory's passed beyond recall,  
Joe Chaffee's coming home to die.<sup>39</sup>

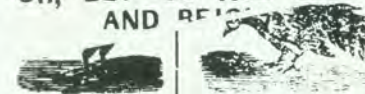


**McCOOK!**

**GOVERNOR OF COLORADO!**

**LET THE TRIBUNE CHICKEN CROW!**

**OH, LET US ALL LAUGH AND REIGN!**



We take supreme delight in presenting to our readers a graphic sketch of the McCOOK-CHAFFEE fight, as it appeared at noon to-day. The CHAF-

FEE chicken, which has been the "boss" chicken in the "Ring" for so long, and upon which so much money has been wagered, is now a dead chicken in the "Ring." The McCook fowl has fought this fight out bravely, and even now we can hear his clarion voice crowing all over the Territory—cock-a-doo-dle-do! Bring on your other dunghill chickens—our bird is fresh, and comes out of the fight UNTARNISHED.



Again we shriek as we hoist our banner on high. "Glory-enough-for-one-day!"

Will some of the "byoys" hoist those "banners on the outer walls?"

Mr. CHAFFEE'S resignation is now in order.

Has any one seen anything of SAM ELBERT?

WANTED.—A dozen new tape-lines to measure the faces of the members of JACK FALSTAFF DOWNING'S Ring brigade.

Has any one heard of... now, hundred

WASHINGTON, D. C., }  
9:45 P. M., June 19, 1874. }

Special to *The Denver Tribune*.

McCOOK was confirmed as Governor of Colorado within the hour.

CPAMPION VAUGHN.

Reports of Chaffee's imminent political death, however, were exaggerated. His position before the voters had been strengthened as the long fight in the East spawned other issues which raised the delegate from the nadir of his public life.

Grant's attack on the Colorado administration generated great public excitement and speculation. The attention of the citizenry was so aroused that Saloman Brothers Grocery was moved to exploit it and advertised, "Pres't Grant Can't Remove Us, We still continue to sell the choicest Groceries at the lowest hard times figures." Throughout the territory, many saw the move as confirmation of the land fraud and as the end of the "Denver crowd"'s reign. A mass meeting in Boulder adopted a resolution praising Grant and condemning Moffat's appointment as treasurer. Another gathering in West Las Animas expressed thanks to the president and welcomed McCook, "the gallant soldier."<sup>10</sup>

Just as damaging as scandal to Chaffee's political position was the popular feeling that he had lost his personal influence in the national capital. A territorial delegate, because he could not vote in Congress and his constituents could offer no ballots for president, had to depend primarily on personal appeal and persuasion to produce results. To those on an ambitious frontier looking to Washington for aid in their land's development, a delegate without these assets was worse than useless, for he was standing in the way of someone who might get the job done. The Laramie *Sentinel* gossiped with its readers about the woes of its territorial neighbor: "It does look as if Delegate Chaffee, as a friend from Colorado told us this morning, has lost his grip." McCook's nomination made public the break between the delegate and the president, and hope for federal help in the territory naturally dimmed. In the *Chieftain* of Pueblo, the editor wrote that since Colorado's delegate had lost his prestige, and therefore his usefulness, he should carry out his threat and resign. The Greeley *Sun* concurred. Perhaps the cruelest blow came from the Boulder *News*. King Lunalillo of the Sandwich Islands had died recently, the editor noted. Chaffee had best go and assume the throne, for in the Pacific kings are admired as ornaments and are never forced to show their power.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Daily Times* (Denver), June 20, 1874, p. 1; Handbill, June 19, 1874, MSS VII/140, State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

<sup>11</sup> *Daily Times* (Denver), February 2, 1874, p. 1; *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), February 6, 1874, p. 1; *Denver Mirror*, February 22, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> *Laramie Sentinel*, reprinted in the *Denver Tribune*, January 31, 1874, p. 1; *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), February 5, 1874, p. 4; *Sun* (Greeley) reprinted

The ring's grip on the party was threatened. Political "outs" had become increasingly restive as Chaffee strengthened his position after the 1872 election. "I am informed there is a move a foot to displace Gov. McCook and to have Saml Elbert appointed in his place," wrote a business associate to Henry Teller. "Is this concentrating too much in one faction?" Now they leaped at the new opening. Teller went to work immediately. In a letter to his friend, the young attorney Harper Orahood, he described his reactions:

McCook has been nominated for governor and Chaffee telegraphed that he will resign if he is confirmed. They called a meeting to protest and we went in and took a vote of twenty to one for McCook. . . . I think they may try to get up a meeting at Central or B[lack] H[awk] to protest. I hope you will put your foot in it. If McCook is confirmed we will have the Ring broken up completely. . . . If Chaffee resigns all the better.<sup>12</sup>

Immediately, however, another reaction began against the man Grant had chosen to replace Elbert. Accusations that McCook had defrauded the government through the Ute cattle contract were not new to Coloradoans. Rumors of corruption had plagued the mustachioed governor during much of his earlier administration. Popular discontent with McCook had risen in the final months of his term and had aided Chaffee in securing the governorship for Elbert.

Charges of corrupt rule continued to haunt McCook. At the Denver meeting where Teller claimed to have taken a "vote of twenty to one for McCook," a speaker reminded the crowd of the infamous Ute contract. The editor of the Fairplay *Sentinel*, who had labeled Moffat's appointment a "Ring sinecure," soon wrote that if other journalists were afraid to mention the Ute frauds, he would take on the responsibility, but other newspapers, especially the *Rocky Mountain News*, overcame any hesitancy they might have felt and filled their columns with the scandal. The *Chicago Times*, consistent critic of Grant, commented that Elbert "is as much better than McCook as the Virgin Mary is superior to Simon Cameron." Many persons apparently shared the feelings of a sampling of Boulder citizens who were pleased with the Denver ring's apparent demise but disliked the prospect of the former governor's return. Even the Democratic Pueblo *People*, which had played up the Las Animas

in the *Denver Mirror*, February 8, 1874, p. 2; *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), February 27, 1874, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Letter from William S. Jackson to Henry M. Teller, December 13, 1872, Henry Moore Teller Papers; Letter from Teller to Harper Orahood, January 28, 1874, Harper Orahood Papers, Western Historical Collections, University of Colorado Library, Boulder.

frauds, preferred Elbert to the new nominee without hesitation.<sup>43</sup> To many, therefore, the president's replacement seemed an irritating exchange of frauds.

With the nomination of McCook, Jenkins, and Searight, the question of carpetbaggism again began to flourish. Although McCook was a Fifty-Niner, he had left Colorado to serve in the Civil War and had not returned until 1869. Jenkins and Searight, moreover, had no claim to residency, one coming from Virginia and the other from Pennsylvania. No opponent, however, could burden Chaffee with the hated carpetbag. Born in New York, he had come to the territory in 1860 with Eben Smith to establish a stamping mill in Gilpin County. After making his fortune in mining, he had moved to Denver and founded the First National Bank, of which he was president until 1880. Elbert also was an early settler.

During the Washington battle, Grant pressed his attack on the Chaffee faction by ordering extensive removals of Colorado federal officers friendly to the delegate. Denver postmaster Hiram Bennet's job went to David A. Chever, and Bennet's assistant was replaced by W. W. Lander.<sup>44</sup> In the controversial Pueblo land office, Cook resigned and Stanton was removed, and their places were given to James L. Mitchell and Keyes Danforth. In the Denver office, pioneer and war veteran Louis Dugal was replaced by Herman Silver, while collector of internal revenue J. H. Morrison was forced to give up his office to W. H. Parker. All the new men were from outside the territory.

The press showed a swelling hostility toward the new appointments. From the first, William Byers' *News* warned that residents were to be thrust aside and "odious men foisted into power." When the prophecy seemed to be confirmed, the *Mirror* attacked the unreasonable "wholesale decapitation" of officials and asked its readers, "Is Colorado a mere satrapy?" Disturbing rumors took root. Word came from the East that Searight was a disappointed office seeker and Jenkins a lobbyist for railroads. In Central City, a letter was received from an Alabaman claiming he had Washington support for Moses Hallet's place on the Colorado Supreme Court.<sup>45</sup>

Editors looking for an answer to the problem of carpetbaggism usually came up with statehood. Honest citizens had no voice in the selection of officials, it was lamented, and they would continue to be shamed with men like Searight and Jenkins as long as they lived under territorial government.<sup>46</sup> No man in Colorado had done as much in the drive for admission as Chaffee. As delegate he continued his efforts in the movement he had supported actively in the 1860's. Though thwarted during his first term, Chaffee appeared much closer to success at the start of 1874. In December, Grant had recommended inviting Colorado to join the union, and Chaffee had introduced an enabling bill on the eighth of that month. Even as he was directing the fight against McCook, Colorado's delegate was working in the House committee on territories for a favorable recommendation on the enabling bill. This fight he won. At the first of June, he submitted the committee's report, and a week later, he wired William Byers that the House had passed the measure by more than a two-thirds majority.<sup>47</sup> Senate passage still was needed, but Chaffee had advanced the effort toward what many considered the ultimate answer to territorial vassalage. Byers provided the applause, terming it "a great victory for Mr. Chaffee."<sup>48</sup>

Another success for the delegate lay in the length of his battle in Washington. Even the Pueblo *Chieftain*, adamant opponent of the "ring," began to doubt the character of McCook when he had not been confirmed by the middle of April. Before the end of February, the Denver *Times* was commenting that Chaffee's unprecedented fight against Grant reaffirmed his standing among the nation's leaders. When the Senate sent Grant's nomination back to committee, the *Times* noted with amazement the David-and-Goliath spectacle: "Chaffee has achieved what no man has ever achieved before since the formation of the Government, and Grant has met a Bull Run." Eventual defeat could not lessen the effect of the underdog's extended campaign. The moral victory was expressed in a *Rocky Mountain News* editorial:

Whatever may be the result, no one can deny the strong fight which has been made by Mr. Chaffee. . . . Even if he be defeated, he has demonstrated his high personal influence at the

<sup>43</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 28, 1874, pp. 2, 4; *Fairplay Sentinel*, reprinted in the *Denver Mirror*, March 1, 1874, p. 2; *Chicago Times*, reprinted in the *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), February 18, 1874, p. 2; *Boulder County News*, January 30, 1874, p. 2; *People* (Pueblo), January 31, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Frank Hall has written that Lander, seeking the post office position, played an important role in the attack on the Chaffee faction. Hall, *History of Colorado*, II, 159.

<sup>45</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 29, 1874, p. 2; *Denver Mirror*, May 10, 1874, p. 1; *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), February 13, 1874, p. 2; *Daily Register* (Central City) March 17, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> *Daily Times* (Denver), May 18, 1874, p. 2; *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), February 18, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Steps to Statehood in Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine*, III (August, 1926), 109-10.

<sup>48</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), June 9, 1874, p. 2.

national capital, for the contest is as much between Chaffee and Grant . . . as it is between McCook and the people of Colorado.<sup>49</sup>

Among the columns of the anti-"ring" press there appeared no more of the editorial scorn reserved for the politically impotent.

To be sure, strong opposition to the Denver politician remained. Even the friendly Denver *Times* admitted newspapers against Chaffee outnumbered those for him, ten to eight.<sup>50</sup> Most vigorous was the Denver *Tribune*, which attacked Chaffee almost daily as a man without honor who opposed McCook with money and lies, hounded the general's wife to her grave, and even had designs on the presidency. Nevertheless, McCook's unpopularity and the Ute Indian contract charges, the carpet-bag issue, and Chaffee's stubborn battle enabled the delegate's press supporters to take the offensive and to defend him with greater confidence. The Denver *Mirror* underwent a striking conversion. Its editor, Stanley Fowler, had attacked Chaffee savagely when the Las Animas scandal came to light, but as the Washington battle progressed, the journalist's views began to change. When Colorado officials started to fall before Grant's orders, Fowler published lengthy articles deploring the "demoralized carpetbaggers, importunate incapables, and played out politicians" being sent to the territory. Chaffee's statehood efforts were met with praise. By early August, Fowler was writing that Chaffee "stands . . . head and shoulders above any of his defamers. . . . to his active instrumentality we look for early admission of Colorado as a state."<sup>51</sup> Fowler's conversion was matched in varying degrees by editors in the territory.

When McCook was confirmed by the Senate, the *Rocky Mountain News* boasted that the Colorado delegate was victorious in defeat after a fight which had left him stronger and more influential than ever. The writer undoubtedly exaggerated, but the leader of the Denver "ring" certainly had come far during the past four months. The Denver *Times* had been more accurate with a one-line filler set in the corner in an April issue: "Chaffee stock is rising."<sup>52</sup>

The fight over McCook was not finished but rather was transferred to the territory. The battle's victor and Chaffee's

<sup>49</sup> *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), April 16, 1874, p. 4; *Daily Times* (Denver), June 30, 1874, p. 2; May 8, 1874, p. 2; *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), March 17, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Daily Times* (Denver), June 30, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> *Denver Mirror*, May 10, 1874, p. 1; August 2, 1874, reprinted on March 14, 1875, p. 1.

<sup>52</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), June 23, 1874, p. 2; *Daily Times* (Denver), April 29, 1874, p. 2.

political future would be decided not on the floor of the Senate but at the polls of Colorado. Despite his pledge, Colorado's delegate did not resign when the new governor was confirmed, but neither did he seek re-election. Both the Central City *Register* and the *Rocky Mountain News* had placed his name in nomination. Late in July, however, the "ring" leader wired his refusal to Byers.<sup>53</sup> The outlook was dim for any Republican in the shattered party, and Chaffee was not one to play the martyr.<sup>54</sup> He had no intention, however, of bolting and running as an independent, as Byers' editorials suggested. "Damn these men who falter when clouds appear," he had written to Frank Hall two years before. "I would stick to the Republican Party for what it has done, such a record, it partakes of the divine almost."<sup>55</sup> Chaffee chose to remain a delegate and a Republican and to stand aside as the drama played to its conclusion. Any political work was done behind the scenes. Otherwise, Chaffee inspected his mining properties, and in August he went to Europe.

Regardless of Chaffee's lack of participation, the campaign was molded by the spring struggle. The faction led by McCook and Henry Teller sued for peace. The new governor invited Chaffee to stump for a united party, but to no avail.<sup>56</sup> McCook wrote a local politician that he saw no reason the past could not be forgotten and harmony restored, "and I ask you to assist in keeping personal quarrels out of the convention."<sup>57</sup> But such a hope was visionary. Voters could not be expected to ignore an issue which had dominated public affairs for months, and supporters of the "ring" did their best to keep the fight alive.

The convention met on August 5 and, after Judge James Belford withdrew,<sup>58</sup> nominated H. P. H. Bromwell and adopted a vague platform endorsing the national administration and pleading for harmony among the ranks. The Democrats had sensed victory and had organized throughout the spring. On July 23, they gathered in Colorado Springs and chose Thomas M. Patterson, lawyer and relatively new arrival in Colorado, to bear the party banner. The campaign went badly from the start

<sup>53</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 28, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> For Chaffee's violent reaction in 1870, when nominated on what he believed to be a losing ticket, see Irving Stanton, *Sixty Years in Colorado: Reminiscences and Reflections of a Pioneer of 1860* (Denver: n.p., 1922), p. 151.

<sup>55</sup> Letter from Chaffee to Hall, August 4, 1872, Frank Hall Collection.

<sup>56</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 14, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from McCook to Nathan C. Meeker, July 20, 1874, Edward M. McCook Letters.

<sup>58</sup> Elmer Ellis writes of a rumor that Chaffee threatened Belford to prevent his entrance into the race. Elmer Ellis, *Henry Moore Teller, Defender of the West* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1941), p. 90.

for the Republicans. Many in the southern counties felt they were ignored. When George M. Chilcott of Pueblo was passed over for Bromwell, the *Chieftain* complained: "For four years we have been Chaffeed, Cooked and Mofated—the next two we are to be McCooked and Tellered."<sup>59</sup> Byers' *News* and eventually the *Central City Register* editorialized that a vote for Bromwell was a vote for McCook and carpetbag government, and the newspapers stressed that the Republican convention had rejected a statehood plank for its platform. Apparently concerned over charges of carpetbaggism, McCook asked Grant to make no new appointments until after the election.<sup>60</sup> Bromwell and Patterson rarely mentioned the accusations debated in the press, and the Republican was attacked for ignoring his party's feud. In addition to a splintered organization and cool support in the south, the Republicans were hurt by Grant's veto of the "inflation bill" and the scandals which had rocked the national administration.

The election and the decisive clash of Chaffee and his adversaries finally arrived. On September 8, a day quieter than usual because a new election law had forbidden bands and the sale of liquor during voting, Coloradoans chose the first Democratic delegate in their history, 9,255 to 7,170. The *Rocky Mountain News* attributed the Republican defeat to Grant's nomination of McCook and to the party divisions the newspaper had encouraged for months. The editorial ended with a pout: "We hope the President is satisfied."<sup>61</sup>

It was Chaffee who had reason for satisfaction. When Patterson was elected, the McCook-Elbert fight ended with Chaffee's career saved and his power reaffirmed. As in 1872, a rival faction had bid for dominance in the party only to meet defeat at the polls. The vote was largely a repudiation of McCook and rule by outside appointees. The new governor had failed the test of holding his territory within his party. To Republican leaders in 1874, the rising national power of the Democrats demanded firm control of any prospective state. Political reins of the territory had to be returned to the man who knew how to use them, and Chaffee had proved his ability in Colorado public affairs.

The victory of Chaffee and his supporters must be attributed to their understanding of the temperament of Coloradoans and

to their ability to play upon voters' dispositions. In January, his enemies had rejoiced that the "ring" was smashed and its leader politically dead, but Chaffee's battle during the months that followed saved him from threatened disgrace and obscurity. The influence of a lowly delegate who could hold his own with a president could hardly be questioned. An unpopular nominee and charges of corruption constantly broadcast in the press played upon the most persistent issue of territorial politics: carpetbaggism, the feeling that self-government was denied and base officials imposed for the advantage of dishonest eastern politicians. Chaffee's efforts for admission established him as the champion of statehood, the ultimate cure of carpetbag government. The spring fight, in short, allowed the delegate and his supporters again to take the offensive. Skillfully turning the emerging issues against his challengers, Chaffee had shown that his political defeat could be bought only by abandoning Colorado to the Democrats, a price Republican leaders in Washington were unwilling to pay.

Chaffee had made his point. When Congress reconvened in February, the way opened for his ascendance to the pinnacle of his career. Mutual friends negotiated a reconciliation between the chief executive and the delegate. Grant realized party harmony was impossible as long as McCook remained in office. Pressure was exerted, and McCook resigned, this time to be replaced by a compromise nominee, John L. Routt. Working together, Chaffee and Patterson engineered passage of the enabling bill in the Senate, where it had languished since June. The House approved the Senate amendments on the final day of the delegate's term. Months later, to reward the champion of statehood, a grateful Colorado Legislature would present Chaffee with one of the Senate seats of the new state, and to show the binding of party wounds, Henry Teller would be given the other. When the news came from Washington inviting Colorado to join the union, reporters again "ran up and down," but no one was speculating on Chaffee's political decline.

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<sup>59</sup> *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), August 13, 1874, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> Territorial Executive Record, II, 352, Colorado State Archives.

<sup>61</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 9, 1874, p. 1.

# Fort Lewis Military Records

by GREGORY C. THOMPSON AND FLOYD A. O'NEIL

As the tide of westward migration swelled in the post-Civil War years, the Indians of the trans-Mississippi West became increasingly resistant to the occupation of their lands. This resistance led to a series of encounters with the armed forces of the United States, and the policy of the federal government resulted in the establishment of more military posts in the West. Some posts were located near agricultural lands or mineral deposits as population centers grew. Others were established where resistance was encountered; still others were located either on or adjacent to the major reservations where hostilities developed.

Indian warfare in Colorado reached a high point in the late 1860's and the 1870's and at this time the government found it necessary to establish a military post to protect the citizens of southwestern Colorado. The area was developing rapidly as a result of the discovery of rich mining districts in the San Juan and La Plata Mountains. Agriculture, lumbering, and grazing grew apace.

The original site chosen for the fort was at Pagosa Springs, Colorado. There on October 15, 1878, Fort Lewis was established. It was named after William H. Lewis of the Nineteenth United States Infantry, who was killed at Punished Woman Fork, Kansas, in an engagement with the Northern Cheyenne Indians.

After the White River Ute outbreak of 1879 which took the life of Nathan Meeker and a score of others, Lieutenant General Philip H. Sheridan, after a tour of inspection, ordered the post to be relocated near Hesperus, Colorado, so that it might serve the desired purposes of protecting the new settlements and also of protecting the Utes from white encroachment. The boundaries of the Southern Ute Reservation in southwestern Colorado were drawn in such a way that the Utes held a body of land fifteen miles wide and over a hundred miles long; their



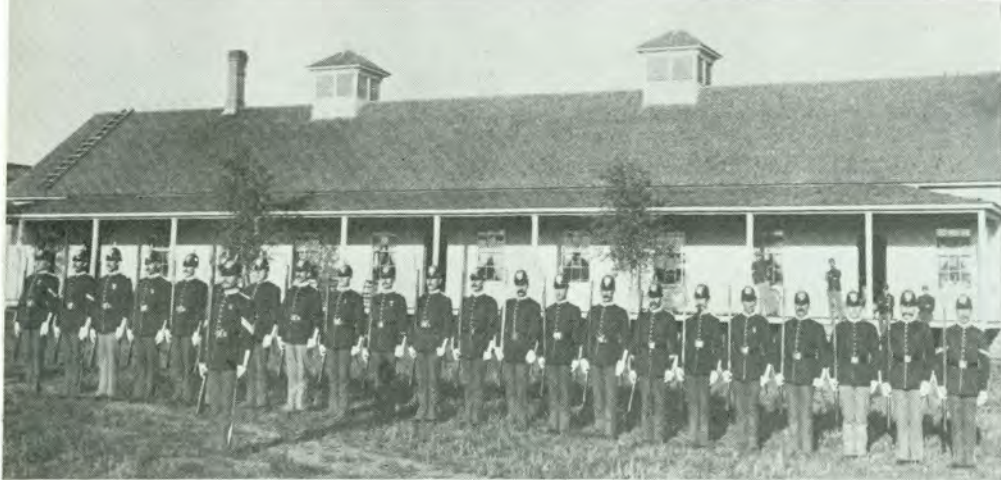
lands lay across many river valleys and contained no geographical unity. The reservation interdicted almost all routes of travel between southwestern Colorado and northwestern New Mexico.

The military post was established and the initial buildings built under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. A. Crofton of the Thirteenth United States Infantry. The site chosen for the new camp was near Hesperus on an elevated plateau on the La Plata River. While the new fort was under construction it was referred to as the "Cantonment on the La Plata."

As compared with many of the forts of the West, Fort Lewis had a relatively uneventful history. (Desertions and the attraction of the "wild life" of Silverton and Durango caused consternation to many of the commanders.) No great campaigns were waged from the post, but it probably served as a deterrent to conflict between the whites and Indians at a time when the white pressure to obtain the Indian lands was particularly intense. Some expeditions, however, were sent out from the fort to quell difficulties which arose in all of the four states adjacent to it. The post was abandoned in September, 1891, and the military reservation was transferred to the Department of the Interior for the establishment of an Indian school. This school lasted until 1910 when the military reservation was given to the state of Colorado to be part of the land grant system; from this grant Fort Lewis A & M College was founded. In 1956, the campus was abandoned in favor of a new site chosen for Fort Lewis College in the city of Durango.

In 1968 a joint project was carried out by the University of Utah's Western History Center and Fort Lewis College's Center of Southwest Studies to extract the records of Fort Lewis from the National Archives. The selection, organization, and processing of these records was accomplished by the authors. Included are 4,920 pages of documents relating to the entire his-





*Troops from Company A, Twenty-Second Regiment, shown in front of their quarters at Fort Lewis about 1885.*

tory of the fort at both Pagosa Springs and the La Plata River site. This is a case history of a western military post. The researcher would find information on daily routines; buildings; materials and prices; supply problems; relations with ranchers and businessmen; toll roads and railroad prices; courts martial; dealings with Utes, Navajos, and Apaches; surgeon's reports; post library, and many other topics. Microfilm copies of the materials described below are available in the University of Utah Library. A photocopy of the entire collection is available at the Center of Southwest Studies, Fort Lewis College, Durango, Colorado, and may be used by permission of the director, Dr. Robert W. Delaney.

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