

## Digging Doctors

By MERRITT BROWN\*

As Dr. Fredrick Wislizenus entered the Rocky Mountains with the American Fur Company in the late 1830's, he records his reason for coming to the west: "Chained for several years to an exacting medical practice, in which I had tasted to the full the sorrows and pleasures of the active physician, I felt the need of mental and physical recreation."<sup>1</sup> It was not medicine which drew this European physician to the western wilderness, nor was it the prospect of medical prosperity which impelled men of his profession to the Pike's Peak region a generation later. Had you read the first issue of the *Rocky Mountain News* on an April day in 1859, you would have noticed on the front page an advertisement to the following effect: "A. F. Peck M.D.—Cache-a-la-Poudre, Nebraska, where he may at all times be found when not professionally engaged or digging gold."<sup>2</sup> No statement could be more typical of the doctors who came west in the Pike's Peak gold rush. The story of their brief stay in the Colorado country is like the picture of an incomplete puzzle, tantalizing the curiosity of those who would see its entirety. But the picture is there, colorful though fragmentary, vivid though illusive.

The pioneers coming west brought with them more than just ways of living. With them also came diseases that were virtually alien to the mountain men and Indians alike. Scarlet fever, diphtheria and smallpox were all unwelcome immigrants. With the establishment of sizable communities, typhoid fever became a menacing enemy. Cholera was the chief killer of those crossing the plains. It struck suddenly, accompanied

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In preparing this manuscript, Merritt Brown used many standard works on the gold rush, and the following newspapers: *The Gold Reporter*, *Rocky Mountain Herald*, *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Western Mountaineer*. His original sources comprised six diaries from 1859 to 1860, now in the Library of the State Historical Society of Colorado.

Mr. Brown says: "To my knowledge none of these diaries have been published in full. They vividly portray the personal hardships, thoughts and activities of those who came to Pike's Peak in 1859-60. Within the mass of insignificant details contained in these documents is painted a picture of life, as it was in 1859, that is not found in published books on the subject."

<sup>1</sup> F. A. Wislizenus, *A Journey to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1859*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, April 23, 1859, p. 1. According to Robert L. Perkin, *The First Hundred Years*, p. 57, Dr. Peck was a member of the W. N. Byers party of Omaha, which brought the press of the *Rocky Mountain News* to Denver. "shortly before the press party left Omaha he had been engaged in dissecting the body of a man lynched for horse stealing and had made his first—perhaps his only—lucky strike in the deceased's pockets." The amount was said to have been \$300.—*Editor*.

by violent diarrhea and vomiting. Within a few hours the victim was either dead or on the road to recovery.

## VOL. 1.

### Rocky Mountain News.

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<sup>3</sup> Rocky Mountain News, September 26, 1860.  
<sup>4</sup> Ibid., August 27, 1859

Medicines were available to the '59ers in the form of quinine and calomel. Chloroform was first used in the West about 1852, and it was in common use in Denver by 1860,<sup>3</sup> although the extent of its use prior to that year is not certain. Good strong whiskey was the liquid anesthetic employed by the gold seekers. Drug stores soon appeared on the scene handling everything from medicine to dry goods. Dr. S. Wilcox who established the first drug store in Denver, bearing the strange name of "Old London Hospital," received an appreciative letter from Luke Tierney, a well-known gold rush personage, praising the doctor's treatment of his case of "that most trying of all diseases, rheumatism." Luke does not mention the name of the remedy which Dr. Wilcox gave him, but his testimony of recovery after only two weeks would make any of today's television sponsors proud.<sup>4</sup>

Though not in the strict category of disease, insects of all types were continual pests, and filth was the order of the day in the mining camps. In

the account of his trip to the Pike's Peak region in 1859, Dr. C. M. Clark observes that conditions in the mining camps were anything but sanitary. Concerning a group of miners he came upon he says, "We found a party of miners . . . sitting around their claim chatting and occasionally scratching . . . one of them particularly was constantly digging most vigorously." Clark concludes his account of this man's affliction rather vividly. ". . . at every bite he would reach for the invader, and at times was victor, bringing out a big louse about the size of a grain of wheat and casting it away while he kept talking."<sup>5</sup> This spectacle was indeed a common one in the mining camps of '59. Clark goes on to say that personal cleanliness was something virtually unknown in the mountains. Men would go for weeks without washing or changing their clothes. And these garments did not even get a rest at night, for the men often slept in them. The filth of the mining cabins was also great, propagating sickness such as mountain fever. In such conditions as these, it is indeed amazing that these Pike's Peakers maintained the level of health they did.

A good insight into the care and experiences of those who were sick may be gained by perusing the diaries of the time. In his diary, A. T. Rankin mentions one poor man who was sick and kept in a tin shop for awhile. Later he was moved to an old, unheated house, and a woman was hired to watch him. "There he died . . . many others have died here recently in similar circumstances far from home with few to care for them."<sup>6</sup> Incidents like this took place at a time when there was no scarcity of doctors in the Denver-Auraria vicinity. Part of the answer to this paradox may lie in the seemingly stoical disregard for professional medical help that existed on the part of many at that time.

Another diary is that of H. J. Hawley who mined near the present town of Central City. In those days when you had a toothache it was risky business to seek medical attention. At least this was the experience of Mr. Hawley who went to a doctor to have his tooth pulled and was rewarded for his efforts by having the bad tooth only broken off and a good tooth pulled by mistake. The results of this experience were prolonged for a month while he was in daily pain and could hardly eat with any comfort: "I feel rather large around the jaw this a.m. and I cannot chew anything therefore have to leave everything alone." At another time he records, ". . . as George is sick I must go in and work my sickness off."<sup>7</sup> This was the only available remedy for many maladies in the mining camps of those days.

<sup>5</sup> C. M. Clark, *A Trip to Pike's Peak*, p. 96.

<sup>6</sup> Diary of A. T. Rankin (unpublished), 9-10, Mss. 1-17, Library, State Historical Society of Colorado.

<sup>7</sup> Lynn E. Perrigo (ed.), "H. J. Hawley's Diary, Russell Gulch in 1860," *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XXX, No. 2 (April, 1953), 148.

Some were more fortunate than Mr. Hawley in receiving, what they considered to be, effective aid from a physician. The diary of Joshua Manwaring, who lived in Boulder City (now Boulder), discloses a bout with the fever which often caused sickness and death:

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

July 8 (through) 16, "Was suffering with billious fever. Dr. Atkins done all he could for me and after a while succeeded in breaking it up. It left me in a very debilitated condition. I could neither stand nor walk. The ends of my fingers were getting cold. Dr. Atkins fixed me some stimulants which helped me along pretty fast."<sup>8</sup>

One is tempted to wonder if the patients' recovery was not more often due to sheer physical stamina rather than to proper medication. One thing is certain, during the gold rush of '59, good health was the only guarantee of recovery.

Probably some of the greatest dangers to the '59ers were accidents of various kinds. Green Russell in a letter dated June 17, 1859, makes reference to many accidents that had occurred through carelessness. Accidental shooting, starvation through trying to cross the plains on foot, and exposure all took their toll of life that year.<sup>9</sup> Often, amputation of an arm or leg which had been infected by a wound was the only way to save a man's life. But the home remedies of the day presented a greater danger in producing false security, if not actual harm. A young man prospecting in the mountains west of Denver during March of 1859, revealed the following well-meaning prescription: "Niwot came into lodge while I was getting supper: going to Auraria for medicine for his sick squaw. . . . I gave him a bottle of Perry Davis' Pain Killer and a chunk of rhubarb root for his squaw. And he left this morning for his village."<sup>10</sup> Newspaper editors, too, were firm believers in home remedies. Thomas Gibson, editor of the *Gold Reporter*, circulated his personal recommendation for a "sure cure":

A CURE FOR SCROPULA—Put two copper cents in a cup, and pour on them one ounce of aquafortis and two ounces pure strong vinegar. . . . Apply it to the sore twice per day, with a soft brush or rag. . . . I have never known it to fail to cure the scropula even in the worst stage, and I have reports of its curing old sores. I believe that it in no case can do injury."<sup>11</sup>—editor<sup>11</sup>

There is, however, a brighter side to this picture. For although many succumbed in the battle to stay alive, many more emerged as victors with an apparent ease that would make

<sup>8</sup> Robert M. Warner, "Journal of a Fifty-Niner," *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 3 (July, 1959), 168-69.

<sup>9</sup> L. R. Hafen (ed.), *Colorado Gold Rush Contemporary Letters and Reports*, 383.

<sup>10</sup> George H. Jackson Diary, March 4, 1859, Library, State Historical Society of Colorado.

<sup>11</sup> *Gold Reporter*, AUG 6, 1859.

today's '59ers envious. One cannot read the accounts of those who came to the Rockies without noticing the many references to continued good health that seemed to prevail among them. Luke Tierney, who accompanied the Russell party [of which Dr. Levi J. Russell was a member] to the mouth of Cherry Creek in June of 1858, made it clear that their health was not impaired at any time.<sup>12</sup> This was in spite of the fact that they were often exposed to mountain snows and immersion in water. In fact, according to the old mountain men, no one had died from a disease contracted in the mountains before the Gold Rush. Concerning the winter of 1859-60, Matthew Dale writes, "With the exception of two or three cases of scurvy, there has been no fatal case of any disease in the mountains, which considering exposure, food, etc. is a very bright picture of healthfulness."<sup>13</sup> This "picture of healthfulness" which to a large extent did exist was due to the fact that most of the '59ers were young and therefore were not good candidates for the sick bed. Such was the milieu into which the gold rush doctors ventured.

Although many of these men were graduates of some of the finest medical schools in the East, it was not the prospect of professional advancement that brought them to the Pike's Peak gold diggings. A degree of established settlement was necessary on the frontier before sufficient demand could be created to support a physician in his practice. This degree of settlement was not reached in Colorado until late in 1859. Henry Villard, reporter for a Cincinnati newspaper and an eye witness of the gold rush, remarked that, ". . . Doctors are already plentifully supplied, but not much demanded."<sup>14</sup> Many physicians did ply their Hypocratic trade, but they often had a miner's pick in one hand with an eye to the "diggings."

Even those who did hang up their shingles in Denver and vicinity had the gold fever, while others went straight to the business of prospecting and caring for the sick as the opportunity afforded. Still others devoted most or all of their time to non-medical activities. For they had come to a land where Gold was king, and men were subject to its reign, and doctors were men of like passions with their contemporaries.

On November 1, 1858, a party from Kansas City arrived on the banks of Cherry Creek bringing with them Dr. G. N. Woodward (or G. W.).<sup>15</sup> The Kansas City group returned in April, 1859, but Dr. Woodward stayed on to try his hand at prospecting. In letters he wrote home from November through April he indicates his intention to mine gold. By April the doctor seemed somewhat disillusioned and indecisive as to

<sup>12</sup> L. R. Hafen (ed.), *Pike's Peak Gold Rush of 1859*, 124-5.

<sup>13</sup> Robert G. Athearn, "Life in the Pike's Peak Region: The Letters of Matthew H. Dale," *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2 (April, 1955), 96.

<sup>14</sup> Henry Villard, *The Past and Present of the Pikes' Peak Gold Regions*, 151.

<sup>15</sup> L. R. Hafen, *Colorado Gold Rush Contemporary Letters and Reports*, 149, 164, 333.

his future activities. In a letter that month he wrote "... cannot tell where or what we shall do in this wild distant land."<sup>16</sup> In spite of that discouraging note he must have achieved a measure of prosperity. For by August of 1859, he was the owner of many lots in Auraria. During the late spring and summer of that year, he did practice medicine in Denver and Auraria. Beyond this, little more is known concerning Dr. Woodward.

The well-known freighting firm of Jones and Cartwright had as one of its partners Dr. J. T. Cartwright who apparently engaged in no medical practice whatever. This pattern of non-medical activity is further seen with respect to Dr. C. A. Roberts, who resided at Mountain City (near present Central City) during the summer of 1859. The local newspaper for September 3 of that year discloses some of the many irons which Dr. Roberts had in the fire of the gold rush. These included the recording of claims, deeds, bills of sale, sale of claims, and attending to the settlement of disputed claims. This Mountain City physician also acted in the capacity of prosecuting attorney in a miner's court trial. But the crowning supplement to Dr. Robert's medical practice came when, in the absence of Thomas Gibson, he became acting editor of the *Gold Reporter*. Other physicians were actively engaged in operating saw mills, manufacturing coal oil, and were active in public debates and politics. Perhaps this story of non-professional interests can best be told in the words of Dr. George M. Willing, who crossed the plains in search of gold in the late spring of 1859: "We will get the gold from the 'Peak', if its to be had, if not, then we go through to California."<sup>17</sup>

Willing was a man of education, a keen observer possessing a sensitive, somewhat literary temperament.<sup>18</sup> Upon first arriving in Denver, his impression was one of disappointment at the small deposits of gold. After returning from a prospecting tour in late June his discouragement was greatly increased:

Have been in the mountains, and have got back, which is quite a miracle, when difficulties, dangers, privations, and hardships are considered. The roughest country the Almighty's sun ever shown upon. . . . Visited Gregory's diggings—the most inaccessible spot on earth—and found them almost a humbug. The gold is there, and in particular localities in large quantities. Outside of these rich spots you may tear up whole acres, and not get five

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>17</sup> Ralph H. Bieber, "Diary of a Journey to the Pike's Peak Gold Mines in 1859," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. XIV, No. 3 (December, 1927), 362.

<sup>18</sup> The following is an interesting passage from Willing's diary.

*Ibid.*, 366.

"From a neighboring camp the sound of music comes floating on the breeze, and very sweet music it is, awakening pleasant remembrances of home, so far away. The airs of Beethoven, Mozart and other grand masters, sound strangely out of place in this wild waste, as would the song of birds, or the soft voice of woman. Man's fiercer nature is more in keeping with the scene, and released from all the restraining influences of society, wildly do his passions riot."

cents for your trouble. . . . With all these discouragements staring me in the face, I will return to the mountains as soon as I have laid in a sufficient stock of provisions. Have picked out a claim that I think will pay. At all events, I mean to gouge into it extensively, and probe it thoroughly. . . . Tomorrow I go back to the mountains to delve and toil, and struggle for gold, gold, always gold. What success may attend my exertions, the future only can determine.<sup>19</sup>

That success appeared on the horizon soon, for less than a month later Dr. Willing expresses glowing enthusiasm in a letter published in the *Rocky Mountain News*: "The gold is here—emphatically here—in large, not in small quantities. . . . He who strikes a lode here and works it (and there are thousands of them) his fortune is made."<sup>20</sup>

The metallurgical skill of men like Willing was rivaled only by their medical prowess. For even in the "diggings" themselves there were men of acknowledged medical competence. Some of them had practiced their profession with the best physicians and surgeons in the East before coming to the gold fields. And they may be credited with having, to some extent, delivered the Pike's Peakers from being at the mercy of unschooled quacks. For in the frontier settlements of the American West the treatment and practice of medicine was a curious mixture of the superstitious and the modern. Throughout the West many who were called doctors had only a tutorial education. Often they would spend a year or two as an apprentice to some doctor who conveyed what knowledge and experience he had. At the end of that period, they would enter into their own practice taking with them both the knowledge and ignorance of their teacher.<sup>21</sup> Though men of doubtful competence undoubtedly did journey to Pike's Peak, they were in the minority and did not impede the rapid growth of the medical profession.

From St. Louis in 1859, came Dr. Drake McDowell. His father had been a leading surgeon and professor of anatomy at the Missouri Medical College of St. Louis which was ranked high in that day for its instruction in anatomy. It is probable that Dr. McDowell took his degree from that school.<sup>22</sup> In any event, the residents of Jefferson Territory were destined to appreciate his surgical skill. In the *Rocky Mountain News* of May 23, 1860, an account is given of two successful operations performed by Dr. McDowell: one for the amputation of an arm and the other for a case of harelip. By the summer of 1860, other physicians were regularly performing operations with the aid of chloroform to mercifully deaden pain.<sup>23</sup> In the same year post-mortem examinations became an established part of medical practice in the Pike's Peak region. It was not

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.

<sup>20</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, July 9, 1859.

<sup>21</sup> D. O. Collins (ed.), *The Westerners Brand Book* 1948, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> Howard Kelly, *A Cyclopaedia of American Medical Biography*, 11, p. 132.

<sup>23</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, September 26, 1860.

long after this that various medical services, such as vaccination for smallpox, were available to the residents of Colorado Territory.<sup>24</sup>

Throughout the year of 1859 there was a noticeable progression in the practice of medicine in Denver. By the end of the year many doctors were devoting their whole time to the profession. By June of 1860, a city hospital was established under the direction of Dr. J. F. Hamilton, for the purpose of caring for those who were homeless and could not afford medical attention. In the following year its operation was discontinued partly because many of the doctors, including Dr. Hamilton, enlisted in the army. But at least, steps had been taken in the right direction.

Also, by the spring of 1860 the need and desirability for co-operation between the physicians of Denver was clearly recognized. Therefore, on June 2, 1860, a small group of doctors formed the Jefferson Medical and Surgical Society. Dr. W. M. Belt was elected president of the infant organization. A code of ethics and standard fees were adopted. Among the purposes of the Society was the intention to disseminate professional knowledge among themselves through the reading of papers and mutual consultation.<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, no records of this Society are known to exist. With the coming of the Civil War the Society broke up due to the enlistment of many of its members in the Army. Though several later attempts were made to form some kind of medical society, it was not until 1871 that a permanent society was established—the Colorado Medical Society. When this society was formed, however, none of the 1859 doctors appeared as members.<sup>26</sup> Many were swept into the War Between the States while others returned to the East within a year or two, desiring their homes more than the gold. But they did not leave before the frontier of medicine had passed Colorado leaving in its place the solid roots of future scientific progress.

In returning to their homes, many of these men of medicine must have looked at the western mountains with some nostalgia. It had been an eventful period in their lives, full of prospecting, caring for the sick, and taking active parts in the establishment of settled communities. They had ridden the crest of the human flood which had swept across the plains in search of Pike's Peak gold. History had used them to help lay the foundation on which was to stand, one hundred years later, a thriving metropolis of the Rocky Mountain west. These, then, were the men who brought miner's tools and medicine cases with them to Pike's Peak in 1859. These were the men who not only helped populate the Colorado country, but helped keep the population alive. These were the digging doctors.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, February 15, 1862.

<sup>25</sup> *Rocky Mountain Herald*, August 18, 1860.

<sup>26</sup> *Transactions of the Territorial Medical Society*, 2-3.

## A Fifty-Niner Who Stayed

J. Roland Weston of Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi, President of the Mississippi Historical Society, presented, in 1958, to the State Historical Society of Colorado, photostatic copies of a number of century-old letters written by his Great-uncle A. S. Weston, a pioneer in California Gulch, Colorado.

Born in Skowhegan, Maine, July 22, 1828, A. S. Weston received a good common school education in his native town. Later he attended the Bloomfield Academy. In 1845 at the age of 17 he settled in Wisconsin, engaging in the lumber business. Some eight years later he returned to Maine where he engaged in the lumber business with his father. Again, in 1858, he left his native state because of failing health and came west to Sumner, Kansas.

When the Pike's Peak excitement broke out in 1859, A. S. Weston set out for the mountains with a load of goods, which he sold in the "Arkansas Diggings," near the head of the Arkansas River. The following spring he took his family across the plains with an ox team, and on July 14, 1860, arrived in California Gulch (Leadville).

There Mr. Weston went into mining and ranching. He was admitted to practice as an attorney at law in the courts of Colorado Territory. For a number of years he was the only practicing attorney in the county of Lake. Judge Weston became one of the most conspicuous members of the bar of Colorado. He died on March 30, 1897.—*Editor*.

The following letters were written in 1859 and 1860:

Sumner (Kansas Territory) July 15, 1859

Dear Brother

Our train left here last evening and camped about 3 miles from town. I go out to them with my Indian Pony this morning. I expect to be in Denver City in 35 days if we have good luck. I take out about \$1200 worth of goods on our wagon, with 3 yoke of oxen. There (are) 4 wagons in company—the roads are first rate now, and if we get 100 miles without difficulty we shall get along well, as there will be no rains farther than 100 miles from the river for 2 or 3 months. Mr Richardson (A D R of the *Boston Journal*) a week ago yesterday in 7 days from Denver—his reports are good. Ague dont grow on the plains so I think I shall not have it any more. Eliza & the children are well. I leave them comfortably situated. Mr. and Mrs. Bartlett are well. Direct your letters to Sumner and they will be forwarded to me.

Yours in Haste  
A S Weston

Sumner K.T. Nov 22 1859

Dear Brother

I returned to this place from the gold mines on the 17th inst, and take the first opportunity to write you. I started from here on the 15th of July and have been absent a little more than four months.

The distance from here to Denver City is about 675 miles. I took my goods into the mountains and sold almost all of them before leaving. We were in the mountains 22 days. Another man went with me (who had goods also) and the two of us sold \$2200 worth of goods in the 22 days I speak of. Of course we did not sell as high as we could have done had we not been anxious to sell out and come home this fall.

As it was we got exorbitant prices as compared with the rates of the states, but rather low ones for the mountains. On the whole I got pretty well paid for going out and have returned in first rate health, better than I have enjoyed for many years. We started from Denver City October 10th rather too late, as the grass was very dry and almost entirely dead. For 400 miles we could not get corn for less than \$4 pr bushel. We bought little at \$ but when it came down to \$2 we fed liberally, for the last 100 miles we bought at 50cts.

The weather has been on the whole very favorable. The exceptions are that on the 29th of Sept while in the mountains we had 8 inches of snow. It cleared off cold as it does in winter, but after a day or two it turned warm and was as pleasant up to the time we left (Oct 7) as "Indian Summer" could make it. Oct 17th while on the Platte a 2 inch snow came upon us, which went off the next day. The nights were usually cold with warm pleasant days. After we left the Platte it became more and more windy but not very uncomfortable. Friday Nov 11 we encountered a severe gale from the north. At night it snowed about 2 inches, and as the wind continued to blow the next day the snow was *quite busy* all day. Two of my oxen became chilled while on the road and still 4 miles from the only *practicable* camping place, Ash Point. We managed to get them within 2½ miles of the Point into a hollow on the prairie and camped with them, dividing our blankets with them. We went to bed without supper or fire and passed a bitter cold night, as best we could. The cold gave our cattle a sort of "Cholera Morbus." We drove them into camp the next morning. There is gold out in the mountains. I will write you again in a few days. (I brought in 5½ #) Has the interest on my note been paid, I wrote to father about before I went away but have heard nothing from it. Write soon. We are all well.

Yours truly

A. S. Weston

Sumner K.T. Jan 9 1860

Dear Brother

I received yours of Dec 6th some days ago. I am glad to hear from you and that you are all well. We are all well. The children are going to school and making some improvement. The Baby walks alone but is quite backward about talking. The winter has been quite cold most of the time but is very fine now. We have had no snow to amount to anything.

The Territorial Legislature has organized. It is expected that it will adjourn to Lawrence. soon. The Gov. says he will veto the Bill to adjourn.

You ask about selling the mill. I have always cherished the hope that I shall be able to return to Maine to live and have rather looked upon the Mill as a stake to fall back on. I hardly dare to return now and may not for a year or two (and perhaps longer) to come. Under these circumstances I do not feel like refusing to sell inasmuch as father needs someone of us with him. The whole Mill cost something over \$3500. I have always valued my half at \$1750. I do not know what the state of the improvements may be or how it is expected that I shall pay for them. This offer is made without any reference to them. It being understood to relate to the Mill as it stood at the time I left it.

As to terms of payment, I should like to make them as follows: 1st that you make provisions for taking up my note to Mr. Brainard, due next Oct. which with interest will amount to \$550, then make arrangement to pay father what I may be owing him if anything. And the balance of the \$1200 to be sent to me so as to reach me by the first day of April next. I would make the terms easier, but if I sell the Mill I shall probably change my business here so as to require an increase of capital at that time. I would like an answer as soon as convenient that I may make my arrangements accordingly.

We have no news of importance here. We are waiting anxiously to get into the "Union" before it *BUSTS*.

The news from the mines continues about the same. I had a letter from an acquaintance there a few days since he represents the prospects as more cheering than ever. Write soon. Give our love to all

L.W.W. Bloomfield Your affectionate Brother A S Weston

Sumner K.T. April 5, 1860

Dear Brother

I wrote to you some time ago. I think some time in January. And have received no answer yet. I made you an offer of the Mill but I suppose you have concluded to accept of it as you have not written since. We have had a fine winter and Spring so far. It is very dry here now or the grass would start so as to furnish feed for stock immediately.

Since the first of March I have had a fire in my store but six times, and only one day for the whole day. It is now very pleasant. I learn from Walter Weston that Josiah Weston (Nathaniel's son) is in Ill. Eugene is here, not doing much. Bartlett is I believe in St. Joseph now. I have not seen him since I came home from Pikes Peak. We are all well. The children are growing finely. The river, which has been very low all this Spring, has risen two or three feet, making a good boating stage. I noticed elms in blossom on the 5th day of March. Peaches about the 20th. I think the Peaches have thus far escaped the frost. There is a gentleman here planting a large vineyard. The bluffs along the river are admirably adapted to vine culture.

Pikes Peakers are starting every day. The Pony Express started from St. Joseph Monday evening amid great enthusiasm. Write me immediately and let me know whether you want the Mill or not. It is important that I should know at once.

How is Father's health this Spring? I have heard from home but once since last June. Write all the news. Give our love to all.

L. W. Weston Your Affectionate Brother  
Bloomfield, Maine A. S. Weston

Denver Nov 6 1860

Dear Brother

Yours of Sept 30 I received yesterday as I came here from the mountains. I had begun to think you were all dead. It is the first letter I have received from the land of civilization since I came out here. The Arkansas country is not so barbarous after all. We have a good set of people there. Last summer we built a log meeting house. Have had preaching and a sabbath school &c. Of course we have some hard cases but the masses are as honest as in any country. The proximity of trees with projecting limbs may have some influence on Society at large. The weather is very fine. Have had very little snow. 2 inches is the most we have had at any time on the Arkansas (River). Although this side of the Park (South Park) there fell 10 inches last week. Willie came down with me (for the fun of it). Eugene was

to leave about this time for N. Mexico. All the rest are well. I start back today.

I have a store there and am working a claim close by. About the personal property of course I intended that you should have it with the Mill. I will give you a bill of sale of it if you will enumerate the articles or I presume that this acknowledgement will be sufficient.

I suppose you are having a good time today electing old Abe. Now do write within 60 or 90 days and let me know how you are getting along. We may get snowed in for 2 or 3 months and not be able to communicate with the States but if you write immediately I can hear from you.

L. W. Weston

Yours Truly  
A. S. Weston

Denver Nov 6 1860

Dear Brother

Yours of Sept 30 I received yesterday as I came here from the mountains - I had begun to think you were all dead - It is the first letter I have received from the land of the living since I came out here - our country is not so bad as you have a good deal of snow - we had had of C. but any with on Soc June 12 is the on the Park then fell 12 inches last week - Willie came down with me (for the fun of it) Eugene was to leave about this time for N Mexico - All the rest are well - I start back today - I have a store there and am working a claim close by =

L. W. Weston  
W. H. Weston  
Moses

( California Gulch  
Direct thus Colorado Territory  
April 1 1861

Dear Brother

I wrote you from Denver on the 6th of November last And have waited all this long winter for an answer but have thus far failed to receive one. We have had a pleasant winter with less snow than I expected to see. Our mail has been detained but once or twice the whole winter. We have been well and doing as well as could be expected for winter. Of course we have taken out but little money from the mines on account of the cold weather but have been preparing for a successful Spring's work.

It will be nearly a month before we can wash on top of the ground. After that we are in hopes to be "hard up" no longer. I had the good turn to have about \$1000 worth of goods lay over till fall and being of kinds not very salable in winter the most of them are on hand now. Now while I am comfortably situated here, I am owing about \$700 in St Louis which I want very much to pay this Spring. Now what can you do for me? Not of yourself but can you hire the money for me at not more than 10 pct interest till such time as you can pay it and if there is not enough coming to me from the Mill you can write me the amount of the deficit and I will remit the same to you. At present it costs 6 pr ct to send money to the States from here. If you can make such arrangements you may pledge my R R Bonds as collateral. Now if you can do anything of the kind don't wait to hear from me again but buy a Draft on N. York if you can, if not, on Boston and send it to Uncle Sumner at St. Louis. And in any case write me immediately what you have done in the premises. Write me all the news about town. Tell Moses to send me the Clarion, and I will send him a Nugget by and by. How is father? And Mary? And Eliza and all the rest of the folks.

What are you doing in the Mill? How's Business? I am already laying out work for next winter and of course this means that I am to winter in the mountains again. I bought 1/2 of a claim in Oct for \$250 and now am offered \$1000 for the whole claim, payable as it comes out. It is no object to sell in this way as if the money is not taken out of the claim it will not be paid, on the other hand if more is taken out I may as well have it. Mining is uncertain business. Two men took out \$35,000 here last Summer and are now at work for \$2.50 per day, flat Broke. So it goes.

Your Affectionate Brother  
L.W.W. A. S. Weston

## The Grange in Colorado

By WAYNE E. FULLER\*

Just east of Denver's city limits along the highway leading to Parker, stands the Cherry Creek Grange hall. Over two thousand hard-earned, carefully guarded, farm dollars went into the building of that red brick building, and farmers and their wives, sons and daughters, have been meeting there regularly since 1887.<sup>1</sup> As anyone who has driven off the state's beaten roads knows, Cherry Creek's is only one of a number of such Grange halls in Colorado. True, it was one of the earliest, but the mortar was hardly dry between its bricks before Grange halls began springing up here and there across the state in a variety of shapes and sizes. There were, for example, in times past, the Henderson hall, an elongated affair sitting atop a general store, and the Pleasant Valley Grange hall in mountainous Routt County, built from 16,000 feet of lumber all donated by the national forestry officials through the courtesy of Uncle Sam. At one time there stood a hall in Eastern Colorado made of sod. And a famous old station house on the Overland Stage line, once occupied by the notorious Jack Slade, had been converted into a hall by the Virginia Dale Grange.<sup>2</sup>

One can stand outside almost any of the sixty-odd Grange halls in Colorado today, and with a little imagination picture a thousand scenes that might have taken place within their four walls. If he listens closely he might hear the piano and the squeal of the fiddle, the rhythmic beat of dancing feet, and the caller yelling out to perspiring farmers to "swing their partners." He might even smell the aroma of coffee in the Grange kitchen, and see long tables sagging beneath platters of fried chicken and mashed potatoes, apple pies and real butter. Or, if one is historically minded, he might imagine frustrated farmers, sobered by hard times, angrily speaking out on the difficulties that beset them, attacking the railroads, monopoly, the money power, and ending up by passing resolutions and demanding Grange solutions to their problems.

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<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Proceedings of the Colorado State Grange* (1892), 23-24. The *Journals of Proceedings of the Colorado State Grange*, hereinafter referred to as the *Journal of Proceedings*, contain the minutes of the annual meetings of the State Grange and are on file at the State Grange office in Denver.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1903), 31; *Western Farm Life* (December 15, 1915), 20; *Western Farm Life* (March 1, 1917), 23; *Western Farm Life* (March 15, 1919), 6.

All these things have taken place in Colorado's Grange halls since the 1870's. For more than three-quarters of a century now, they have been the farmers' meeting places where laughter and fun shared places with serious discussions of the everyday problems that filled the lives of farmers. From them have come divers proposals, recommendations, demands touching nearly every aspect of life that concerned farms and farming, and but for their existence and the organization they represented, the history of Colorado might have been just a little different.

The founder of the Grange was Oliver Hudson Kelley. He was on a tour of the South in 1866, inspecting war-ravaged farms, when he conceived the idea of building a secret, fraternal order for farmers. Returning to Washington, D. C., he laid his plans before a group of his intimate friends, and with their help he founded the Grange in 1867, and pledged it to two principal goals: to relieve the monotony of farm life and to educate the farmers in better farming techniques.<sup>3</sup>

At first the Grange grew slowly. But membership soared in the early 1870's when hard-pressed Midwestern farmers found they could use it to form business cooperatives and eliminate the middlemen they believed were stripping them of their profits. They also found, even though Grange rules stamped it as a nonpolitical organization, that it could be used to rally the farm vote against the railroads, the farmers' archenemy in the years after the Civil War.

On the wings of hard times and farm unrest, the Grange came to Colorado in 1873. Colorado was still a Territory then, but already it had a sizeable number of farmers, and, like farmers everywhere, they were feeling the effects of the panic of that year. They had already formed farm clubs across the Territory to discuss their mutual problems when they began hearing tales of the Grange's achievements in the Midwest. Impressed, the farmers near Arvada, with the permission of the National Grange, converted their club into a Grange early in 1873.<sup>4</sup> Ceres Grange, they named it, and from it grew the organization that would one day cover the state.

The way the Grange spread through the Territory after the founding of Ceres Grange was amazing. Within a year forty-six local Granges had been organized and January of 1874 saw delegates from forty-four of these Granges gathering in the exchange rooms of Denver's old American House preparing to form a State Grange. There they chose the State Grange's first Worthy Master, R. Q. Tenney of Fort Collins, a native of New Hampshire and veteran of the Civil War who had come to Colorado with the Chicago-Colorado Company in 1871. When the other officers had been chosen, the Grangers

<sup>3</sup> Solon J. Buck, *The Agrarian Crusade* (New Haven, 1920), 1-5.

<sup>4</sup> Alvin T. Steinel, *History of Agriculture in Colorado* (Fort Collins, 1926), 368-369.

adjourned, promising to complete their reorganization in Boulder the following month, when their new Master would have returned from National Grange meeting in St. Louis.<sup>5</sup>

The first day of the Boulder meeting was bitterly cold. Snow was falling and a light breeze blew. But weather was



R. Q. TENNEY  
First Worthy Master  
Colorado State Grange

no obstacle to the farmers bent on organizing their State Grange. They came in such numbers that the Boulder hotels overflowed, and rooms had to be found in private homes for many of the farm folk. One man walked into Boulder from Platteville, and Master Tenney, with his wife and three-month-old baby, made the trip from Fort Collins to Boulder in two days, riding all the way in a Bain wagon on a spring seat they had borrowed for the occasion.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> D. W. Working, "Address: The Colorado State Grange, 1874-1924," *Journal of Proceedings* (1924), 32; Ansell Watrous, *Biographical Sketch of Rollin Q. Tenney* (Manuscript on file at the Colorado State Grange office, Denver), 2. See also: Jessie L. Clark, "R. Q. Tenney, Pioneer of Many Enterprises," *The Colorado Magazine*, Vol. XXIX, No. 3 (July, 1952), 210-218.

<sup>6</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (February 25 and 26, 1874), 4; R. Q. Tenney, "Fifty Years Ago," *Journal of Proceedings* (1924), 51.

With thirty-two subordinate Granges represented and enthusiasm running high as Tenney, fresh from St. Louis and full of ideas, told them that the "whole Territory . . . was watching" their every act, the delegates moved swiftly to complete the organization of the State Grange.<sup>7</sup> Shortly their work was done, and the farmers returned to their farms convinced that their new organization would solve their basic problems.

One might wonder now at the farmers' enthusiasm for their organization. But it was no mystery then. There were no parity payments or soil banks to ease the effects of declining farm prices and slumping land values. In those days what could be done to ward off the threat to their economic security, the farmers must do alone. And so at their wits' end, they grasped at the Grange as the only thing in sight that might help them in their hour of need. At the very least, the Grange promised the farmers a way to avoid doing business with the middleman, and one of the first moves made by the State Grange was to provide for a cooperative business enterprise through which Grangers might purchase their goods wholesale. Henry Lee was appointed as the Grange purchasing agent, and \$25,000 was to be raised as capital through the sale of \$5.00 shares to Grange members and the local Granges.<sup>8</sup>

On this venture hung the hopes of the Colorado Grangers in 1875, and success seemed within their grasp when they heard of merchants immediately offering to lower their prices in the hope that the Grange would drop its Patrons' Co-operative, as the new business was called. In Colorado, however, as elsewhere throughout the nation, the Grangers were following a will-o'-the-wisp. At the close of 1875, Henry Lee reported that he had spent about \$55,000 on farm tools and other goods, \$12,000 alone on sewing machines for Grange women.<sup>9</sup> But already the Patrons' Co-operative was in trouble.

Throughout the year, Lee himself had been a controversial figure. His appointment had been opposed by the Platte Canon Grange on the grounds that such a widely known business man as Lee was really the Grange's natural enemy. The State Grange gave him a vote of confidence, but this hardly helped, for many Grangers had already lost confidence in him. Besides, Lee represented a company whose tools and equipment the farmers were not accustomed to use, and even discounts offered by the Patrons' Co-operative could not induce many of them to buy. Finally, 1875 was the year of the great grasshopper plague in the Territory, and the farmers' cash supplies had dwindled because of it. Since the Patrons' Co-operative

<sup>7</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (February 26, 1874), 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (February 26, 1874), 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1875), 27.

insisted upon cash, many Grangers had to go instead to stores where they could get credit.<sup>10</sup>

These misfortunes shattered the Patrons' Co-operative. An attempt to breathe life into it in 1876 failed, and with their brave and optimistic plans in ruins about them, the farmers suddenly lost interest in the Grange. Almost overnight, it seemed, the organization fell apart. Not even a quorum was present when the State Grange met for its annual session in 1878, and business had to be suspended until the next day when delegates from a few more local Granges straggled in.<sup>11</sup> Looking at the Grangers assembled there in that year and remembering the Boulder meeting of 1874, no one would have believed that the organization so enthusiastically begun five years before could have fallen so low. Yet the Colorado Grange was only running true to form. Across the land, farmers whose hopes for quick monetary returns were centered in the Grange, had deserted by the thousands when those hopes were not immediately filled.

Now for a decade the Colorado Grange languished. In seven of those years it had no membership in the National Grange, so few were the number of local active Granges throughout the State. Yet year after year, except for 1880, a faithful remnant attended the State Grange's annual sessions, listened to the Master's address, heard the reports of the local Granges and conducted their meagre business. In these years the Grange might have folded up completely had it not been for a handful of determined hard-working men such as Levi Booth.

From 1877 to 1892, Levi Booth was Master of the State Grange. Born in New York, and educated in Wisconsin where in 1854 he and one other man were the first graduates of the University of Wisconsin, Booth had come to Colorado in 1859 and prospected for gold in California Gulch. In time he brought his family to Colorado, bought the old Four-Mile House, and settled down to farm along Cherry Creek. Like many Americans of the period, he believed that farms and farming were as close to Paradise as one was likely to get on earth. "Heaven," he once told his Grangers, "is where the God of Nature rules supreme in the fields of golden grain, in the shady grove where birds sweetly sing His praises, where wild roses perfume the air. . . . Farmers, this heaven is ours, and if we do not appreciate it we ought to go to Hell."<sup>12</sup>

Somehow, men like Booth, John Higgs, who edited the Grange column in the *Colorado Farmer*, and John Churches, first State Grange Treasurer and faithful member, held the

<sup>10</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1875), 12 and 28.

<sup>11</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (December 12, 1878), 4.

<sup>12</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1913), 49, and Levi Booth, *Speech Before Darden Pomona Grange* (Manuscript in possession of Mrs. D. W. Working, n.d.).

organization together, and, weak as it was, the Grange remained the voice of the Colorado farmer, demanding, cajoling, speaking out boldly on behalf of their people.

In all these years, when the number of local Granges sending delegates to State Grange meetings could be counted on the fingers of two hands, the Grange took a stand on virtually every problem that could possibly interest the farmers. When the railroads raised their rates in the State in 1880, the State Grange attacked them. The impact of the Grange assault was felt in the Colorado State Legislature where in 1885 a law was passed establishing a commission to curb the railroads.<sup>13</sup> And when the dairy farmers complained that the 40 tons of butterine, suine, and oleomargarine being sold in Denver every day were ruining the butter market, the Grange protested. Again, the Colorado State legislature responded. A law passed in 1885 provided for a dairy commissioner with authority to regulate the sale of "bogus-butter" in the State.<sup>14</sup>

Both of these laws were ineffective and sources of bitter disappointment to the Grangers, though it is doubtful if a more powerful Grange or any other farm organization of the time could have done better. The trend of events was running away from the farmers in these years. However, in its fight to safeguard the State's water for the farmers' use, the Grange was more successful.

Very early in its history the Grange had urged that the State be divided into water districts corresponding to the natural watersheds and that an elected water commissioner be placed over each district to control the water. The background of this scheme is obscure, but it may have originated among the Grangers themselves. At any rate, Colorado put this plan into effect between 1879 and 1881 and was the first State in the Union to do so.<sup>15</sup>

More dramatic than the fostering of this idea was the struggle to prevent private corporations from controlling the water supply and charging the farmers fancy prices for bringing the water to their land. Always suspicious of private corporations in this period anyway, the Grangers fought the private corporations every inch of the way as they began to harness the water supply. They were particularly incensed when, in addition to the fees for bringing the water to the land, the private companies began to charge the farmers royalties on their land because of its increased value once it was

<sup>13</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (January 18, 1881), 3, and the *Denver Tribune-Republican* (January 14, 1886), 2. See also Leon W. Fuller, "Colorado's Revolt Against Capitalism," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXI (December, 1934), 346.

<sup>14</sup> *Denver Republican* (January 15, 1885), 8, and *Session Laws of Colorado* (1885), 282-284.

<sup>15</sup> Percy Stanley Fritz, *Colorado: The Centennial State* (New York), 329. See also *Rocky Mountain News* (December 14, 1876), 4. [Through the efforts of Governor Samuel H. Elbert, a convention of trans-Missouri states, to discuss an interstate system of irrigation, was held in Denver October 15, 1873. This created much interest in the entire water question.—Editor.]

irrigated. A bundle of resolutions adopted by the State Grange in the early 1880's urged the State to take over the water companies.<sup>16</sup>

But nothing was done immediately by the State legislature, so the Grangers and other interested farmers took it upon themselves to form an organization they called the Farmers' Irrigation and Protective Association. And when one of their members, Dr. A. B. Wheeler, refused to pay the hated royalty, he won his case after carrying it all the way to the State Supreme Court. Then with the Grange and the Association pounding away, the State legislature at last decreed in 1888 that private ditch companies could no longer charge royalties on land their water was irrigating.<sup>17</sup>

The Grangers were overjoyed. They were also proud of their organization. So proud in fact, that they could not keep from boasting that every member of the Farmers' Irrigation and Protective Association's executive committee was a Granger.<sup>18</sup>

About the time the fight over the State's water was ending, the Grange was reviving. Once more hard times were upon the land, and farmers turned again to one another to attack their problems in unison.

The economic doldrums of the early 1890's were everywhere present, but Colorado was particularly hard hit. The repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act which had permitted the Government to buy a certain amount of silver every month, was a jolt to the State's economy. Mines were closed, and the ranks of the unemployed swelled. The fall of farm prices to 10 cent butter, 35 cent potatoes, and 8 cent eggs, as one Granger noted, rounded out the picture of financial panic in Colorado.<sup>19</sup>

In the midst of this crisis on the farm, the Midwest farmers began to organize as they had in the 1870's, first into local Farmers' Alliances and finally into the Populist party. The farmers of Colorado followed the lure of Populism. They joined the Farmers' Alliances, but they also returned to the Grange. In threadbare clothes and with anger and frustration in their eyes, Colorado farmers listened intently to R. A. Southworth, the Grange organizer, as he journeyed through the State in 1890, promising salvation through the Grange. Twenty-nine Granges this man organized in one year, and he was hard at work in 1891 when suddenly Levi Booth revoked his commission.<sup>20</sup>

Staunch old Granger that he was, and perhaps conservative too, though his speeches do not indicate this, Booth believed

<sup>16</sup> *Colorado Farmer* (January 22, 1885), 1.

<sup>17</sup> Steinel, *op. cit.*, 209, and Fritz, *op. cit.*, 326.

<sup>18</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (January 12, 1888), 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Colorado Farmer* (February 20, 1890), 4. For a survey of Populism in Colorado see Fritz, *op. cit.*, 345-360.

<sup>20</sup> Steinel, *op. cit.*, 29, and *Journal of Proceedings* (1892), 10.

there had been too much "politicking" connected with the organization of new Granges. He would not have the Grange bound to the political fortunes of the Populist party.

Courageous or foolhardy, Booth's action hurt the Grange. By 1888 enough subordinate Granges had already been organized to give the State Grange standing in the National Grange, and this place it never again lost. But after 1891, even when it supported almost every principle of the Populist party from free silver to the direct election of Senators,<sup>21</sup> it never flourished as it might have. Interested in the panacea of Populism, the farmers turned from the Grange in droves and joined the Farmers' Alliances.

There was one consolation in all this. When the farmers' crusade was all over in 1896, the Farmers' Alliances were submerged along with Populism, but the Grange lived to fight another day. The Colorado State Grange moved into the twentieth century, shorn of a number of Granges it was true, but still intact.

And now prosperity was on the wing. The burning issues of the 1890's were behind, and the farmers' mood mellowed. The new frame of mind was reflected in the State Grange. Under the leadership of J. A. Newcombe, State Master from 1894 to 1908, Grange membership grew steadily, but no great battles were waged. Symbolic of the new spirit was the fact that the annual Grange picnics, still so popular among Colorado Granges, had their origin in this period of the early 1900's. Relaxing under the spell of better times, farmers packed their children and overflowing lunch baskets off to various sites about the State on yearly "get-togethers" with brother Grangers.<sup>22</sup>

This is not to say that the Colorado Grangers were indifferent to the issues of a "muckraking" era. They were not. After all, it had been the farmers who had brought the abuses of a business dominated Government to the attention of the nation, and had cried out for reform in high places. Now that others were taking up the crusade for reform, the farmers were not going to turn their backs on their own proposals. One has only to turn to the Grange reports for these years to see that the Colorado Grange continued to back nearly all the old Populist reforms—the direct election of Senators, an income tax, a stronger Interstate Commerce Commission, and a better anti-trust law. It also gave its support to prohibition, the good roads movement, parcel post, a postal savings bank, a pure food law, rural free delivery, and the initiative and referendum for Colorado.<sup>23</sup> But few of these were issues that

<sup>21</sup> See especially *Journal of Proceedings* (1891), 49, and *Journal of Proceedings* (1895), 47.

<sup>22</sup> Grange picnics are mentioned in the *Journal of Proceedings* from 1902 on, but a particularly entertaining account may be found in *Ranch and Range* (September 1908), 17.

<sup>23</sup> See the *Journals of Proceedings 1900 to 1910*, passim.

could bring the Grangers roaring out of their seats in hot debate as in days gone by. Besides, since most reforms had to be undertaken on the national level, the burden of the work fell upon the National Grange. So the Colorado Grange drifted pleasantly until beginning in 1909 it was aroused from its lethargy by reasons not completely explainable. In one decade its membership increased five times and the number of local Granges from thirty-one to 204.<sup>24</sup> Nothing like it had been seen since the Grange's palmy days of the 1870's.

Unlike other periods when the Grange grew rapidly, this was not a decade of hard times, but of prosperity, and one must look elsewhere to find the causes of this fantastic growth. New dynamic leadership provided by men like John Morris, the new State Master after 1908, Clarence Swayze and Rudolph Johnson, had much to do with it. More important probably were the Grange business enterprises.

For years after the collapse of the Patrons' Co-operative in the 1870's, the State Grange avoided ventures into the business world. Yet they were a persistent lot, these Grangers, and they never could quite see why they should not establish co-operative businesses of their own and shun that troublesome middleman. So, when it had regained some of its strength, and after talking about it off and on for fifteen years, the State Grange went into the insurance business, founding the Grange Mutual Fire Insurance Company in 1895. Short on capital but long on hope, this company was a great boon to the farmers and Grange alike. When the Grange agents quoted their rates of fire insurance on barns and farm-houses, many of the old line companies knew they were beaten. And when the farmers saw this, their interest in the Grange revived. No one knows how many, but certainly a great number of them, joined the Grange just to get the cheap insurance, and in only twenty years, more than \$3,000,000 worth of Grange fire insurance was in force.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, merchandizing was another matter. So disastrous had been the outcome of its first store, that the State Grange had been content to leave storekeeping to storekeepers. But the local Granges were of a different mind, and through the 1890's right up to the eve of World War I, they had their own cooperatives. Such items as coal, potatoes and flour they bought in carload lots, and their reports through the years declare that they saved their members as much as a dollar a ton on coal, 30 cents a hundred on potatoes, and 35 cents a hundred on flour.<sup>26</sup>

This flourishing small scale business and the success of

<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Journal of Proceedings* (1909), 21, and *Journal of Proceedings* (1920), 24.

<sup>25</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1894), 56, and *Journal of Proceedings* (1896), 12. <sup>26</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1912), 30, but see also "Subordinate Grange Reports," *Journals of Proceedings 1892-1913*.

the Grange Mutual Fire Insurance Company convinced a number of Grangers that they must have a State Grange store. Logic, at least, was on their side. If they had profited from a small business, they would surely do so from a larger one. And so at nearly every Grange session in the early 1900's there was talk of hiring a purchasing agent for the State Grange and going into business. Four years in succession resolutions were passed to that end, and, finally, in 1913, a purchasing agent to buy and sell for Colorado Grangers was hired.<sup>27</sup> The State Grange was again in business, but if the good members could have had a glimpse of the future there would have been less enthusiasm over this turn of events.

There was a period of adjustment after 1913, and for a time the new business lagged. Then came 1917. By this time location for the store had been found in the Charles building [Denver], and here, ruling over a selection of merchandise that ranged from drugs and wearing apparel to all kinds of farm equipment, was Otis Scruggs, the State Grange's purchasing agent. According to one report, he was one of the busiest men in the State. Over \$305,000 worth of business Scruggs reported in that one year! And the next year's business nearly doubled. The store had to be moved into bigger quarters and room for it was found in a building at 1616 Arapahoe Street.<sup>28</sup>

As the Grange store boomed, so did Grange membership. At one time in 1915 so many people were anxious to join the Grange that Master John Morris had to make a special plea for more deputies to help organize new Granges. And in 1916 and 1917, the Grange in only two states in the Union grew faster than in Colorado. Finally, by 1918, the same year which marked the high point in Grange store sales, Grange membership showed the largest gain in its history.<sup>29</sup> These were the Grange's golden years, and if someone had then suggested that the Grange was soon to be engulfed in its worst catastrophe, no one would have believed it. Yet this was its fate.

The trouble centered around the Grange store, just as it had in the 1870's. The success of the Grange store had aroused the jealousy of Denver business men and as time wore on, the Grange purchasing agent found more and more places where he might buy goods closed to him—The International Harvester Company, the Fiske Rubber Company, the Auto Equipment Company, and so on down the line. Then an ill-starred attempt to branch out into the mail order business for Grangers far away from Denver failed. And finally, by 1919, with Grange membership again on the decline, apathy of Grangers toward their store spread, and business gradually tapered

<sup>27</sup> *Journals of Proceedings, 1908 to 1911*, passim and *Journal of Proceedings* (1913), 42-60.

<sup>28</sup> See *Journal of Proceedings* (1918), 27 and 36; *Western Farm Life* (June 15, 1917), 16; *Journal of Proceedings* (1918), 36, and *Western Farm Life* (August 15, 1918), 11.

<sup>29</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1918), 7.

off.<sup>30</sup> But all this was nothing compared to the blow the Grange store suffered at the hands of its business agent, Otis Scruggs.

Scruggs was a trusted Granger and came from an old Grange family. He had had no formal business training, but that had apparently not mattered. He had a flair for business and a pleasing personality, and his ideas and management had been key factors in building the Grange store. As time passed the Grange executive committee gave him a free hand to run the business the way he saw fit.

As the Grange business diminished, however, there were those who began to mistrust Scruggs. One irate Granger went so far in 1920 as to accuse him of dishonesty at the annual Grange session. But a special investigating committee found no evidence of Scruggs' dishonesty and even recommended that his accuser apologize.<sup>31</sup> Not until 1922, after Scruggs had resigned, and the auditor had checked the books, did the worst become known. Scruggs had bilked the Grange out of more than \$14,000.<sup>32</sup>

The disclosure of Scruggs' mismanagement of funds ruined the Grange store and almost ruined the Grange. Creditors immediately threatened suit to recover their money, and the bonding company which had bonded Scruggs refused to pay the bond, forcing the Grange to bring a lawsuit of its own against the company. The situation was further confused when Scruggs himself had the nerve to bring a lawsuit against the Grange to recover \$3,000 he claimed the Grange owed him.<sup>33</sup> In the face of accumulating evidence against him, however, he dropped his suit and fled. The State Grange was saddled with a huge debt. While all this was going on, Grange members began to melt away from the organization. Over 1,000 memberships were lost in 1922 alone, and the decline went on until 1925.<sup>34</sup>

For nineteen years the Colorado State Grange worked to lift the debt Scruggs had left and to clear the organization's name. By borrowing from the local Granges and from prominent Grangers, the State Grange was able to pay all its outside creditors first. With the proceeds of some \$5,000 which the bonding company was finally forced to pay, the Grange paid the individuals who had loaned money. Then year by year, little by little it repaid the local Granges, making its last payment in October of 1941.<sup>35</sup>

All the while it paid its debt, the Grange was rebuilding. Helped along by its faithful fire insurance company, a care-

fully trained group of Grange organizers, and, in the 1940's by the Blue Cross insurance to which people could subscribe only if they belonged to some organization, the State Grange counted almost 12,000 members in 1949. And through the years of its reconstruction, though it spoke with an increasingly conservative voice following World War II, it proved in the 1930's that it could still champion the farmers' cause. The fight it waged for a state income tax was reminiscent of the old fighting Grange of the 1880's. Joined by other interested groups, the Grange put all its resources into this battle and in 1937 came off victorious, when a state income tax was adopted and some relief from burdensome property taxes was in sight.<sup>36</sup>

At mid-century, the Grange had been in existence in Colorado for more than 75 years, and its mark was upon the State's history. With its regular social gatherings it had broken the monotony of rural life in a day when the farmer's isolation was one of his worst enemies. Grangers still live who can recall the excitement with which they looked forward to "Grange night" when there were neither automobile, movies, television, or radio to occupy their thoughts. With as good a reason as any, the Grange could also point with pride to the battles it had fought for Colorado farmers in the State legislature; and many a farmer in the State can thank his Grange for past favors as he irrigates his land, pays his fire insurance, picks up his mail at his gate, and attends any one of a dozen different meetings in his community's Grange hall.

True, not all the Grange had attempted had prospered. Great expectations were twice dashed with the failure of its stores. But even here it could show its insurance company with its \$25,000,000 of insurance in force in 1949 to the most captious critic and not be ashamed. Perhaps this was enough to give the Colorado Grangers confidence for the future. At any rate, half way through the twentieth century the old dream of a Grange store was still alive.<sup>37</sup> Come another depression, and in all likelihood, there will be another attempt to build a Grange store.

<sup>30</sup> See the "Reports of the Committee on Taxation," *Journals of Proceedings, 1930-1937*.

<sup>31</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1940), 69, and *Journal of Proceedings* (1944), 14.

<sup>32</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1919), 31, and *Journal of Proceedings* (1920), 15.

<sup>33</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1919), 33.

<sup>34</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1923), 20-25.

<sup>35</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>36</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1923), 23.

<sup>37</sup> *Journal of Proceedings* (1942), 46.

# Gunnison River Diversion Project

## PART II

By RICHARD G. BEIDLEMAN\*

By September of 1901, the preliminary survey work of the U. S. Geological Survey in the Black Canyon area of West Central Colorado had progressed far enough to verify that a diversion tunnel was feasible and to indicate a general location for such a tunnel, from the Gunnison River gorge into the Uncompahgre Valley.

The prosecution of the project now fell to the board of control set up by the Colorado "State Canal No. 3" bill (House Bill No. 195), passed the previous April. This board was to be composed of three residents of Delta or Montrose Counties, appointed by the governor for a two-year term. The men appointed were John J. Tobin of Montrose County and Senator C. M. Hammond and George E. Dodge of Delta County. Later the governor and state engineer were made ex-officio members of this board.<sup>1</sup>

The board employed John A. Curtis of Delta, Deputy State Engineer, to make the final location of the main tunnel. This would extend on a northeast diagonal from the Mancos shale badlands about four miles northeast of Table Mountain and Montrose to the canyon near present Serpent Point. Then a spur tunnel would extend upstream to the Narrows, where a dam was planned, so that water could be picked up there and delivered into and through the main tunnel by gravity flow.<sup>2</sup>

Resident Hydrographer Fellows, who with Will Torrence had successfully run the river for the first time, was further pursuing his in-canyon surveys, which continued to be adventurous. When working upstream from Red Rock Canyon with an assistant, he put the transit, a new gun and other equipment on a raft to float across the river. The raft sank and everything was lost. The transit had belonged to Curtis, and Fellows had to pay him \$200 for its loss.<sup>3</sup> On September 23, he and a few companions drove to the canyon rim, inspected the proposed tunnel site, and examined several near-by ravines down which a wagon route to the river might be constructed.<sup>4</sup>

\* Dr. Richard G. Beidleman, of the Zoology Department, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado, here presents Part II of his article, "The Gunnison River Diversion Project," of which Part I was published in *The Colorado Magazine*, Volume XXXVI, No. 3 (July, 1959), 187-201. Dr. Beidleman left in August, 1959, for a scientific visit to Spain and other parts of Europe. This article is the story of the diversion of water from the Gunnison River to one of its tributaries in the Valley of the Uncompahgre.—Editor.

<sup>1</sup> Colorado State Engineer, *11th Biennial Report of the State Engineer to the Governor of Colorado for the years 1901 and 1902* (1902), 45.

<sup>2</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *First Annual Report of the Reclamation Service from June 17 to December 1, 1902* (1903), 137.

<sup>3</sup> *Montrose Enterprise*, October 3, 1901.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, September 26, 1901.

Meanwhile, Whitman Cross of the U. S. Geological Survey, on October 17 and 18, made an examination of the geology of the region to determine the rock formations through which the proposed tunnel would pass in its course from the Gunnison River to the Uncompahgre Valley "by the shortest possible line."<sup>5</sup>

Thomas R. Hannihan was selected as state superintendent for the tunnel construction, and the initial excavation was started from the Uncompahgre Valley side in late fall of 1901. The rock formation here was shale; consequently, it was necessary to timber the tunnel as work progressed to prevent cave-ins, with the anticipation that eventually the wooden shoring would be replaced by a lining of concrete or brick.<sup>6</sup> By one estimate the cost of the tunnel would run about \$20 per foot, with a total of \$880,000 for the completed, lined bore.<sup>7</sup> In addition, there would be the expenditure of \$200,000 for a dam, "controlling works, engineering and contingencies." The total cost, including the distribution system, would run to about \$1,500,000.<sup>8</sup>

The tunnel, as originally proposed, would be about three miles long, emptying water into a twelve-mile ditch which in turn would carry the water to the mouth of the Montrose Canal. More than 100,000 acres of land would be reclaimed, enough for 1,200 families, with an increase in value of 5 million dollars.<sup>9</sup>

It was hoped that convict labor, provided by the state, could be used in construction work. With respect to this, the *Montrose Enterprise* had commented, "The question of convict labor to aid in the work is one of vast importance, as it not only makes toward the building of the tunnel, but it solves another problem that of what to do with the idle convicts. Keep pushing this matter."<sup>10</sup> About sixteen convicts would be involved,

<sup>5</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *First Annual Report*, loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Colorado State Engineer, loc. cit.

<sup>7</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *First Annual Report*, op. cit., 139.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* The *Delta Laborer* observed that "While the enterprise is gigantic, and will cost an immense sum yet the aggregate cost will not be over \$3 per acre for the land to be watered—advancing it from worthless class to the value of at least \$20 per acre, and under improvement to from \$50 to \$100. It also means additional room for at least 10,000 people in the next ten years."—The *Gunnison People's Champion*, December 6, 1900.

<sup>10</sup> *Montrose Enterprise*, August 4, 1900. The "State Canal No. 3" bill authorized the use of able-bodied convicts in the construction work.—*Session Laws of Colorado*, 13th Session (1901), 370-371. A Denver reporter commented on the employment of penitentiary inmates: "I believe it best for us to make provisions for the employment of the convicts, and that the funds be drawn from the penitentiary fund, as that is a preferred fund, and further because any bill drawn from the general fund would be an empty affair. Also your people should consider what disposition the state should make of the water when the tunnel shall be completed. I think it best for the state to sell the water at reasonable rates to preferred purchasers, and that the bill provide for an issue of script payable in water, which would assist the state materially, and enough of this script could be placed to feed and clothe the convicts. I would advise that the cantonment be made a part of the penitentiary and the operations be under the penitentiary board. . . ."—The *Gunnison People's Champion*, December 6, 1900.

and this would necessitate the building of a special security stockade.<sup>11</sup>

During the week of November 21, 1901, work commenced on the road from Montrose to the proposed west portal of the tunnel.<sup>12</sup> This road is still passable in 1959, extending north-east from Montrose and east of Table Mountain, eventually reaching the southwest end of Bostwick Park after winding through the badlands. By December 16, a frame dining room, bunk house, and blacksmith shop had been built at the site, and the face of the shale hill had been shaved off. On that date the first dirt was taken out of the tunnel.<sup>13</sup>

By the end of December, ten men (apparently not convicts, who for some legal reason could not be used) were at work, putting eight hours in the tunnel, nine on outdoor work. The timbering was being done with a 12x12 framework and an arched roof. At this time it was estimated that it would be possible to drive from five to six feet a day in the shale.<sup>14</sup>

Colorado, it must be remembered, had only allotted \$25,000 for the "State Canal No. 3" project. The board was empowered by the legislature to solicit "subscriptions and advancements of money and equipment from interested persons who receive in return water rights receipts."<sup>15</sup> In order to excite capital in the venture, the men had maps of the Uncompahgre Valley prepared and collected information on the area and nature of land there which could be watered by the system. Insufficient funds were forthcoming, however, and within a year the state's work on the tunnel had to be abandoned, with, as someone commented, only a "small hole in the ground and some weather-stained machinery to show for it."<sup>16</sup>

Actually, more work had been accomplished on the State's tunnel than this statement would suggest. A progress report issued by the Colorado State Engineer in 1902 indicated that the tunnel had been driven 835 feet from the west end, with 350 feet timbered. Two air shafts had been sunk, one 65 feet and one 90 feet, and five miles of wagon road had been constructed.<sup>17</sup>

Fortunately, by this time the federal Reclamation Act had been passed, on June 17, 1902, establishing the Reclamation Service. Congressman John C. Bell's bill for construction of a tunnel, introduced into congress in 1901, was incorporated into this act.<sup>18</sup> The state and local citizens hastened to petition this new agency to continue the diversion project, and the

<sup>11</sup> *Montrose Enterprise*, October 17, 1901.

<sup>12</sup> *Montrose Enterprise*, November 21, 1901.

<sup>13</sup> *Montrose Enterprise*, December 12, 1901.

<sup>14</sup> *Montrose Enterprise*, December 26, 1901.

<sup>15</sup> *Session Laws of Colorado*, *op. cit.*, 372.

<sup>16</sup> John Henry Shaw, "Exploring the Black Canon," *World To-Day*, Vol. 17, No. 5 (1909), 1143.

<sup>17</sup> Colorado State Engineer, *loc. cit.*

<sup>18</sup> *Souvenir Booklet, Montrose County, Colorado* (Montrose, 1905). Copy in the Montrose Public Library.

"Uncompahgre Valley Project," "Gunnison River Diversion," or "Gunnison Tunnel Project," as it was variously called, became one of the first five projects to be taken up by this Service, scheduled for immediate development.<sup>19</sup>

This project ranked fifth in importance among twenty-seven irrigation works begun by the government under this act, in terms of acres to be reclaimed, and ranked third in cost, the Reclamation Service estimating that expenditures would approximate four million dollars to complete the tunnel, diversion canals, and associated accoutrements.<sup>20</sup> The extent of local support is emphasized by the fact that most of the existing ditches in the Uncompahgre Valley were pledged to help carry the diversion water.<sup>21</sup>

During 1902, surveys were continued by U. S. Geological Survey personnel to ascertain the best location for the tunnel, its dimensions, and the grade which the tunnel should have in its course from the Gunnison River down to the Uncompahgre Valley. A longer tunnel could have reduced diameter but would have an increased grade, with associated increase in speed of water which might erode away the tunnel's lining. A short tunnel could have a slight grade but would have to have a large bore. Consideration was also given to the best location for the upper end of the tunnel. A dam could be built across the river to facilitate diversion, or the same result could be achieved by increasing the length of the tunnel. According to the U. S. Geological Survey, "All of these matters involve careful study and the preparation of elaborate estimates of cost."<sup>22</sup>

Although skilled topographers were in short supply, mapping of the irrigable land in the Uncompahgre Valley proceeded, and it was planned eventually to use power from the tunnel project to pump water to lands not accessible by gravity irrigation. Settlers in the valley, meanwhile, were organizing themselves in a manner similar to the residents of the Salt River Valley in Arizona, as the "Uncompahgre Valley Water Users' Association," and every attempt was being made to simplify and facilitate the operations of the engineers.<sup>23</sup>

Extremely cold and stormy December weather curtailed topographic mapping in the Black Canyon area, and field parties were disbanded in January, 1903. The next few months were devoted to a compilation of data already gathered and the preparation of initial estimates. A preliminary report was

<sup>19</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *9th Annual Report of the Reclamation Service, 1909-1910* (1911), 94.

<sup>20</sup> Arthur Chapman, "Watering the Uncompahgre Valley," *Review of Reviews*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (1909), 177.

<sup>21</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *24th Annual Report of the U. S. Geological Survey* (1903), 224-225.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>23</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *2nd Annual Report of the Reclamation Service, 1902-1903* (1904), 200. The Association was formed at Olathe on May 5, 1903, at a convention of delegates of the water users of the Uncompahgre Valley. It was incorporated in Delta on May 11. There were 513 signers for stock subscriptions, subscribing for 63,000 acres, each share representing one acre of land.

completed on March 6.<sup>24</sup> The next day the Director of the U. S. Geological Survey sent the Secretary of the Interior a letter outlining the general plans for development of the Gunnison River Project.<sup>25</sup> It was recommended that the overall project as outlined be approved, that the surveying of irrigable lands be continued, and that investigations be expedited leading to the preparation of specifications and letting of contracts.<sup>26</sup> On March 14, the Secretary of the Interior gave his approval to the project, later (June 7) setting aside \$2,500,000 from the reclamation fund for construction purposes.<sup>27</sup> Meanwhile, on March 16, the Colorado legislature authorized the transfer to the United States of all property and rights acquired for State Canal No. 3. The actual conveyance, however, was not to be made by the state board of control until August 14, 1906.<sup>28</sup>

On June 17, 1903, Ira W. McConnell, an engineering graduate from Cornell University, was placed in charge of the topographic work as resident engineer. He was to remain in charge of the Uncompahgre diversion project throughout much of its prosecution, being made supervising engineer in November of 1907.<sup>29</sup>

The summer of 1903 proved to be a busy one in the field, though no further construction on the tunnel was attempted. Most of the work involved mapping, with six surveying parties in the field, both in the Uncompahgre Valley and in the Black Canyon. The most daring piece of work was a survey within the canyon at the point tentatively selected as head of the proposed tunnel, near the Narrows. The 1,500-foot length of canyon had to be surveyed from both rims, this difficult job finally being completed in August.<sup>30</sup>

Because of the swift water, narrow gorges, and huge boulders in the canyon, the river could not be used as a survey route. Instead, the men had to descend into the chasm over the sheer cliffs and down narrow fissures in four different places. First, a fissure and talus slope on the south side were mapped, as a possible route for a cableway into the canyon for carrying supplies. Then the survey party detoured 150 miles around to the north rim, scrambled down a similar fissure, and surveyed a similar talus slope. From this point

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>25</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *3th Annual Report*, loc. cit.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Reclamation Record* (October, 1909), 101. Working with McConnell in 1907 were Edward E. Sands, acting project engineer; Andrew F. Ross and Herbert L. Daniels, engineer; Edward R. Furstenfeld, chief clerk; and Harry E. Essley, fiscal agent.—U. S. Reclamation Service, *Monthly Bulletin*, Vol. 1 (January, 1908), 6. In the fall of 1909, McConnell resigned to go into private engineering work.

<sup>30</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *2nd Annual Report*, op. cit., 182-184. The map the men made is Plate 23 in the *2nd Annual Report*. There is further description of this daring survey in U. S. Geological Survey, *Water-Supply and Irrigation Paper* No. 93 (1904), 164-165.

McConnell and his assistants, W. P. Edwards (engineer), J. A. Sargent (topographer), and L. E. Foster (assistant topographer), went along the rim about 1,200 feet upstream and dared a perilous descent to another short talus slope, using ropes to get down the steep rock walls.<sup>31</sup>

Returning from the north rim, this party made one more invasion of the canyon to a rocky slope extending into the river. Here they encountered one small tract which could not be reached by instruments, so a man had to be sent down by means of ropes in order to set signals there for triangulation. The completed map of this rough portion of the canyon, together with some photographs of the area, were eventually published in the *Second Annual Report* of the Reclamation Service.<sup>32</sup>

Earlier in the season Engineer W. P. Edwards had made a survey for a road from the west end of the proposed tunnel heading up onto Vernal Mesa to the head of the dam-site trail and to the rim above the proposed east (river) tunnel heading, a total distance of nine and one-half miles.<sup>33</sup> Also, Edwards directed the construction of four trails from Vernal Mesa down into the canyon as far as possible without having to resort to blasting. Brush was cut away for a temporary wagon road along the top of the mesa for a distance of two miles. In addition, a number of special excursions were made into the canyon depths, especially at the dam site, where in October soundings were made.<sup>34</sup> As might well be guessed, many of the investigations carried out during the 1903 season were of the most hazardous nature. Fortunately, there were no casualties.

During the winter of 1903-04, there was a reconsideration of the location for the tunnel; and it was decided, and so reported on February 6, 1904, by McConnell, that a new location about five miles east of the original site would be shorter and more practicable.<sup>35</sup> This new site, the one occupied by the tunnel today, became designated as the "upper location" or "boat landing location." This was about the site surveyed back in 1894 by Richard Whinnerah.<sup>36</sup> Interestingly enough, in the fall of 1900 W. H. Fleming had recommended consideration of the 1894 survey site, pointing out that such a site would avoid the construction of a dam and expensive flumes.<sup>37</sup> At that time, of course, the Narrows site had won out.

On May 9, the two proposed tunnel locations were visited

<sup>31</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *2nd Annual Report*, op. cit., 186.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 183-197 and Plate 23.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

<sup>35</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *3rd Annual Report of the Reclamation Service, 1903-1904* (1905), 2nd Edition, 215.

<sup>36</sup> *Souvenir Booklet, Montrose County*, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup> *Montrose Enterprise*, October 20, 1900. "It seems to be the sentiment of many that a tunnel near Red Rock will be long, as the park is quite wide there, and a survey must be made to settle that point. If the tunnel is to be of great length, it would be better to use the Cedar Creek site, and thus avoid long, dangerous fluming in the roughest country on earth."

by a consulting board made up of Arthur P. David, George Y. Wisner, and W. H. Sanders, accompanied by Morris Bien, an engineer, Colorado's State Engineer, L. G. Carpenter, and the district and resident engineers of Montrose.<sup>38</sup> The upper location was officially approved by this group for the following reasons: (1) less difficulty in access to the canyon portal; (2) simplicity of engineering problems; (3) shorter length; (4) increase in irrigable land; (5) relief from the necessity of building several miles of very costly canal.<sup>39</sup> On June 7, 1904, as previously mentioned, the Secretary of the Interior set aside \$2,500,000 from reclamation funds for construction of the Uncompahgre Valley Project, and authorized the taking of such action as might be necessary to carry out the project in all its details.

After this decision, it was necessary to make more careful surveys of the new line, including accurate determinations of the elevation at the river portal and the west or Cedar Creek end of the tunnel.<sup>40</sup> According to specifications, the tunnel would be about 30,000 feet in length, 10½ by 11½ feet in cross section, with a fall of two feet in a thousand and a carrying capacity of 1,300 second-feet. The tunnel would have to be lined throughout, the type of lining depending upon the nature of the rock passed through.<sup>41</sup>

Bids for the construction of the tunnel were opened at Montrose on October 5, with ten bids being considered from companies as far away as California and Illinois. Low bidder proved to be the Taylor-Moore Construction Company of Hillsboro, Texas,<sup>42</sup> and the Secretary of the Interior signed the contract early in January, 1905.<sup>43</sup> The bids had been based upon linear cost of various units of the project. The contract called for excavation and lining of 30,582 feet of tunnel and of a cut at the west portal 1,950 feet long and a maximum of 49 feet in depth. It was estimated that the tunnel would cost \$1,000,000 and would be completed by April 15, 1908.<sup>44</sup> Bids were also let for construction of the north, east, and west canals which, associated with other open-air features, would cost about \$1,250,000.<sup>45</sup>

As soon as the new tunnel line had been decided upon, surveys were run for a wagon road to connect the Cedar Creek Portal with the River Portal.<sup>46</sup> Out of several possibilities a route was chosen, and to avoid further delay the government

<sup>38</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *3rd Annual Report, op. cit.*, 203; U. S. Geological Survey, *25th Annual Report of the U. S. Geological Survey* (1904), 294.

<sup>39</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *3rd Annual Report, op. cit.*, 68.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *4th Annual Report of the Reclamation Service, 1904-1905* (1906), 119.

<sup>44</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *3rd Annual Report, op. cit.*, 205.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 205-208.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

itself decided to carry out the construction, which started in July. It was essentially completed by October 1, 1904, except for a few additional turnouts and widening at a number of places, by force account. The grade where the road switch-backed down into the gorge was as much as 23%, the steepness permissible because no loads would have to come up out of the canyon.<sup>47</sup> The job involved the excavation of 30,000 cubic yards of material, the clearing of 38 acres of roadway, the construction of nineteen wooden box culverts and 300 linear feet of cribwork along cliffs.<sup>48</sup>



ROAD DOWN TO RIVER PORTAL

The wagon road into the canyon became the only one to reach the river for seventy miles. The grade was so steep that, as one author commented, "4-horse wagons going over it present the appearance of being almost all brakes."<sup>49</sup> The construction down to the river cost \$20,000 and hauling over this road was to cost \$4.50 a ton. This road is still in use today as an access road to the river portal and is reminiscent of many of the old mountain mining roads throughout western Colorado. After completion of the road, a 24.32-mile telephone line from Montrose to the Cedar Creek Portal and on over Vernal Mesa to River Portal was put in, this contract being completed in December.<sup>50</sup>

Government headquarters for the project were set up in Montrose, and at West Portal and River Portal shelters were erected for the use of the workmen. Excavation of the tunnel from both ends commenced on January 11, 1905. By the middle of May, when 15% of the contract time had elapsed, only 4.5% of the work had been accomplished.<sup>51</sup> The contractors were experiencing financial difficulties. They had had neither the adequate mechanical plant nor the organization necessary for such a venture. A 65-ton Bucyrus steam shovel used on the

<sup>48</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *9th Annual Report, op. cit.*, 94-95.

<sup>49</sup> Arthur W. Page, "Running a River Through a Mountain," *World's Work*, Vol. 14, No. 5 (1907), 9329.

<sup>50</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *3rd Annual Report, op. cit.*, 209-211.

<sup>51</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *9th Annual Report, op. cit.*, 96.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>53</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *4th Annual Report, loc. cit.*

<sup>54</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *9th Annual Report, op. cit.*, 95.

excavation at West Portal had been idle for repairs sixteen out of thirty-six days. The moist adobe and gravel encountered had entailed heavy timbering, and frequent cave-ins delayed the work.<sup>52</sup>

The contract was finally suspended, and on May 27, 1905, the Reclamation Service assumed the job of completing the tunnel project.<sup>53</sup> At this time 436 feet of 8x8 undercut drift on the tunnel grade at east portal had been driven, 135 feet of this had been enlarged to full size (about 10x10), and a power plant had been installed here to operate two air drills, an air hoist, and a pump. At West Portal 574 feet of full-sized tunnel and 108 feet of 8x8-foot drift had been excavated.<sup>54</sup>

The excavation of the tunnel under the supervision of the Reclamation Service was to continue for the next four years, with the actual work carried out by Service engineers when no satisfactory bids could be obtained from private concerns.<sup>55</sup> Eventually, the work progressed on four headings: east from the Cedar Creek Portal, west from River Portal, and east and west from a shaft sunk into the mesa about a mile from River Portal.<sup>56</sup>

The hazards accompanying the construction were closely related to the character of the rock material encountered during excavation. Starting from West Portal there was the following geologic sequence: (1) 2,000 feet of heavy, water-bearing alluvial clay, gravel, and sand beds; (2) 1,200 feet through a zone of hard shale below and gravel above, with much seepage; (3) 10,000 feet of black shale, with fossil deposits and pockets of combustible gas; (4) 2,000 feet through a badly shattered fault zone characterized by high temperature, hot and cold water, coal, marble, hard and soft sandstone, limestone, and concentrations of carbonic-acid gas; and (5) 15,455 feet of metamorphosed granite with many water-bearing seams.<sup>57</sup>

Some of the adventures of the subterranean diggers equalled those experienced by the earlier runners of the river and scalars of its chasm walls. On one occasion excavators from the west end tapped a cavern charged with carbonic-acid gas. Rushing and hissing, the gas drove workers helter-skelter; and the ventilating machinery had to be turned off until the confusion subsided.<sup>58</sup> In December of 1906 such a large underground stream was intercepted that jets shot forty feet into

<sup>52</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *4th Annual Report, op. cit.*, 119. On September 26, 1905, three bidders submitted proposals for completion of the tunnel, all of which were rejected.

<sup>53</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *5th Annual Report of the Reclamation Service, 1906 (1907)*, 109; U. S. Reclamation Service, *9th Annual Report, op. cit.*, 96.

<sup>54</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *9th Annual Report, op. cit.*, 96-97.

<sup>55</sup> Page, *op. cit.*, 9325. It seems probable that slightly different descriptions of similar events in popular periodical articles may actually have been variations on a single event. Newspapers and the annual reports of the Reclamation Service represent the most valid sources of information.

the tunnel through drill holes, knocking the drillers from their machines. The flow was estimated at 25,000,000 gallons in twenty-four hours. Accompanying the water was a heavy flow of "choke damp" (carbon dioxide). Because of the gas, water, and high temperatures, work had to be halted in this heading for about six months until a 680-foot ventilating shaft could be sunk.<sup>59</sup>

Occasionally, flows of water heated by slacking of shale would be encountered, raising the temperature in the tunnel to an uncomfortable level averaging 85 degrees.<sup>60</sup> The heat became so unbearable at one point (over 90 degrees) that further work had to be delayed three months while a 400-foot ventilating shaft was constructed.<sup>61</sup> Five hundred feet of excavation went through a deposit of fossil clam shells, and special timbering methods had to be devised to prevent cave-ins here.<sup>62</sup> In another spot where the granite roof of the tunnel began to cave in, the hole was filled with thousands of bales of hay.<sup>63</sup>

When the project was about half completed, a section of tunnel already shored gave way, cutting off a number of men in one of the headings.<sup>64</sup> Fortunately, an air pipe was buried with the workers, and for 72 hours air was pumped in to the men while rescuers labored in three-minute shifts on a temporary opening. Constantly the entombed men implored their rescuers to hurry. Those first reached took their turns at the shovels to extricate their companions. Six men perished in their particu-



EAST PORTAL, *Review of Reviews*

<sup>59</sup> Chapman, *op. cit.*, 179; U. S. Reclamation Service, *6th Annual Report of the Reclamation Service, 1906-1907 (1907)*, 79.

<sup>60</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *5th Annual Report, op. cit.*, 109.

<sup>61</sup> Albert Wilhelm, "The Great Gunnison Irrigation Project," *Scientific American Supplement*, Vol. 68, No. 1759 (1909), 184.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* Chapman, *op. cit.*, 179.

<sup>63</sup> Lillian R. Brigham, *Colorado Travelers* (Denver, 1938), 134.

<sup>64</sup> This accident is described in a number of reports and newspaper articles, with details varying, as usual. Among the best accounts are those in Page, *op. cit.*, 9327; U. S. Geological Survey, *4th Annual Report, op. cit.*, 119; U. S. Geological Survey, *26th Annual Report of the U. S. Geological Survey (1905)*, 261-262. According to an account in the *Colorado Springs Gazette* for May 31, 1905, 25 workers were entombed after a cave-in due to seepage towards the Cedar Creek end of the tunnel. "My God, we are gone," one man reportedly shouted as he was struck by the blast of air from the collapse of the tunnel roof.

lar cave-in, caught and killed by falling rocks.<sup>65</sup> Later a coroner's jury exonerated all persons from blame and attributed the accident to "unforeseen and unavoidable conditions."<sup>66</sup> In 1909, just a few days before the tunnel was officially opened, Walter Honey, a driller, was crushed by a ton of rock crashing down from the tunnel roof.<sup>67</sup>

At the River Portal, high water periodically invaded the tunnel entrance, which was about seven feet below the water

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GUNNISON TUNNEL

line, and kept pumps constantly at work, sometimes discharging as much as 750,000 gallons in twenty-four hours.<sup>68</sup> Water in the tunnel not only raised the humidity to uncomfortable heights for the workers (and increased the air temperature through slacking of the shales) but had other adverse effects as well.<sup>69</sup> The tunnel floor could not be used at all. The electric tram tracks had to be elevated. Shoring timbers would float away or become water-soaked. Special attention had to be paid to such commodities as tool boxes, powder, nails, repair parts for drills, and even lunch boxes to insure that they wouldn't become buried in muck or swept away. Water flows from surrounding bedrock were so numerous through the tunnel sections excavated during the year from July, 1907, that pumps removed the water at the monthly rate of about 19,000,000 gallons.<sup>70</sup> In one section of fissured, water-bearing rock the water pressure often reached such extremes that it would force powder out of holes before the charges could be fired.<sup>71</sup> In the fault zone, frequent intruding water would often carry literally tons of sand which would bury tram tracks and

<sup>65</sup> On June 1, the *Colorado Springs Gazette* listed five men as dead: Edward Schuler, Floyd Woodruff, A. B. Steele, Charles Hornhart and James Cassidy. A sixth casualty, Herman Eckerman, was reported on the following day. The rescuers worked in three-minute relays for twenty-four hours, finally reaching the buried men and hauling them up a sixty-foot rescue tunnel by ropes. The June 1 issue of the *Gazette* carried a good human interest story dealing with the men's experiences.

<sup>66</sup> U. S. Geological Survey, *3th Annual Report*, 119.

<sup>67</sup> *Delta County Tribune*, September 24, 1909.

<sup>68</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *5th Annual Report*, op. cit., 109.

<sup>69</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *6th Annual Report*, op. cit., 80.

<sup>70</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *7th Annual Report of the Reclamation Service, 1907-1908* (1908), 75.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

tools for a distance of two hundred yards down the tunnel.<sup>72</sup> Indeed, so much trouble was encountered in the fault zone, it took a year to pass through. In April of 1908, a water vein was encountered which stopped all progress for months and necessitated the use of additional pumps.<sup>73</sup> Earlier, another underground water course was hit which discharged from the West Portal at the rate of 7½-second feet. This forced the raising of the tram tracks upon timbers for three and one-fourth miles, delayed drilling, increased the labor of mucking and increased the cost of track work.<sup>74</sup>

Forces from the outside world proved just as bothersome. On July 30, 1908, a cloudburst raised the level of Cedar Creek until it rushed into the portal cut, filling the cut with debris and washing out more than fifty feet of timbering at the end of the tunnel.<sup>75</sup> The previous August a similar rise in Cedar Creek broke into the rescue shaft sunk in May of 1905, and work was delayed for a week.<sup>76</sup> Spring and summer rains would frequently make the steep River Portal road impassable for the contracted freight wagons, and government teams often had to be used to haul in coal to keep tunnel pumps in operation.

Despite the complications and frustrations, the work of the excavation proceeded.<sup>77</sup> At the East and West Portals steam power plants, air compressors, electric generators, and cycloidal ventilating blowers were installed. Trammings within the tunnels was carried on with six-ton electric locomotives, operating on a 24-inch gauge track and pulling side-dump (west) or non-dumping (east) cars. Drilling was done with drills best adapted for the particular substrate, with up to fifteen power drills operating from the west end.<sup>78</sup> Electric lines were run into the tunnel headings as work progressed, and all lighting was by means of electricity.

Arthur Page in his "Running a River Through a Mountain," has given a good glimpse of the tunnel excavation work: ". . . Two miles and a half in the mountains from the Uncompahgre side are about 15 men with three drills working in the rock. Two steel pipes, about a foot in diameter, lead from a shaft to the head of the tunnel, one pumping in fresh air and the other sucking out foul air. An electric train hauls out the rock as it is excavated, down the long wet tunnel lighted here and there by electric lights. . . ."<sup>79</sup>

<sup>72</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *9th Annual Report*, op. cit., 98-99.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>74</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *7th Annual Report*, op. cit., 76.

<sup>75</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *8th Annual Report of the Reclamation Service, 1908-1909* (1910), 66; Chapman, op. cit., 179.

<sup>76</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *7th Annual Report*, op. cit., 76.

<sup>77</sup> The most detailed account of the construction activity is to be found in the *9th Annual Report of the Reclamation Service*, 95-100.

<sup>78</sup> A. W. Rolker and D. A. Willey, "Heroes of the Gunnison Tunnel," *Everybody's Magazine*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (1909), 516.

<sup>79</sup> Page, op. cit., 9322.

Originally, the work camp at West Portal was a mere collection of tents, and the center was poorly supplied with water and sanitary facilities. During the winter of 1904-05, this camp was moved about a mile to a more convenient location. Gradually, dining halls, bunk houses, storerooms, offices, a power house, machine shop, stables, and cottages for families were erected. Signs of civilization became evident at this community bearing the post office name of Lujane. Sewage and water systems were installed. There were policemen and sanitary inspectors. Good stores, boarding houses, a post office, school, two churches, and a hospital were started. By August 1, 1905, about 350 men were employed at the West Portal, and the town of Lujane grew to about 800 inhabitants.<sup>80</sup>



EAST PORTAL, BLACK CANYON

The work camp at River Portal was also initially composed of tent houses. In time these were replaced by frame structures covered with tarpaper. Because of the narrow shoreline, the River Portal community had to be built in part on rock debris from the tunnel excavation and in part up the steep slope of the canyon. Here each building had its own embankment foundation in order to give it land on which to stand. A large stock of supplies and spare parts for equipment was laid up here against those frequent times when the River Portal would be inaccessible by road. At this location about 140 men were employed.<sup>81</sup> At the rim was located the milk ranch, with stock and cows to supply the village below.<sup>82</sup>

The manifold difficulties encountered by this early reclamation project are emphasized by this statement from the *Fifth Annual Report* of the Reclamation Service:

Before a proper appreciation of the difficulty of this work can be realized it must be recognized that in many respects it is an unprecedented undertaking. At the present time an expenditure of nearly 100 horsepower is required for tunnel ventilation alone. Every car of material taken from the tunnel must be hauled an average distance of 2 miles before it reaches the dump.

<sup>80</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *5th Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, 108; Page, *op. cit.*, 9322; Sidney Joeknick, *Early Days on the Western Slope of Colorado* (Denver, 1913), 287.

<sup>81</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *5th Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, 108.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Ed Nelson in Montrose, September, 1958.

Water flowing into the tunnel must be pumped long distances before it is finally discharged. The material through which the tunnel has been excavated has been extremely difficult to handle in many places. The country in which the work is located is not self-supporting. This has required the shipment from outside points of practically every pound of supplies used. Freight rates are high, labor is scarce, and correspondingly indifferent; supplies of all classes are commanding the highest prices ever realized. All of these factors increase the difficulty and the expense.<sup>83</sup>

Lack of good, and in some cases any, workmen did indeed present a serious problem, unimproved by good wages. Laborers on concrete work were paid at the rate of \$2.36 per eight-hour day. Excavation laborers were paid from \$2.25 to \$2.50 per day, while foremen received \$3.00 a day. Superintendents received \$122.50 per month. Men received free lodgings and hot showers but had to pay for their meals, 75c a day. The two camps, however, were somewhat isolated, the work hazardous, and the average stay for a worker was only two weeks.<sup>84</sup>

On June 30, 1906, about a year after the Reclamation Service took over work on the tunnel, 11,992 feet had been excavated from the four headings,<sup>85</sup> and in July headings three and four on the west end were connected.<sup>86</sup> One of the work gangs during this period averaged 25.6 feet per day, considered to be "greater progress than was ever made on similar work."<sup>87</sup> At other times it would take from twelve to twenty hours just to drill the blasting holes.<sup>88</sup>

Over the entire construction period, except for unavoidable delays, men worked in three shifts, night and day, averaging 255 feet a month (350 a month from west side, 150 a month from east river portal side).<sup>89</sup> It was considered satisfactory progress to proceed 300 feet per month in granitic formation free from unusual difficulties, 240 feet per month in heavy ground, and 600 to 750 feet per month in shale offering no unusual obstacles.<sup>90</sup> An American record in tunnel driving through hard rock was made here in January of 1908, when

<sup>83</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *5th Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, 108-109.

<sup>84</sup> Page, *op. cit.*, 9327; *Reclamation Record* (November, 1908), 101.

<sup>85</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *5th Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, 110.

<sup>86</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *6th Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, 79.

<sup>87</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *5th Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, 109.

<sup>88</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *9th Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, 97-98. "Drilling was carried on with drills considered best adapted to the character of ground encountered at any given time. In the hard granites the Sullivan 3-inch piston drill was used. In the less refractory ground the Sullivan 2½-inch drill gave good service. For certain classes of work the Leyner drills, especially the newer models, gave satisfactory results. In the shales, which have about the hardness of semibituminous coal, the Jeffrey coal auger, air driven, was used with highly satisfactory results. In the clays, some of which were sufficiently compact to shoot to advantage, a soft auger gave best results. Pop holes, holes for trolley hangers, for pipe hangers, for feed-wire brackets, and similar uses, were drilled with stoping drills, of which several types were used."

<sup>89</sup> Chapman, *op. cit.*, 178; Rolker and Willey, *op. cit.*, 516; U. S. Reclamation Service, *6th Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, 79.

<sup>90</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *9th Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, 99.

<sup>91</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *7th Annual Report*, *op. cit.*, 75.



RIVER PORTAL  
World's Work

449 feet of heading advance was driven in one month.<sup>91</sup> The enlargement of the undercut drift to full tunnel section was accomplished by two gangs at an average rate of 1,665 feet per month. During the course of excavation, more than five million two-horse wagon-loads of debris were removed.<sup>92</sup>

Soon after construction of the tunnel had begun, it became evident that the timbering would not long hold up under the influence of the heat and moisture. Consequently, it became

necessary immediately to line the tunnel sections with concrete. Fortunately, a suitable source of sand and gravel was found on a steep hill overlooking the main shaft. The cement was mixed, dumped into special cars, and transported to the point within the tunnel where it could be shoveled into prepared forms. By June 30, 1910, all timbered sections and some untimbered sections of the Gunnison Tunnel had been lined.<sup>93</sup>

In late June of 1909, the excavation of the tunnel was almost complete, and the two gangs of men working in headings one and two began to hear each others' drilling. Within two weeks, at 6:45 on the afternoon of July 6, at a point 10,812 feet from River Portal, the two crews came together, and the rough bore of one of the longest tunnels in the United States was completed.<sup>94</sup>

As the tunnel completion became imminent, a Montrose citizens' group called the "Gunnison Tunnel Opening Committee" laid plans for a grandiose celebration. *The Gunnison Republican* for August 26, 1909, announced the "Gunnison Tunnel Opening Day" in misprint as September 23, 1609, and in several issues included the exciting program:

<sup>92</sup> Rolker and Willey, *op. cit.*, 516.

<sup>93</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *9th Annual Report, op. cit.*, 99.

<sup>94</sup> *Gunnison Republican*, August 26, 1909. The time is given as 5:45 in Shaw, *op. cit.*, 1148, and Fanny E. Coe, *Heroes of Everyday Life* (Boston, 1911), 60. The longest tunnel at this time, incidentally, was reported to be the Hoosac railroad tunnel near Charlemon, Massachusetts, completed in 1875 after twenty-four years of work, the expenditure of \$20,000,000 and the loss of 195 lives. In actuality, the Hoosac Tunnel apparently was about a mile shorter than the completed Gunnison Tunnel.—*Massachusetts* (Boston, 1937), 457; Charles W. Comstock, "The Great Tunnels of the World," *Proc. Colo. Sci. Soc.*, Vol. 8 (1907), 371-373.

- 9 a.m.—Band concert Elk's Park, Montrose.  
9:30—Visit to orchards near Montrose.  
10:00—Meeting of special trains from Ouray, Telluride, Gunnison, Lake City, Grand Junction, Delta, Hotchkiss and Paonia. Escorted by bands and Company E, Colorado National Guard.  
11 —Grand exhibition of the products of the land under the Gunnison Tunnel project at the Western Slope Fair. Admission 50¢. Those entering the grounds at this hour will be given a return ticket good for the afternoon by applying for same on leaving the grounds.  
12 —Dinner.  
1:30—Music by visiting bands at Elk's Park.  
2:30—Arrival special train with President Wm. H. Taft and other national officials. Signal: 1st bomb, train within city limits; 2nd bomb, on depot platform; 3rd bomb, parade starts.  
3 —President escorted to speakers' stand Elk's Park. Introductory remarks by Hon. F. D. Catlin, chairman Gunnison Tunnel Opening Committee.  
3:05—Key of the city turned over to our guests by Mayor J. Q. Allen.  
3:10—Address of welcome by Hon. John C. Bell.  
3:20—Response by President Taft.  
3:35—Remarks by Senator Charles J. Hughes.  
3:40—Remarks by Gov. John Shafroth.  
4 —Trains leave Montrose for West Portal Gunnison Tunnel. Fare for round trip 50¢ (Racing at Fair Grounds will begin at 4 p.m.)  
4:30—Salute by battery from Denver, at West Portal. Cannons will be those captured by the First Colorado Regiment from the Spanish at Manilla. Music by band. Invocation Rev. John J. Shingler.  
4:30—Opening of the headgate to Gunnison Tunnel by Pres. Wm. H. Taft at West Portal.  
4:50—Remarks by I. McConnell consulting engineer U.S.R.S.  
4:55—Remarks by Senator Horace T. Delong of Grand Junction.  
5 —Trains return to Montrose.  
5:30—President Taft will be escorted to the Western Slope Fair and shown the products of the land under the Gunnison Tunnel project and mineral exhibits from the mining camps of the Western Slope.  
6 —Balloon ascension and parachute leap at the Fair Grounds.  
6:30—Supper.  
7:30—Reception to President Taft and others.  
8 —Music by band at Elk's Park.  
8:15—Remarks by Hon. A. King, of Delta, at Elk's Park.  
8:20—Remarks by Arthur P. Davis, chief engineer reclamation service, Washington, D. C.  
8:30—Remarks by Senator John A. Tobin, Secretary of the Water Users' Association.  
8:35—Remarks by Judge S. M. Bailey.  
8:45—Remarks by A. L. Fellows, engineer, Denver.  
8:55—Remarks by Congressman Taylor.  
9 —Grand illuminated parade.  
9:30—Grand pyrotechnical display.

And on September 23, the gala celebration came off as scheduled, marking the official opening of the tunnel.<sup>95</sup> Among dignitaries in attendance were President Taft, Richard A. Ballinger, Secretary of the Interior, Senator Charles Hughes, Jr., Representative Edward Taylor, Governor John F. Shafroth, officials of the Reclamation Service, Fellows, Torrence, McConnell and Lauzon. In addition, thousands of sightseers came from all over the Western Slope. A special train from Delta brought 1,500, and 300 came on a special from Gunnison. Thirty-six automobiles drove over from Delta, the occupants carrying red and white umbrellas. Ouray brought a pack train, in charge of E. A. Phinney, showing the means of transportation in the rich mines.

President Taft came in from the east in a special five-coach presidential train, in the first car of which were U. S. Regulars as guards. As a special presidential guard were all the sheriffs of western Colorado, decked out in western uniform with ten gallon hats, bandanas, blue flannel shirts and corduroy pants, each with a Colt .45 in holster. Preceding Taft's train was another special carrying Rio Grande officials.

The event was heralded as the "biggest event that ever happened in Montrose." Bands from Ouray, Ridgway, Olathe, Lake City, Montrose and Delta were on hand, including girls' bands with natty uniforms. The Grand Army of the Republic "made a fine showing in the parade," as did the Booster's Association and the Colorado National Guard. Montrose contributed its prettiest girls, riding on horseback, to the parade. On the main thoroughfare of town there was a welcome arch consisting of products of the rich agricultural country, and telling how much had been raised during the past year and what the completion of the tunnel would mean for 1910. The official Bureau of Information was established at the Belvidere Hotel in Montrose.

Ten thousand people congregated at the fair grounds to greet the President. The guard of honor was made up of members of the Grand Army of the Republic, and when the President arrived, everyone gave a great hurrah. After giving a welcome address, Hon. John Bell presented Taft with a beautiful gold badge in behalf of the community. It was a "most beautiful and glorious Colorado day weatherwise," leading Taft to comment, speaking of dry towns, that he "did not wonder the people here were 'dry' as they did not have need of a stimulant as the air was like champagne." During the ceremony, Captain Gunnison's cousin from New York was in-

<sup>95</sup> There are many good accounts of this celebration: *Delta County Tribune*, September 24, 1909; *The Denver Post*, September 23, 1909; *The Gunnison Republican*, August 26, 1909, September 30, 1909; *Colorado Springs Gazette*, September 24, 1909; Arthur W. Monroe, "Montrose County, Interviews Collected During 1933-34 for the State Historical Society of Colorado," *C.W.A. Pamphlet No. 357*, Library, State Historical Society of Colorado; and others.

troduced, Mayor Allen gave the key of the city to the President, and there was a girls' relay race on bucking broncos. Following this, the President was conducted through the fair grounds by the president of the Fair Association.

In late afternoon the President's train, decorated by the 3rd Division, proceeded to the West Portal of the tunnel, where there was a special stand erected 75 feet above the tunnel entrance. As the crowds held their breath, President Taft



PRESIDENT TAFT OPENS PROJECT

touched a gold bell on a floating silver plate, the electrical connection sounded gongs throughout the Uncompahgre Valley, swung open the tunnel headgates; and the waters of the Gunnison River were at last released from their rocky prison into the sunny "Valley of Fountains." This bell, of pure gold, was furnished by the Colorado Telephone Company and inscribed on one side "Opening of the Gunnison tunnel by His Excellency William Howard Taft, President of the United States of America, Montrose, Colorado, September 13, 1909." The bell was taken back to Washington by Taft after the ceremony. As the water rushed through the tunnel, reclamation officials fired salutes honoring the President, and back in Montrose at the fair grounds the ascension balloon was released. During the ceremony the President called the surrounding Uncompahgre Valley the "Incomparable Valley with the unpronounceable name!"

In the evening the President had a special dinner at the Catlin house, waited on by ten of the prettiest young ladies



TUNNEL, UNCOMPAGRE END

of Montrose. At the completion of the feast, the people of Lake City presented the President with a 7½-pound trout to dine on the next day. The day ended as the President was escorted back to his private car by the western sheriffs, to the accompaniment of booming cannons and cheering people. The *Denver Post* greeted the memorable occasion with banner headlines: "Taft Opens Tunnel That Will Make Desert Bloom," "Western Slope Makes Event Grand Holiday," "As President Pushes Button Lifting Headgates Gongs Sounded in Valley," "Bore 30,582 Feet Long Will Carry Water Through Base of Mountains."<sup>96</sup>

Actually, much remained to be done on the Gunnison River Diversion Project. The intricate canal system in the valley had to be completed, finishing touches had to be put on the tunnel itself, and so on. Indeed, the overall project wasn't considered complete until mid-1923, at which time expenditures had reached \$6,715,074.41, almost half of which had gone for the tunnel.<sup>97</sup>

IRRIGATION DITCH,  
UNCOMPAGRE VALLEY

The tunnel portion of the project was declared completed for present use in June of 1910, with the first water for irrigation being turned into the tunnel on July 6.<sup>98</sup> The Gunnison River Diversion Dam at River Portal was finished in January,

<sup>96</sup> *The Denver Post*, September 23, 1909.

<sup>97</sup> U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, *22nd Annual Report, 1922-23* (1923), 54.

<sup>98</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *10th Annual Report of the Reclamation Service, 1910-1911* (1912), 89; *Reclamation Record* (1910), August, 66.

1912.<sup>99</sup> Two decades later the project was transferred to the Uncompahgre Valley Water Users' Association which was to repay construction costs in forty annual installments.<sup>100</sup> It was estimated that the settlers who were to benefit from the project would pay about \$35 per acre for water rights.<sup>101</sup>

The total length of the tunnel was 30,582 feet, with dimensions in cross section of about ten feet by twelve feet. The fall of the tunnel was 2.02 feet per 1,000 feet, and water capacity was 1,300 cubic feet per second. Intake on the Gunnison River was about seven feet below low-water line. The area of the irrigation project included 146,000 acres. There were 170 miles of associated canals, 400 miles of laterals, and 205 miles of drains.<sup>102</sup> The main canal was 30 feet wide at the bottom, 83 feet wide at the top, with the average depth of water being ten feet. During the course of the construction, irrigation experts from all over the world visited the site and were amazed at the engineering difficulties which were being overcome. By 1948 the cost of the entire project had risen to \$8,976,484.<sup>103</sup>

At one time the Uncompahgre Valley stirred with talk of a magnificent electric tramway which would trundle the length of the valley on power from the Gunnison River Diversion Project.<sup>104</sup> This was a dream never to be realized, but the other far-reaching benefits and accomplishments of the project have firmly established it as one of the great, early ventures of the Reclamation Service in the West.

<sup>99</sup> U. S. Reclamation Service, *11th Annual Report of the Reclamation Service, 1911-1912* (1913), 67.

<sup>100</sup> *Reclamation Project Data* (Washington, 1948), 443, 445.

<sup>101</sup> *Gunnison Republican*, August 26, 1909. At the time of the tunnel opening in 1909, the Reclamation Service had hastened to quash the rumor that "50,000 acres of land would be disposed of by drawing in tracts of 40 acres, with a guaranteed government water right."

<sup>102</sup> *Reclamation Record* (October, 1909), 96.

<sup>103</sup> *Reclamation Project Data, op. cit.*, Appendix No. 1.

<sup>104</sup> Chapman, *op. cit.*, 182.

## “Meet Me at Scholtz’s”

By MABEL K. HAMLIN\*

On 16th Street at Curtis, where Neisner’s is now (1959) was Scholtz’s Drug Store, at the turn of the century.

It was not only a beautiful store with a hospitable corner entrance, tile floor, tiers of well-filled shelves and show cases, large white marble soda fountain, serviced by white-jacketed, colored boys, but it was at the crossroads of the whole town—an ideal place for friends to meet.

Shoppers from Joslin’s en route to Daniels and Fisher or Wolf Londoner’s grocery store, dropped in for a soda or hot chocolate.

Patrons of the Tabor Opera House, tourists, business men from 17th Street; the vendor on the corner who called “A--L--L kinds of shoelaces”; Johnnie Owens, the crippled newsman, who recited his poems as he sold his papers; the dapper Babcock Brothers from their near-by fur store, clerks from Joslin’s; Jay Joslin, the little grey-bearded merchant, himself; and his brother Jervis from his jewelry store, Joslin-Park in the corner of the Tabor Opera House; post office employees from 16th and Arapahoe, shoppers from Perini’s glove and umbrella store and Meek’s trunk store; the elite from Bohm-Bristol and Gottesleben’s jewelry stores—all of these were in and out of Scholtz’s.

Newspaper men came from three Denver papers, all within a block: *The Denver Republican* at 16th and Arapahoe; the *Denver Post*, a few doors away on 16th street, and the *Rocky Mountain News* on 17th at Curtis.

And the teenagers! The nickels and dimes that soda fountain garnered after school and on Saturdays! No juke box. No snack bar.

All beverages sizzed out of fountain spigots. There were no bottle drinks. Phosphates—lemon, lime, cherry, orange. All a nickel. Ice cream sodas—chocolate, vanilla, pineapple, strawberry, piled high with ice cream and fruit. These were a dime. All glasses were placed in metal containers with handles. Vanilla wafers were served with everything.

The fountain was at the left as one entered. A leather seat reached from door to wall with leather-cushioned revolving stools across the front.

The proprietors were the Scholtz Brothers—Ed, president and manager, and Will, secretary and treasurer. They were in keeping with their store—fine, prosperous men, active in the business and social life of the community.

\* Mrs. Hamlin, a Denver resident and a member of the State Historical Society, is a former newspaper woman. She is also a former President of the Territorial Daughters of Colorado.—*Editor.*

## THE SCHOLTZ DRUG COMPANY

### Drug Stores have Character

- ☞ Drug stores are as different as people. A store can have personality, character and atmosphere just as a person has, and the expression of these characteristics is just as pronounced.
- ☞ For instance, Scholtz drug stores have a strong, honest character, peculiarly their own, recognizable without sight of a sign, just as an acquaintance is recognized without showing a card.
- ☞ The Scholtz store atmosphere reflects efficient storekeeping, a characteristic acquired through thirty-nine years of experience. The minute one steps into a Scholtz store one is impressed by its cleanliness, convenient arrangement, fresh merchandise, and the capable clerks who give each customer their courteous and undivided attention.
- ☞ This enviable Scholtz drug store square-dealing character draws and holds custom just as a strong, pleasing personality draws and holds friends.
- ☞ Hence their success.



### Scholtz's Remarkable Seven

**Main Store—16th and Curtis**

**15th and Arapahoe    16th and California    Colfax and Broadway  
16th and Court Place    17th and Broadway    18th and Welton**

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With Many Branches  
In *Trail Magazine*, 1920

Our early-day doctors were in and out, carrying their little leather bags to be replenished, their horses and buggies waiting outside.

There were no stockings, groceries, hardware, kitchen gadgets, chinaware, toys, doormats or card tables, but there was much more than drugs.

Candy—Huyler's, Gunther's, smartly boxed; large round glass containers, displaying white rock candy, striped sticks, horehound, licorice, lemon drops, tiny red cinnamons, chocolate drops, packages of Baker's sweet chocolate; chewing gum—Yucatan, Juicy Fruit, Spruce.

Cigars, pipes—meerschaum, briar, corn cob. Chewing and smoking tobacco; Sweet Caporal cigarettes, with a picture of an actress or a baseball player in each package.

Perfume—bulk or bottled. Not "My Sin," "Always Yours," "Danger," "Night in Paris," "Temptation"; but "Lilac," "White Rose," "Lily of the Valley," "Violet," "Heliotrope." The only two that seemed a little out of line were "New Mown Hay" and "Ylang Ylang." The former held no allure, and the dictionary reveals that the latter is an East Indian flower, thus not off beat at all. Roger and Gallet's "Vera Violet" perfume was seventy-five cents an ounce—an OUNCE, not a dram.

There was Florida Water—that fresh, spicy odor. It was in large bottles with gay labels showing a high spraying fountain and lovely ladies in the foreground. And Bay Rum. No bathroom was fully equipped without one or both of these toilet waters.

Cashmere Bouquet soap, so popular then is still with us. Guest size cakes are in most hotel bathrooms today.

But what has become of Pears soap? That transparent brown cake, with concave top and bottom to hold the worn slip when past using. Pears soap cost a dime, but it was a luxury well worth this expenditure. And there was another transparent, pale yellow soap with glycerine content, that was in demand.

Sponges hung like bunches of bananas; not rubber sponges, but Nature's own, from the ocean. Some were coarse enough to wash windows and carriages; others fine and tiny enough to tuck in a humidor or to apply rouge.

Chamois were there, large and small; and folding razors with straps for honing.

There were things for babies—rubber teething rings, metal rattles, narrow-necked nursing bottles with small nipples at end of foot-long rubber tubes.

Court plaster—white, black or flesh, was available, plus Sozodont tooth powder.

Sen Sen and peppermint breath tablets were right at hand; and little heart-shaped violet "Breathettes."

Orris root, slippery elm, licorice bark, sassafras, sweet flag, pennyroyal, musk, Pond's Extract, smelling salts—

No doubt, in their metropolitan location and catering mostly to the passing public, the Scholtz Brothers were not familiar with the ailments of their customers. This was the field of the neighborhood druggist. X-rays could reveal little more than he knew of the physical problems of his patrons. "Go ask the druggist" was a household admonition.

He would be told that Grandma was not getting quite the results she had hoped from those last pills; different and more potent would be forthcoming immediately. A tonic of "Beef, iron and wine" might be suggested for sister, instead of the usual sulphur and molasses. Or, "I don't believe that is a boil coming on your neck, Mr. Jones. Likely it's just irritation from that high collar. Put this salve on tonight." . . . "Don't be alarmed. It may not be your heart, at all. Perhaps, just indigestion and gas pains. Here, drink this."

No, the Scholtz brothers could have had little of this; but they were kind, understanding men, who would have qualified, if necessary.

This early store on 16th at Curtis branched out into a group or "chain" of stores; and before 1910 all of these drug stores were taken over by other management.

Our beloved, pioneer Scholtz Drug Store has been gone many years and few are left who once rallied to the call, "Meet me at Scholtz's."

## Childhood Memories of Kittie Hall Fairfield

As Told to

MARGARET ISAAC\*

I was nine years old when we came to Colorado.<sup>1</sup> Papa went first to Leadville in July, 1885. He owned a lard and soap factory in Clinton, Iowa, but due to repeated attacks of malaria he had to get away from the Mississippi River country. His brother, Uncle Al Hall, had gone to Leadville about 1880 to work in the mines, so Papa joined Uncle Al and worked for a time in the mines. A little later Grandma Hall and Auntie Grace Hall came to Leadville, too.

Papa roomed with Mrs. Keller,<sup>2</sup> who kept a hotel in Leadville. She told him about the Meeker country, where she and her husband and her sister and brother-in-law, the Bloomfields, had already taken up ranches. Papa rode a saddle horse down to Meeker from Leadville to look over the country. He was well satisfied, and took up a pre-emption on the mesa above Coal Creek. Before long, his first cousin, Ed Brown, also came to Meeker and took up land. Later, Uncle Al and Grandma Hall came, and likewise filed on land. Our community was known as Hall Mesa. It is now called Irish Mesa.

In November of 1885, Mother, my two brothers, Fred and Roy, and I came by train from Clinton, Iowa, to Rawlins, Wyoming. Papa, driving a team of mules, and Cousin Ed Brown, driving a team of horses, met us with two covered wagons. We three city children had a wonderful time from the start. Pioneer hardships never worried or frightened us. Mother must have suffered agony from the very beginning. She had been accustomed to all of the comforts of a ten-room

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<sup>1</sup> Kittie Hall Fairfield was born April 6, 1876 at Rapid City, Illinois, the daughter of James Edward and Annie E. Hall. She grew up in the White River Valley of Colorado where she met and married William A. Fairfield, the son of a pioneer family, at Angora on April 12, 1897. Mr. Fairfield passed away in 1940. Mrs. Fairfield was a charter member of the Meeker Woman's Club, a member of the Eastern Star, the Mesa Club and the St. James Church Auxiliary. She passed away at Meeker, Colorado on May 9, 1959. Mr. and Mrs. Fairfield were the parents of two daughters: Mrs. Thelma Hallatt of Houston, Texas and Mrs. Grace Johnston of Portland, Oregon. Other descendants include two granddaughters, Mrs. Edgar Miller of Long Beach, California, and Mrs. Gene Shaw of Anchorage, Alaska; three grandsons—Byron Linden of Meeker, William Johnston of Boulder and James Johnston of Portland.—*Meeker Herald*, May 14, 1959.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. William A. Keller kept a hotel in Leadville while her husband mined in that vicinity. The Kellers sold out their Leadville interests in 1887, and moved to Rio Blanco County.—*Progressive Men of Western Colorado*, 1905. For a time after taking up land near Meeker the Kellers came to the White River country in the summers to take care of their property, and returned to Leadville and the hotel business in the winter in order to get ahead financially.—*Author*.

home equipped throughout with speaking tubes and beautifully furnished.<sup>3</sup>

The pioneer Mothers were the ones who suffered and who endured the hardships which came with the settling of the West. To them I pay a special tribute.

Mother was desperately afraid of Indians. She was equally afraid of cowboys, though she herself was a fine horsewoman. As we went through Ogallala<sup>4</sup> on our way west there was mention of cowboys in the vicinity. Mother made us children get down between the train seats.

I remember very little of the trip down from Rawlins. However, I do remember being laughed at one night when a group of cowboys camped near us with a herd of beef cattle, and I asked in wonder, "How long does it take to milk all those cows?" I remember another night when we stopped at an old bachelor's place. He could not speak, but he played tunes on old bottles—wonderful tunes. We begged for more and more. I'm sure he was glad when we moved on!

Papa had the usual one-room dirt-roofed cabin ready for us on his pre-emption. But we had a slab floor, that was luxury. Mother scrubbed the boards until they were white. There were wide cracks between the boards, and often a board had to be taken up so that we could recover some article which had fallen through a crack.

Mother put her white, embroidered pillowshams and spreads on our beds, and then it rained. The dirt leaked through the roof onto the beds, but Mother did not give up. She had a tarpaulin stretched above the beds.

The first people we met in Colorado were Will Taylor in Axial and the Proctor family at their ranch on Nine Mile. The Bloomfields were our first neighbors and friends. They settled on their ranch the year before we came to Colorado. We had many good times at the Bloomfield home. Mrs. Bloomfield was the gem of the community. I attended school through the grades and high school with the Bloomfield children, and we have continued to be friends throughout the years.

Many people came to Meeker about this time to take up land. Besides the Kellers and the Bloomfields, there were four English bachelors, who owned the Upside down T T ranch.<sup>5</sup> They were all fine, cultured men. Johnny Wolfe, another bachelor, owned the Bar Seven ranch. His Mother lived with him. Pony Hudson and Jack Jewett, also bachelors, came about

<sup>3</sup> All of these furnishings were lost in a storage house fire.—*Author*.

<sup>4</sup> Ogallala, Nebraska at this time was a lively "cow town," or livestock shipping point, on the Union Pacific railroad.

<sup>5</sup> The *Meeker Herald* of October 15, 1887 listed among the members of the Stock Growers Association, the White River Land & Cattle Company, with the brand Upside down T, T with A. B. Hankey, General Manager, and W. F. Dendry, Secretary and Treasurer. Since *The Colorado Magazine* does not have type symbols to represent the brand as it was, it will be referred to as the "TT."

this time. Mr. Goss lived on the Bills' place.<sup>6</sup> George Martin was one of our neighbors. His stepdaughters, the Carter girls, went to school with us.

The Coal Creek school was only a few months old when we arrived. The Bloomfields, along with the four English bachelors from the TT Ranch, and others, all had helped build it. My brother Fred and I started to school during the first week in December. The school house was a log building located near the Younker Ranch, now owned by Arthur Lammers. Our teacher was a Miss White from Ohio, a friend of Agnes Hazen. The pupils were the Bloomfield children, the Carter girls, my brother and myself. Later the Petersons, who lived on Big Beaver, moved down to send the children to school.



KITTIE HALL FAIRFIELD, 1957  
Taken at Fairbanks, Alaska While Visiting Her Granddaughter, Mrs. Gene Shaw, and Family.

We pioneer children had wonderful times, and never thought of hardships. We had skis, sleds and skates. We had good, warm clothes. We wore rubber boots to school, which we took off in the school room, and put on moccasins made of buckskin.

One time we found an Indian mummy tied in a tree. We brought it to the school house, but our teacher of that term, Mr. Charley Grimes, made us put it back in the tree. I can still see John Bloomfield climbing the tree and tying the mummy back in place!

Another time brother Fred and I dug up an Indian skeleton from the bank of Coal Creek. A can of beads was buried with the Indian. We took the skeleton and the beads home, but Mother made us return them. We especially hated to take the beads back.

All of our food was freighted in from Rawlins, Wyoming, which was on the Union Pacific. Supplies were piled in the bottom of the freight wagons, including flour and five-gallon kerosene cans! I well remember our first winter on the pre-

<sup>6</sup> Now owned by Allen Pearce.

emption. One of the kerosene cans had sprung a leak en route. Mother heated our flour and aired it, but it still tasted. We had kerosene-flavored flour all winter. But we ate it! We had to!

This first winter we had no fruit except four apples for which Papa paid a dollar. In place of fruit we ate a special kind of white potato which had blue lines running through it. The more blue lines, the greater prize was each potato. We ate them raw with salt. The next year we had wild fruits and berries. I remember Mother going out with the Bloomfields to pick wild gooseberries. They were wormy. Mr. Bloomfield



THE HALL'S FIRST HOME ON HALL MESA

was full of fun. He said, "We'll serve the gooseberries to company, and call it company jam."

In the summer of 1887, Papa had a contract to put up the hay on the TT Ranch. Grandma and I were left alone at her home to take care of three cows and the chickens while the rest of the family put up hay. Early one morning Sheriff Kendall, Jack Ward and some other men came by and told us that they were going up Coal Creek to arrest an Indian thief.<sup>7</sup> They were afraid more trouble might follow with the Indians, so they told Grandma to take me and go to the TT Ranch.

Grandma wouldn't go. She had been through the Sioux Wars and she wasn't a bit afraid. As soon as the men rode away she began to make preparations to stay. First we went to haul

<sup>7</sup> Game Warden Burgett, accompanied by a numerous posse, started up the river for the purpose of arresting a number of Utes for whose apprehension warrants had been issued under the provision of the game law. . . . Later in the day Sheriff Kendall and two or three deputies who had reached here from Glenwood Tuesday morning, joined the Game Warden's party. Mr. Kendall had warrants for the arrest of two Indians who were indicted by the last grand jury for horse stealing. *Meeker Herald*, August 13, 1887. Following the Meeker Massacre in 1879, the Utes were moved out of the White River Valley to what is now called the Uintah-Ouray Indian Reservation in Utah, but kept coming back into Colorado on hunting expeditions, and some unruly ones made forays on livestock.

a barrel of water. I was so excited, I made the horse nervous, and he upset the first barrel. We went back the quarter of a mile to the spring, and this time we reached the house with the water.

The house was built in an ell. Uncle Al slept in one part which was on his land, and Grandma lived and slept in the other part of the ell which was on her land. Now Grandma made the building into a fortress. She tied the cows in the ell, and after much chasing we caught the chickens and put them in a box near the cows. Grandma boarded up the windows and loaded the guns. We took turns sitting up all night to watch for the



MR. AND MRS. J. ED HALL  
Parents of Kittie Hall Fairfield

Indians. We neither saw nor heard one! Of course, all the squeaks which I heard I was sure were Indians. They wouldn't have had a bit of trouble scalping me as my hair stood right on end! I was afraid, but Grandma wasn't. She was mad. She didn't want to go down the river. She had a little garden, her chickens and cows to look after. She didn't propose to leave. But the next day Papa and Uncle Al came up and took Grandma to Meeker to the home of Mr. Major,<sup>8</sup> who was manager of the J. W. Hugus Store at that time.

They took me to the TT Ranch. All the neighbors had moved to this ranch for protection in case of an Indian uprising, for there had been trouble over the Indian's arrest. There ings.

<sup>8</sup> "Newton Major came to the White River from Ashley Valley, Utah when the fort was still here (Meeker). He was in charge of the trading post for J. W. Hugus & Company. In an article that the Wilbers have in their possession, Mr. Wilber tells the following story . . . 'In 1883 the troops were ordered to leave Meeker and the property was offered for sale at auction during August of that year. Mr. Major bid in the piece of property which was to become the site of Hugus & Company's store on Main Street (6th and Main) now A. Oldland and Company.' Mr. Major was here for some years after my father came and started the *Herald*. He later retired from the company and moved to Pasadena, California, where he stayed until his death. . . ." Letter from Richard G. Lytle, editor of the *Meeker Herald* to Mrs. Isaac, May 26, 1959.

were about fifty men at the ranch and the wives and children of those who had families. Guards were set up. One guard went around the house all night, and one went around the outbuild-

During the day the men went armed in groups to the different ranches to put up their hay. They always left the women and children fully guarded. However, we never saw or even heard an Indian during all this time. Later, after the scare was over, we learned that we had been watched. It was discovered that all through the "trouble" an Indian was sitting with his horse, watching us. He was on the hill across the main road from the ranch house, watching every move—the guard pacing about the buildings, our men going out armed each day, and all the preparations for defense.

The Indians had been given permits to come up here to hunt. They brought all their squaws and papooses with them, as well as their sheep, cattle and horses to be grazed. During this fracas they lost all their stock. If the Indians had come to White River looking for trouble they would not have brought their squaws and herds, and surely some of the ranch buildings and the hay would have been burned. I call it the "white man's war." The Indians did not want to fight; they were only trying to get back to the reservation.<sup>9</sup>

During the "scare," part of the Indians moved on to Rangely, while others remained camped on the hills behind Meeker. Word came that the Indians were supposed to be fighting at Rangely, so a number of our boys went down there. In the meantime, word had been sent to Aspen for troops.

The officers of the Aspen men met at the TT Ranch house for dinner, but they left their orderly outside to hold the horses. The officers took their time with their meal, which provoked Billy Carver, the cook, who was most impatient for them to join our boys at Rangely. He fed the orderly, taking a full dinner to him in a dishpan as a tray. And the orderly was the only one to be served Billy Carver's delicious plum duff. The officers had already tarried too long over their dinner, so Billy saw to it that they would spend no time on his special dessert before being on their way.

<sup>9</sup>Game was plentiful in the White River area, and scarce on the Indian reservation. The Indians came in increasing numbers each year. . . . Game laws had been passed by Colorado, and Joe Burgett got the appointment as game warden. He started to enforce the law on the Utes. He got up a posse and went with a warrant to arrest them. He read the warrant to the Indians, but they did not understand it. . . . The Indian ponies were rounded up and put in McHatton's corral. There were said to be 300, but before they were returned to the Indians, all had been stolen but seventy head.—Thomas Baker, "The Ute War of 1887," C.W.A. Interviews, 1933-34, Rio Blanco County, pp. 82-83. Library, State Historical Society of Colorado.

A skirmish took place at Rangely. Both Mr. Ward and Lieutenant Folsom were killed.<sup>10</sup>

A short time after the officers missed the plum duff, someone took me to Meeker to Grandma. Then one night word came that the Indians were going to attack the town. The people gathered in the old adobe store building. Full of anxiety over a possible attack, they came as they were. Someone brought word to Mr. Major to meet with the Indians below town for a peace conference. He hurried off to the meeting place lest the Indians change their wishes for peace to those of hostility. He soon returned with the good news that the Indians were leaving peacefully. Mrs. Major, dressed as she had been all this time in her Mother Hubbard nightgown, with an apron tied around her waist, and holding the corners of the apron in her hands to guard her silver and precious belongings wrapped therein, met her husband on his return. With the excitement of a possible attack over, he really saw his wife for the first time that night. Mr. Major's first words of greeting were, "Nellie, why didn't you dress?"



"GRANDMA" HALL  
Not Afraid of Indians

"Well, Mr. Major," she replied in her typically formal manner, "why didn't you take off your red night cap?"

<sup>10</sup>At 6:30 A.M., August 25, the Indians opened fire after trying to draw the whites into a well arranged ambush; the troops and Kendall's men returned the fire. . . . The fight lasted all day. . . . Eight Utes were killed. . . . Captain Jack Ward, one of Sheriff Kendall's deputies was killed at first fire from the Indians. . . . Later a courier reported the death of Lieutenant Frank Folsom, of the Aspen troops.—Meeker Herald, August 27, 1887.



J. W. HUGGUS & COMPANY'S STORE  
Where pioneers took refuge during Indian scare.

Reaching to his head and placing his hand affectionately on his night cap, he retorted in his usual jovial manner, "No doubt the Indians thought my cap was a special war bonnet of high authority, and that's why they agreed to peace without delay."

Before long the Indians returned to the reservation, and the ranchers went back to their homes.

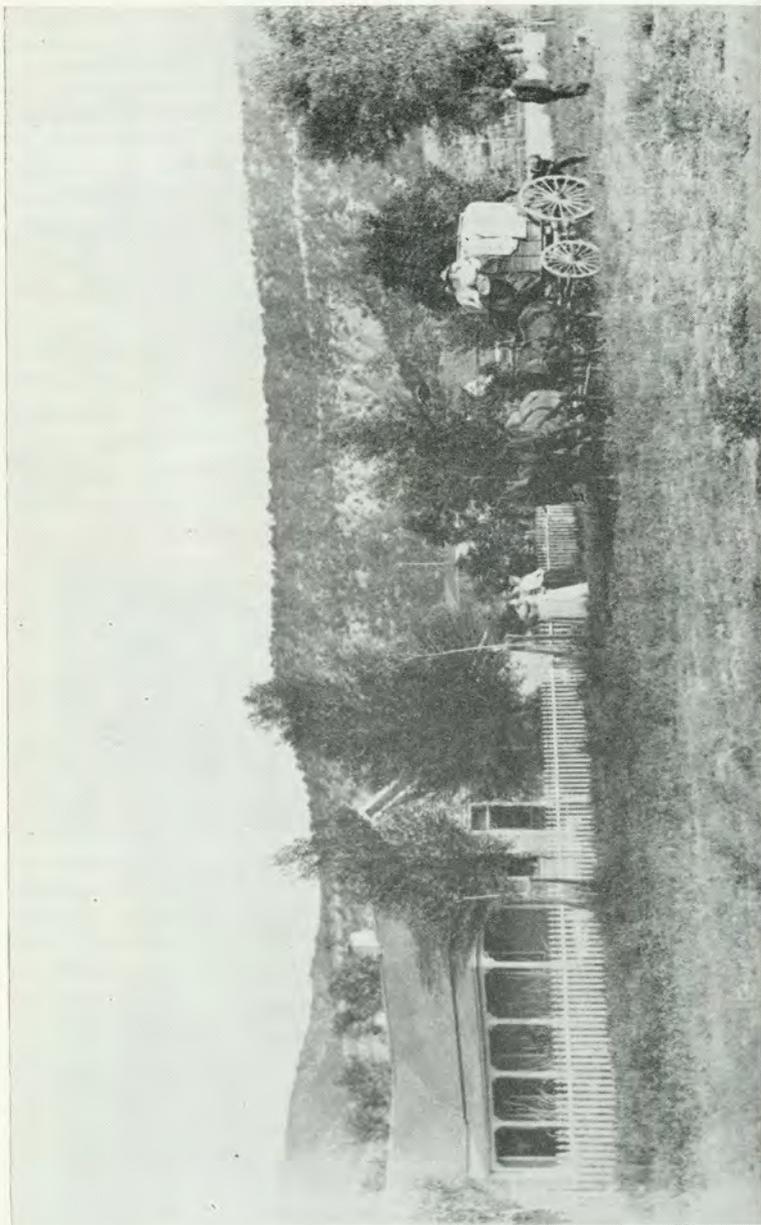
The Indians were still allowed to come back regularly from the reservation to go hunting. They would graze their stock—sheep, cattle and horses—here throughout the summer while they hunted, dried their meat and cured hides. In the winter they returned to the reservation to receive their rations.

One time when Martha Hossack Gibbens was out riding in a strong wind, dressed in full riding skirt and cape, she saw some Indians. Martha was terribly frightened, and so were the Indians. She raced her horse all the way home, and the Indians returned to camp and told their companions they had seen an evil spirit. From this time on, whenever some of Martha's friends wanted to tease her, they called her an "evil spirit."

Colorow often came to our house. Mother was so afraid of him she gave him anything he wanted. One time when he came, she had a red and white checked tablecloth on the table. Colorow wanted it. Mother immediately gave it to him. He wrapped it around himself blanket style, and started off. All at once he spied Mother's old red hoop skirt hanging on the wall. This he must have, too. My brother Fred and I helped him into it. We took off the tablecloth, put on the skirt, then draped the tablecloth around his shoulders. Off he went to get on his horse. Every time he raised his foot to mount, out went the hoops and the horse shied away. Finally, Fred got on one side of Colorow and I, on the other. We held the hoops until he was astride his horse, then we let go. The horse bucked and ran, and as far as we could see him, the red tablecloth was flying from Colorow's shoulders.

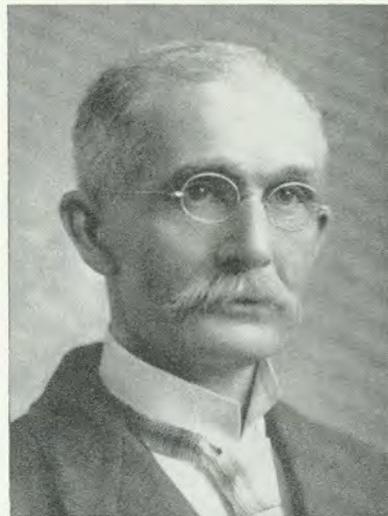
One time Colorow was seen taking a bath in the town ditch. It was a shock to the Indian, and hard on the ditch water. Colorow's son, young John Colorow, was a fine looking Indian. At different times he brought beaded gifts to me, which now, I wish I had kept.

I have so many pleasant memories of my childhood days that I seldom think of the sorrows, but the hard winter of 1887 still stands out vividly in my mind as the greatest tragedy of those early days. I can still see the starving cattle, their mouths bleeding from eating cactus. It was a great loss to the cattlemen, but a pioneer is never defeated. After that, they made provision to feed their cattle through the winter months.



HOME OF NEWTON MAJOR, MEEKER, COLORADO  
Stage for Rifle stopped here for passengers.

Civilization came. Mr. McHatton,<sup>11</sup> who lived in Powell Park, and who also owned a home in town and several ranches, which now make up the Bar Seven, brought the first alfalfa seed into the valley from Utah. He gave seed to Papa to plant



JAMES L. MCHATTON

on "Hall Mesa." We guarded the field with care to keep the prairie dogs from eating it. A sister of the Hayes brothers brought the first dandelion seed from the East, with other special seeds. She selected the dandelion because she thought it was so pretty!

And today White River Valley still has both—the alfalfa and the dandelion.

<sup>11</sup>James L. McHatton, called by his neighbors "Uncle Jimmie" McHatton, was an outstanding leader in the pioneer community. He was active in all enterprises of the county. In addition to locating the Cross L Ranch, where he planted the alfalfa seed brought from Utah, he also started, with Frank Sheridan, the first commercial sawmill (about 1884), and the first flour mill in the area. The flour was called "The White River Gem." Mr. McHatton also brought fine Percheron horses with him to the valley, which he bred for many years. James L. McHatton was born in Schuyler County, Illinois. He first went west to Oregon, then came eastward to Utah, and on to White River (Meeker, Colorado) in 1883. His sister Mary and his niece, Nellie Walsh (later Mrs. Frank Sheridan) came with him. Later another niece, Addie Walsh (Mrs. Boyd Walbridge) came from Illinois. Mr. McHatton never married. He died in February, 1910.—Information supplied to the Author by Mr. F. H. Sheridan, Meeker, Colorado, son of Frank and Nellie (Walsh) Sheridan.