

# Higher Education: To Compete or to Coordinate?

BY DAVID P. NELSON

The proposed Auraria Higher Education Complex, with its fate to be decided by state political leaders and educators in the 1970s, is the latest joint effort involving Colorado's publicly supported colleges and universities. The University of Colorado, Metropolitan State College, and the Community College of Denver are engaged in the most extensive project in the state's history to determine if systematic coordination of higher education is possible on a single site in downtown Denver. Cooperation always has faced a major barrier: the leadership of each college and university has tried to prove to Colorado politicians and bureaucrats that its school offers the academic programs best designed to meet the needs of the citizens of the state. As a result there has been a strong tendency for the schools to compete for students and state financial support. Yet, beginning in the late 1930s, precedents appeared for successful coordination in Colorado higher education.

Until 1937 coordinated efforts by Colorado's institutions of higher learning found rhetorical support from the state political leaders and educators, but no one could cite a single instance in which the alleged spirit of cooperation had been translated into action. Through its constitutional power of the purse the Colorado General Assembly might have stimulated or coerced the schools to join forces on matters of common concern, or college and university presidents might have asserted initiative in this area. But in 1937 forces operating at both the state and national levels combined to insure coordination among the six public colleges and the University of Colorado.

The state constitution of 1876 and subsequent legislation had determined in large part that coordination always would be difficult to achieve. By creating four governing boards to direct the affairs of the various colleges and the university,

state politicians established a pattern of decentralization in higher education.<sup>1</sup>

While decentralized higher education led to some competition among the institutions, the school heads frequently acknowledged that they shared many problems. They all wanted more students, faced demands for more teachers and higher salaries, needed funding for capital construction, and relied on substantial state aid to pay operating expenses. In fact, the school heads did establish an organization which they called the Presidents' Association in 1926. Although the presidents met several times a year during the association's first decade, they usually operated independently in solving their problems. Upon the outset of the Great Depression in 1929, they fought as individuals for the survival of their respective schools by reducing sizes of their teaching faculties, slicing salaries, postponing building programs, and requesting minimum support from the state legislature for operations.<sup>2</sup>

In the fall of 1936 there was a feeling among voters in Colorado that the Depression was coming to an end.<sup>3</sup> They gave incumbent President Franklin D. Roosevelt more than a 100,000-vote plurality as a sign of such confidence. Democrat Teller Ammons reflected the national tide with an equally impressive victory in his race for governor.<sup>4</sup>

The college and university presidents, acting upon these favorable developments, saw the prospects of more state money

<sup>1</sup> The state constitution authorized the Board of Regents to govern the University of Colorado in Boulder. Colorado, Secretary of State, *The Constitution of the State of Colorado, Revised to May 1, 1953*, art. 9, sec. 12 (Denver: Peerless Printing Co., 1958), p. 41. By statute the State Board of Agriculture was directed to operate Colorado A & M in Fort Collins. Colorado, *Revised Statutes* (Rose, 1963), 8 vols. (Denver: Bradford-Robinson Printing Co., 1964), 6:594. The State Board of Agriculture was also authorized by law to govern Fort Lewis A & M in Hesperus. *Revised Statutes*, 6:605. Other legislation directed another body, the Board of Trustees of the State Colleges, to operate Colorado State College in Greeley, Adams State College in Alamosa, and Western State College in Gunnison. *Revised Statutes*, 6:566-67. Another board of trustees was established by law for the Colorado School of Mines in Golden. *Revised Statutes*, 6:579. Since 1937 the schools in Fort Collins and Greeley have become universities as a result of legislation. *Revised Statutes*, 6:590. Fort Lewis A & M is now named Fort Lewis College and is located in Durango. *Revised Statutes*, 6:604, 607. Two other four-year colleges, Southern Colorado State College in Pueblo and Metropolitan State College in Denver, were created by law in 1961 and 1963 respectively. *Revised Statutes*, 6:610, 613-14.

<sup>2</sup> Michael McGiffert, *The Higher Learning in Colorado: An Historical Study, 1860-1940* (Denver: Sage Books, 1964), pp. 197-200.

<sup>3</sup> There was, in fact, an upswing in the state economy in 1937. Farm income reached a six-year high of nearly \$161,650,000 as prices for agricultural products rose. Manufacturing interests increased sales by 65 percent over 1933 and experienced their most successful year since 1930. The mining industry reported its highest income since 1920, and tourists added an estimated \$50,000,000 to the state economy. Federal income taxes amounted to \$22,000,000, the highest total collected since 1921. James Frederick Wickens, "Colorado in the Great Depression: A Study of New Deal Policies at the State Level" (Ph.D. diss., University of Denver, 1964), pp. 358-59.

<sup>4</sup> Colorado, Secretary of State, *State of Colorado Abstract of Votes Cast at the Primary Election Held on the Eighth Day of September, A.D. 1936 and at the General Election Held on the Third Day of November, A.D. 1936* (Denver: Bradford-Robinson Printing Co., 1936), 2d tip-in.

being directed to public higher education. If they could give evidence of productive joint effort to serve the citizens of Colorado, they believed they could gain a share of the additional tax revenue. Accordingly, they decided to use their eleven-year-old association as their tool for improving the financial outlook for their institutions.

The presidents were well acquainted with each other as there had been only one turnover in the leadership at any of the schools since 1926. George Norlin, a nationally respected classical scholar, had headed the University of Colorado since 1919. Charles A. Lory, of the Colorado Agricultural and Mechanical College in Fort Collins and the branch institution at Fort Lewis Agricultural and Mechanical College, had assumed his duties in 1911 and had served longer than any college president in state history. The president of the Colorado School of Mines, Melville F. Coolbaugh, took office in 1925 and remained at the college in that capacity until his retirement in 1946. George W. Frasier, a former student of John Dewey at Columbia University, had begun his twenty-four-year presidency at Colorado State College in Greeley in 1924. One year later Ira Richardson, who also had studied under Dewey, had become the first president of Adams State College in Alamosa; his tenure spanned a quarter century. Only Charles C. Casey, head of Western State College from 1930 until his death in 1946, assumed his office after the association organized. But since Casey had been superintendent of the Longmont Public Schools for sixteen years before moving to Gunnison, he was well acquainted with problems of financing education in Colorado.

Colorado's first university building—"Old Main" at Boulder.



Since all but one of the presidents were charter members of the association, by 1937 they had had opportunity to become familiar with the needs of all the schools. During their lengthy terms in office, they had become experienced in approaching legislators and governors with plans requiring state outlay. Hoping to take advantage of those factors which had strengthened their organization, the presidents decided to make another attempt to obtain legislative approval of a capital construction program in 1937.

Other developments worked in favor of the school heads. The Public Works Administration in Washington, D.C., offered to pay 45 percent of the costs of all approved building projects, if the state paid the rest of the bill. The association gained an ally at the state level when the Colorado State Planning Commission, newly created in 1935, encouraged the presidents to take advantage of the federal program. The state planning agency was authorized to establish and administer policies for all capital construction projects at the state institutions.<sup>5</sup>

To secure the necessary legislative approval of the ten-year building levy, the Committee on Public Works of the State Planning Commission presented a detailed argument to Governor Teller Ammons and the general assembly for state support for capital construction at the colleges and university. The committee, asserting that none of the state's institutions of higher learning ever had received adequate funding, noted that in 1917 the legislature had initiated a building program with a three-tenths-mill levy over a ten-year period. But when this levy was discontinued in 1927, the schools had to depend on state appropriations, historically not a very productive or reliable source of revenue.<sup>6</sup> During the decade from 1927 to 1937, the general assembly provided money for only three emergency buildings: heating plants at Colorado State College and Western State College and a wing for the main building at Adams State College.

Asserting that rising enrollments warranted the construction of more classrooms, the committee offered a rationale for



*College building architecture shortly after 1900 reflected a classical spirit at Western State College, left, and Colorado State College, now the University of Northern Colorado.*

the ten-year mill levy. It maintained that in allowing for intelligent, long-term planning at each institution, the citizens of Colorado would be assured of more efficient use of state funds. The State Planning Commission, before approving projects, would require the institutions to present their requests accompanied with data on building materials and costs to assure sound construction at the lowest possible expense to the state. This program would eliminate the biennial requests for building funds which had induced the colleges to lobby for their individual interests at every session of the legislature, resulting in unhealthy competition and often in unwise appropriation of funds.<sup>7</sup>

The association realized the advantage of having another agency present its argument for the mill levy plan. The presidents avoided any possible involvement in disputes on the matter which might have tarnished the legislature's image of the colleges and the university, thus endangering passage of the program.

Reflecting a guarded optimism about the future, newly elected Governor Teller Ammons predicted in his 1937 inaugural address that the economy, now on the upgrade, could be stimulated further by wisely conceived legislation.<sup>8</sup> Impressed with the unprecedented growth in enrollments at the state colleges and the university, Ammons called for additional state funding

<sup>5</sup> The law creating the Colorado State Planning Commission was copied largely from a model bill written by advisers to President Franklin Roosevelt to facilitate the distribution of federal funds to the states. William M. Williams, interview, Denver, July 27, 1968.

<sup>6</sup> The decision not to continue the building program took place at the end of a decade in which enrollments increased almost two and one-half times. For the regular term of 1917-18, the combined enrollment of all the institutions of higher learning was 2,799. In 1927-28 the enrollment stood at 6,990 students, increasing to 8,216 students by 1935-36. Colorado, State Planning Commission, *Preliminary Report and Plan of the Colorado State Planning Commission: A Building Program for the State Institutions of Colorado for the Ten-Year Period 1937-1947* (N.p.: March 1937), pp. 14, 15.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>8</sup> *Denver Post*, January 12, 1937, p. 6.

for higher education. He noted the suggestion of the State Planning Commission that the state should adopt a ten-year building mill levy so that the "state may take advantage of federal funds for permanent improvements." Without explicitly endorsing the idea from the planning commission, the governor did urge "constructive action consistent with the resources of our state."<sup>9</sup> However, his support for the building program was not clear, for he did not explain what he meant by "constructive action." New in office, Ammons possibly did not want to commit himself to this policy on capital construction without further consideration of the long-term financial obligation which the state would incur at a time when the economy was just beginning to improve.

Although the remarks on capital construction implied support for building projects at all of the schools, Ammons did not promote this request by citing advantages of coordination in public higher education. The obvious stimulus was the promised aid of the Public Works Administration. Nothing in the message indicated a concern for overall financing of higher education or the development of a plan to delineate functions and purposes of the institutions.

*Home economics  
was given special  
emphasis at  
Colorado A & M.*



*Forestry, a program now of doubtful continuance at CSU.*

From the perspective of the state colleges and the university, no issue in the 1937 session was more important than the building mill levy program. The presidents were apprehensive about their chances for success because state officials seemed to have a single-minded interest in old-age-pension legislation. President Norlin of the University of Colorado, unhappy with the slight attention given to the mill levy, complained that the youth of Colorado had been neglected.<sup>10</sup>

During the five-month session of the general assembly, numerous reports in the *Denver Post* and the *Rocky Mountain News* confirmed Norlin's charge that the attention given the old-age-pension bill obscured all other state issues. But after a pension plan was enacted in the spring of 1937, lawmakers approved two measures that strongly influenced the development and coordination of state higher education for the next thirty years.

First the General Assembly passed the ten-year building mill levy program, marking the first impressive success for the Presidents' Association. The legislation set up two tax

<sup>9</sup> Colorado, Secretary of State, *Senate Journal of the Thirty-first Legislature [1937] of the State of Colorado at Denver, the State Capital* (Denver: Smith-Brooks Company, 1937), p. 76.

<sup>10</sup> William S. Davis, *Glory Colorado: A History of the University of Colorado, 1858-1963* (Boulder: Pruett Press, 1965), p. 384.

schedules, one to apply from 1937 to 1941 and the second from 1942 to 1946.<sup>11</sup>

INSTITUTION	LEVIES FOR 1937-41	LEVIES FOR 1942-46
Adams State College	.032	.048
Colorado A & M	.064	.096
Colorado School of Mines	.064	.096
Colorado State College	.064	.096
Fort Lewis	.016	.024
University of Colorado	.128	.192
Western State College	.032	.048



*The original Fort Lewis campus was far less impressive than recent construction at Durango.*

Thus, for the last five years they would receive an increased outlay of 50 percent. To facilitate long-range planning, provision was made for the sale of anticipation warrants whereby the presidents could borrow money for capital construction up to the amount the levy was expected to yield during the first

<sup>11</sup> Colorado, Secretary of State, *Laws Passed at the Thirty-first Session of the General Assembly of the State of Colorado* (Denver: Eames Brothers, 1937), pp. 241, 576, 1105, 1197, 1200, 1295, 1363. Cited hereafter as *Laws Passed at Thirty-first Session*.

five years.<sup>12</sup> The 1942 legislature then would have authority to review and make plans for the last five years of the program.

The mill levy program for capital construction, expected to produce about \$5,000,000, allowed the institutions of higher learning to take advantage of federal matching grants from the P.W.A. The colleges and the university liked this arrangement because they could plan for the decade, building classrooms before rather than after enrollments swelled.

But more important for coordination, the long-term guarantee of state money eliminated competition among the colleges and the university for building funds. It is ironical that the first successful joint effort of the Presidents' Association permitted each member institution to operate more independently of the others than had been possible previously.

The second important piece of legislation passed in 1937 concerned the junior colleges. In 1925 the general assembly had authorized the creation of junior colleges at Grand Junction and Trinidad and had appropriated \$2,500 to each school for buildings. Over the next twelve years, as the state gave no support to these schools, they operated on income from student tuition, local tax support, and small sums from the University of Colorado.<sup>13</sup>

Realizing that the support of the Presidents' Association was essential to passage of any further legislation in behalf of junior colleges, President William R. Ross of Trinidad Junior College and Dean Clifford Houston of Mesa Junior College in Grand Junction explained to the presidents in 1936 a new plan for organizing, operating, and financing two-year colleges. They suggested that junior college districts be created throughout Colorado, each governed by a locally elected board. To finance the schools, they recommended that the state grant to each junior college a sum of \$100 yearly for every student enrolled. However, the chief means of support would come from local mill levies on property.

Ross and Houston then turned to the influential young speaker of the house of representatives, Wayne N. Aspinall of Grand Junction, to attempt to secure the legislation they recommended.<sup>14</sup> Noting the meager allotment from the state in the past, Aspinall asked his colleagues in the legislature to consider the expanded role of the two junior colleges in Colorado. He emphasized that enrollment at the schools totaled 550 students

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 1295-96.

<sup>13</sup> William R. Ross, "The History of the Trinidad State Junior College from 1869 to 1939" (Ed.D. diss., Colorado State College, 1940), p. 39.

<sup>14</sup> *Denver Post*, January 6, 1937, p. 3.

in 1937, marking more than a 20 percent increase from the previous year alone.

Ross and Houston had learned from reading the minutes of the Presidents' Association that its members would endorse limited state funding for junior colleges if the local districts would provide most of the financial support.<sup>15</sup> They therefore presented Aspinall with a draft of a bill to grant junior college districts authority to impose a levy on property. If the funds derived from this source were insufficient to pay a salary of \$75 per month to every junior college teacher, the state would appropriate additional money to the districts.<sup>16</sup> In adopting this position, the authors of the bill dropped their initial request for \$100 per student. They had learned that the Presidents' Association would oppose junior college legislation unless this method of finance were adopted.

To gain approval for their plan in the general assembly, Ross and Houston tried to allay fears that the junior colleges would compete for students with the already established institutions of higher learning. They distributed a report including information which they had derived from a questionnaire answered by students who had attended the two-year schools in Trinidad and Grand Junction. Ross and Houston found that "between 80-95 per cent of the students enrolled over a period of years . . . could not have attended college elsewhere."<sup>17</sup> Because of this fact, they submitted that the junior colleges served as "feeders" of students to upper-division work at the colleges and the university and thereby complemented rather than competed with existing programs at the senior institutions.

The first section of the junior college bill was inserted at the request of the Presidents' Association to clarify the legal status of the two-year schools in Colorado. The proposed statute affirmed that junior colleges operating under provisions of the act "are hereby declared to be an integral part of the public school system."<sup>18</sup> The presidents wanted the junior colleges to be subject to the laws of the public school system rather than to the laws pertaining to the institutions of higher education. They believed that this distinction would insure them against having to compete with junior colleges for state funding.

There was only one link established between the two-year

<sup>15</sup> Ross, "History of Trinidad State Junior College," p. 47.

<sup>16</sup> This salary level was set because it was generally accepted in Colorado in 1937 that the average salary of a public school teacher should be \$75 per month. William R. Ross, interview, Greeley, November 20, 1968.

<sup>17</sup> Ross, "History of Trinidad State Junior College," p. 56.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

institutions and the four-year colleges and the university. Section 18 of the bill stated:

Credits received by students attending junior colleges shall be accepted in full by other state institutions of higher learning for provisional enrollment in such major courses for which the courses in the junior college qualify.<sup>19</sup>

While encouraging an arrangement for the transfer of credits, the bill contained no procedure for determining which courses should "qualify." It was assumed that the schools, rather than the legislature, would establish the criteria for the transfer of credits.

The bill placed before the general assembly did not divide the state into districts as Ross and Houston had proposed. But it did contain a provision whereby citizens of any county in the state could petition for a local election to vote on establishing a junior college district. To qualify as a district, a county had to meet two prerequisites: (1) a grade school population, determined by the preceding school census, of at least 3,500 students and (2) a minimum assessed valuation of property of \$20,000,000.<sup>20</sup>

After the alteration in the initial Ross-Houston plan was made, the presidents gave their approval to the junior college bill. Then under the guiding influence of Speaker Aspinall in the legislature, "its passage was little more than a matter of legislative routine."<sup>21</sup> In Grand Junction the *Daily Sentinel* applauded the revived interest in junior colleges and claimed that they had proved their worth in "extending educational advantages to hundreds of boys and girls who would otherwise have been deprived of any college work."<sup>22</sup> The *Trinidad Chronicle-News*, recalling failures to secure state support in the past, commended the legislators representing the localities of senior colleges for their support.<sup>23</sup>

Particularly significant for the coordination of higher education was the legal status accorded to the junior colleges. Because they were designated as part of the state public school system, they were administered by the State Department of Education, the agency directing the primary and secondary schools in Colorado. This distinction between the junior colleges and the institutions of higher learning created no problems for two more decades. But when the legislature in 1955 began to regard the two-year schools as fulfilling part of the state re-

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> *Daily Sentinel* (Grand Junction), January 14, 1937, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> *Chronicle-News* (Trinidad), January 22, 1937, p. 4.

sponsibility for post-high school education, the legal distinction proved to be a significant barrier to coordination of public higher education.

The junior college statute was not the result of a comprehensive study of the educational needs of Colorado. In 1937 the junior colleges enrolled less than 6 percent of the students in post-high school institutions supported by the state,<sup>24</sup> and the authors of the legislation did not offer any proof that junior colleges would serve a larger proportion of students in the future. Essentially, the law created the machinery for local initiative acceptable to the Presidents' Association; and the state was largely absolved, even in the area of finance, from the responsibility of organizing and operating the junior colleges.

Because the two-year colleges were locally controlled and financed, the governing apparatus for post-high school education in Colorado became more decentralized than ever before. Along with the four boards of control for the senior institutions was added a separate board for each junior college district. Proponents of coordination after 1937 learned that the Junior College Act, by providing for an increased number of governing agencies, compounded the problem of making and implementing uniform plans for public education beyond the high school.

The 1937 general assembly, more concerned with doctoring the state's economy than with coordination, nonetheless wrote legislation that enabled the replacement of obsolete buildings and accommodated rising enrollments, made long-range planning possible, and allowed the schools to take advantage of matching grants from the national government. Later developments reinforced the presidents' confidence that they could best secure high quality education through joint efforts. Also, the 1937 legislation on junior colleges committed the state to encouraging two years of post-high school education. Even though local citizens had to take the initiative in creating junior colleges, the law established a uniform procedure for organization throughout the state. It also gave opportunities for education beyond the high school in areas which then lacked institutions of higher learning, thus attracting students unable to pay the high costs of tuition and housing elsewhere. And, lastly, local mill levies on property became the chief means of financing junior colleges.

<sup>24</sup> Enrollment at Colorado's public four-year colleges and the University of Colorado totaled 8,849 students in 1937. Colorado State Planning Commission, *Yearbook of the State of Colorado, 1937-1938* (Denver: Bradford-Robinson, n.d.), p. 296. Enrollment at Trinidad Junior College and Mesa Junior College totaled 550 students. *Denver Post*, January 6, 1937, p. 3.

The return to prosperity in the state that had expedited the passage of legislation on higher education in 1937 did not outlast the year. By the end of the summer Governor Ammons and his commissioner of budget and efficiency, R. G. Montgomery, discovered that the state would be unable to allocate the full amount of the sum approved in the previous session. Montgomery warned President Norlin that a special \$200,000 appropriation to the University of Colorado possibly would be cut in half.<sup>25</sup> By January 1938 Norlin informed the Board of Regents that, in fact, the state's economy had worsened and more cuts could be expected.<sup>26</sup>

But the most serious concern of the Presidents' Association was that the building program which had been approved by the legislature in 1937 might be abolished. The "Roosevelt recession," signaling that the Depression was not over, led both Governor Ammons and lawmakers to seek ways of cutting state expenses. An assistant to the state budget and efficiency commissioner, G. S. Klemmedson, announced that certain state departments "must" decrease expenditures by at least 10 percent.<sup>27</sup> From Boulder President Norlin, correctly assuming that the university and colleges would be affected, fired a letter to Ammons asking why the press was given such statements before the concerned institutions:

Furthermore, I do not understand how Dr. Klemmedson is entitled to use "must" language in this connection. As I understand it, you have asked us all to cooperate voluntarily with you in reducing expenses wherever possible.<sup>28</sup>

Since the Colorado General Assembly met only in odd-numbered years, the presidents did not fear the immediate repeal of their mill levy program.<sup>29</sup> However, Governor Ammons had the authority to require cuts in spending at all state institutions to balance the budget. As Colorado prepared for the 1938 elections, the economy continued its decline. The *Denver Post* reported that the state would have to borrow money after November 15, 1938, to pay state expenses for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 1939.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Along with the outlay of \$200,000 to the University of Colorado, the legislature appropriated \$50,000 to Western State College and \$30,000 to Adams State College. Colorado. *Laws Passed at Thirty-first Session*, pp. 23, 214, 217.

<sup>26</sup> University of Colorado, Board of Regents, "Board of Regents Minutes," vol. 5, Special Regents' Minutes, January 10, 1938.

<sup>27</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 20, 1938, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Norlin to Ammons, January 20, 1938, Records of the Office of Governor Teller Ammons, 1937-39, Box 8, File 112, State Archives and Records Service, Denver.

<sup>29</sup> The General Assembly of Colorado did not begin meeting annually until 1951.

<sup>30</sup> *Denver Post*, October 21, 1938, p. 1.

Running for a second term, Governor Ammons promised a return to prosperity. Republican gubernatorial candidate Ralph Carr blamed Ammons for the financial crisis, asserting that "millions of dollars can be saved by application of efficiency and economy."<sup>31</sup> The voters recorded their discontent with the Ammons administration by giving Carr nearly 60 percent of the vote.<sup>32</sup>

Within a month of Carr's inauguration, the presidents knew what the governor meant to do to fulfill his campaign promises. Late in January 1939 Secretary-Treasurer Charles M. Armstrong impounded all mill levies for state institutions until, as he explained, essential costs of state government should be paid.<sup>33</sup> President Frasier of Colorado State College protested that his school would have to close its doors in two months if the levies were not restored. From Colorado A & M, Charles Lory exclaimed: "We won't take anything like this without a fight."<sup>34</sup>

In February the presidents discovered that the general assembly was considering going a step further than Armstrong. The House Finance and Means Committee began hearings on a proposal which, if adopted, would have diverted all mill levies into the state's general fund. Clearly the entire building mill levy program enacted by the 1937 legislature was in jeopardy. Speaking before this committee, President M. F. Coolbaugh of the Colorado School of Mines argued that there would be no possibility of planning ahead without the mill levy. Ira Richardson of Adams State College warned the committee not to pursue such a course if it wanted to maintain friendly relations with the presidents. With Treasurer Armstrong's action fresh in his mind, President Frasier was more bitter in the hearing than his colleagues, as he declared:

If Colorado doesn't want good colleges I'll pack my little bag and go elsewhere. I'm just a hired man. They are your colleges, not mine. If you want to tear them down, I'll go somewhere else and work, but you'll suffer from the loss of your schools.<sup>35</sup>

The presidents' efforts to keep the state's executive and legislative branches from rendering a death blow to their mill levy program was successful. The general assembly never did take action to divert money from the schools to the general fund,

<sup>31</sup> *Denver Post*, October 23, 1938, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Carr received 255,159 votes while Ammons received 199,562 votes. Colorado, Secretary of State, *Abstract of Votes Cast at the Primary Election Held on the Thirteenth Day of September, A.D. 1938 and at the General Election Held on the Eighth Day of November, A.D. 1938* (Denver: Bradford-Robinson Printing Co., 1938), p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> Davis, *Glory Colorado*, p. 385.

<sup>34</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, January 29, 1939, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, February 8, 1939, p. 2.

and in the spring of 1939 Treasurer Armstrong released all the mill levy funds. As events turned out, the onset of World War II in 1939 and the entry of the United States into the conflict two years later required that all capital construction come to a halt until the end of the war. There was one consolation for the presidents, however; the mill levy revenue was allowed to accumulate through 1945, and building programs resumed at that time.

Until 1965 the presidents continued voluntary coordination, attempting to prove that they were not wasting state money and that the institutions of higher learning warranted an ever-greater share of the state budget. The Presidents' Association was successful in many instances during this period. The presidents' most impressive achievements took place in the area of capital construction, where they received legislative approval for two additional ten-year building plans; also, annual appropriations from the state general fund became the largest source of income for the purpose of defraying operating expenses. However, as the school heads brought their case for more state aid to each successive session of the General Assembly, they found that lawmakers also wanted the presidents to cooperate in solving problems related to faculty salaries, building programs at existing institutions, creation of new colleges and universities, tuition charges for resident and out-of-state students, rising enrollments, improvement of curricula, and the elimination of unnecessary duplication of programs and courses.

*Intramural sports at old Fort Lewis were more entertaining than intermural economics.*



By 1960 the presidents, finding that they could not assume such responsibilities within their association, wrote a constitution asserting their desire to solve common problems<sup>36</sup> and, as a result, received funds from the legislature to hire a full-time staff which would give the presidents useful information upon which policies of coordination would be based. However, within five years it became apparent that the presidents could reach agreement on problems only when recommending more state funding for higher education. Unhappy with this development, the legislature cut off all state support for the Presidents' Association in 1964.<sup>37</sup> One year later a law was passed creating a Commission on Higher Education of seven members appointed by the governor. The new agency was directed to coordinate activities at the colleges and universities. It was clear that no one would be satisfied with the results which voluntary coordination had secured in 1937.

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<sup>36</sup> M. M. Chambers, *Voluntary Statewide Coordination in Public Higher Education* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), pp. 80-82.

<sup>37</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, February 28, 1964, p. 5.

## East Meets West: Woodrow Wilson in 1894

BY FRANK H. TUCKER

In the summer of 1894 a rising figure, a man of exceptional promise, came to teach at Colorado College. He was the future President Woodrow Wilson, then only thirty-seven years old, beginning to feel the call of political aspiration, and getting acquainted with the Great American West.

The decade before 1894 had been a time of rapid development for Wilson. In 1885 had occurred his marriage and his appointment to the Bryn Mawr College faculty. In 1886 he received the Ph.D. degree from the Johns Hopkins University. In 1888 he left Bryn Mawr for Wesleyan University in Connecticut but soon, in 1890, moved on to begin teaching at Princeton University. As the author also of such notable books as *Congressional Government* and *Mere Literature*, Wilson built an enviable academic reputation.

His early biographer Ray Stannard Baker interprets Wilson's travels of 1893-94 as an effort to break away from localized professional activities in the East, to get a wider acquaintance with his fellow Americans. Professor Wilson needed to know the country better, Baker suggests, "to keep his political perceptions clear and his judgments sound." Having great gifts as a public lecturer and after-dinner speaker, he would be a welcome visitor anywhere in the country.<sup>1</sup>

Wilson made his first journey west of Ohio, to speak at the Chicago World's Fair and to visit Madison, Wisconsin, in 1893, the very year in which Frederick Jackson Turner, of the University of Wisconsin, read his famous paper, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," to the American Historical Association. In fact, before the delivery of the paper, Turner read it aloud to his friend Wilson and

<sup>1</sup> Ray Stannard Baker, *Woodrow Wilson: Life and Letters*, vol. 2. Princeton, 1890-1910 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1927), p. 68.

discussed the contents with him.<sup>2</sup> Turning his attention again to eastern audiences, in 1894 Wilson visited Massachusetts, addressing a convention at Plymouth. The listeners, Baker tells us, were so captivated that Wilson "made a lasting impression upon many of those who heard him."<sup>3</sup>

An opportunity for Wilson to sojourn in the Rocky Mountain West also in 1894 came with an appointment to lecture in the summer session at Colorado College in Colorado Springs. The summer program, known in the early 1890s as "The Colorado Summer School of Science, Philosophy, and Languages," brought some quite distinguished figures to the West. For the summer of 1893 Katharine Lee Bates, then professor of English at Wellesley College, joined the faculty at Colorado College. (It was in July of that year, during a trip to the summit of Pikes Peak, that she was inspired to write "America the Beautiful.")<sup>4</sup>

The prospectus for the summer session of 1894 noted that Colorado Springs was frequented by travelers and by "those forced to leave the inclemencies of the East," some studious and some "diletante [sic] in letters." For all types, the school aspired to "give added zest to social life," and by "contact with high class intellects . . . [to] give the less ardent learner an easy way of touching on . . . obvious and important points, but no more."<sup>5</sup> From this we may infer that Professor Wilson's students or listeners were to be a broad and varied cross section of people. If he could address them successfully, he might credit himself with ability to win mass audiences to which a would-be politician must turn. How would he fare with this task?

In the "History" section of the college's prospectus one finds Wilson's lecture subjects outlined. His overall topic was to be the "Value of Constitutional Government," broken down into the following subtopics:

1. What is Constitutional Government?
2. Political Liberty: What it is and whence have we derived it.
3. Written Constitutions: Their Nature, Origin, and Significance.
4. Theory and Practice in the Organization of our Government.
5. The Organization and Powers of Congress.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 125.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>4</sup> For an account of those circumstances see John Fetler, *The Pikes Peak People* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1966), pp. 231-33.

<sup>5</sup> *Prospectus, Colorado Summer School of Science, Philosophy and Languages* (Colorado Springs: Telegraph Printing Co., 1894), pp. 1-3.

#### 6. The Functions of the Courts under a Constitutional Government.<sup>6</sup>

These subjects appear to be neither inherently engaging nor necessarily boring for a diversified audience. A very able speaker could make them interesting, and Wilson would succeed in doing so.

Concerning the actual journey by which Wilson reached Colorado, we know very little. The summer session began on July 5, but Wilson was not due until the last third of July. Colorado Springs press reports show that the arrival of some faculty members was delayed by the disruption of railroad service caused by the Pullman Strike and other related strikes and disorders. Delays were common for persons trying to pass through Chicago, and the strike was not called off until August 7. Whether Wilson was inconvenienced is unclear, but he is understood to have had a hostile attitude about the Pullman Strike of 1894.<sup>7</sup>

In Colorado Springs Dr. Wilson visited with his cousin, Harriet Woodrow Welles. The head of the Welles household, E. F. Welles, operated a "carriage repository" in 1890 at Weber and San Rafael streets and resided at essentially that same location, numbered 1109 North Weber Street in subsequent directories. He was in the harness business as of 1892 and was dealing in mining stocks in 1896.<sup>8</sup> The Welles home was only a block away from the Colorado College campus, very conveniently for the visiting professor.

The journey to Colorado had demonstrated the vastness of America to Wilson. He was astonished, after reaching Colorado, to hear that he was still not two-thirds of the way across the continent.<sup>9</sup> The state made a profound impression upon Wilson. Penning the following observations in letters to his wife back East, he wrote presumably from the upstairs front (western-facing) room of his cousin's home:

As I sit, I have only to lift my eyes to look up to Pike's Peak and these singular mountains. I cannot describe this country yet; it is too unlike anything I ever saw before. . . . I am both disappointed and strangely impressed. I am more than a mile higher than you are (6,000 ft.) and the peak in front of me is some 9,000 ft. higher still.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur S. Link, *Wilson*, vol. 1, *The Road to the White House* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> *Directory of Colorado Springs* (Colorado Springs: Gazette Printing Co., 1896), p. 275.

<sup>9</sup> Baker, *Woodrow Wilson*, 2:73.

<sup>10</sup> Woodrow Wilson to Ellen Axson Wilson, July 23, 1894, quoted in Baker, *Woodrow Wilson*, 2:70. (All letters cited below were written to the same person.)



The Colorado College campus in 1894 shows, left to right, Coburn Library under construction, Hagerman Hall, Cutler Hall (then Palmer Hall), and Montgomery Hall.

Further admiration of the region was occasioned by a drive with Cousin Harriet through the Garden of the Gods. Wilson wrote that it was "most appropriately named. A more beautiful and extraordinary place I never saw." A few days later, returning from a trip to Glenwood Springs, he wrote of "the most stupendous scenery I ever imagined" and said that he was "gradually filling up with new ideas and realization of our continent."<sup>11</sup>

The local newspaper publicized the forthcoming Wilson lectures, recommending this "most valuable course in Constitutional History," to be given by "the distinguished scholar from Princeton."<sup>12</sup> Dr. Wilson's lectures were changed to evening hours, instead of morning as originally scheduled, because, said the press, "almost the entire enrollment of the school wishes to hear him."<sup>13</sup>

However, the first lecture of the course in Colorado left the professor disappointed that only sixty persons had attended, though they "seemed to enjoy it as much as so small an audience could." He blamed the interruption of east-west travel by the strikes for the low attendance. Also, he wrote that the people of Colorado Springs "do not affect lectures of the serious kind." This judgment seems rather surprising for a town already known as "Little London" because of its manifold cultural interests. However, the next day Wilson was reassured, as his first lecture was "so much talked about and has received so much praise," and better attendance was expected at the second lecture.<sup>14</sup> This encouragement may have come from the press, which announced:

A very thorough canvass of the city is being made in behalf of the Summer School, and as a result quite a number of tickets for the remainder of the session have been sold. . . . Dr. Wilson's course alone is worth far more than is charged for the remaining exercises of the session. . . . The general ticket for the rest of the session costs \$6.<sup>15</sup>

A later newspaper comment referred to "the most interesting course of lectures which Dr. Woodrow Wilson is delivering." The same article promised a further attraction for the final week of the summer session: the noted author Hamlin Garland would join the faculty, to give a series of lectures on current literary topics.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, during a break in the Colorado Springs lecture schedule, Wilson made a side-trip to Denver. He wrote of receiving an invitation to lecture for the "Women's Club" in Denver, a group described as including about two hundred of the most prominent and gifted women of that city. He was reluctant to address them and would receive no fee but decided to go anyway because of his hunger "for reputation and influence," as he explained it to his wife.<sup>17</sup>

At any rate, the professor found Denver to be a beautiful city of elegant residences. It struck him as a singular mixture of "all the modern styles of dwelling architecture . . . that architects have conceived since 1879 . . . within the compass of a few city blocks." He likened it to a sort of "experiment ground" or "architectural exhibit." He described Mrs. Platt, the Women's Club president, with whom he stayed, as very intelligent and hospitable. His lecture on political liberty was given at Unity Church before a "small but select audience."<sup>18</sup>

The professor was delighted to find that those who attended his earlier lectures at Colorado College came back regularly, and that he drew new people with each successive meeting, building a large following. He was most pleased with the enthusiastic listener who exclaimed, "Why, that fellow is a whole team *and the dog under the wagon!*" He reminded Ellen Wilson that he was a hard judge of himself but that he must conclude that his lectures had been "the feature of the Summer School; . . . an unqualified success." The enthusiastic comments which he received led Wilson to say: "I have considerably advanced my reputation by coming here."<sup>19</sup>

The journeys through America in 1893-94 and the public acclaim received during them did much to encourage Woodrow

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:71.

<sup>12</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, July 22, 1894, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, July 19, 1894, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Baker, *Woodrow Wilson*, 2:70-71.

<sup>15</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, July 24, 1894, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, July 29, 1894, p. 1.

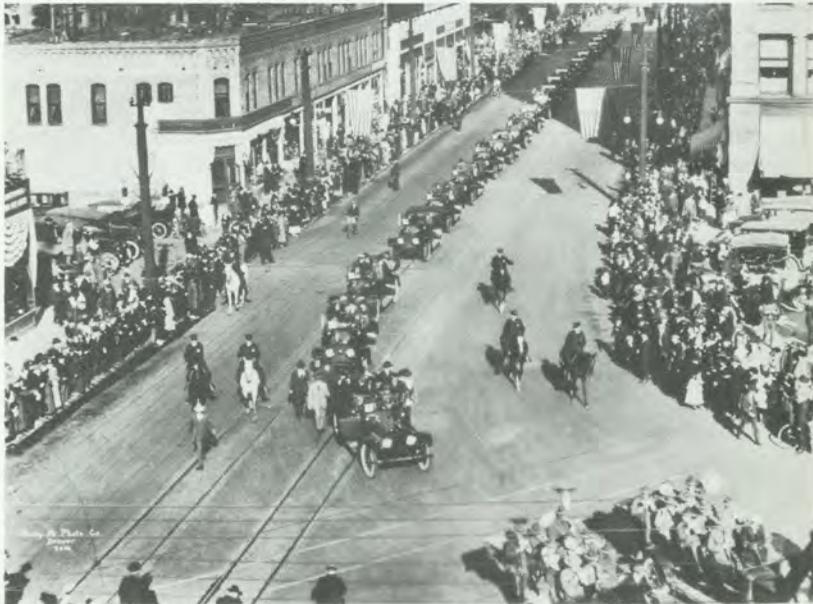
<sup>17</sup> Baker, *Woodrow Wilson*, 2:71-72.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:72.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:72-73.



*Mrs. Huston Thompson  
entertained Woodrow  
Wilson in Denver in 1911,  
and a parade  
marked his  
appearance in that city  
on September 25, 1919.*



Wilson to follow the path of political ambition. He moved very slowly, though, until after the turn of the century when he remarked, three weeks after passing his forty-fifth birthday in 1902, that the decade beginning at age forty-five is the time when one "ought to do the work into which he expects to put most of himself."<sup>20</sup>

The western sojourn of 1894 represents, then, a strong upswing in the morale and ambition of the future president. He returned to Colorado Springs to make two speeches during the presidential campaign of 1912.<sup>21</sup> His final visit to Colorado, when he spoke in Pueblo on September 25, 1919, marked the most dramatic downswing in the Wilsonian fortunes. Exhausted and dismayed by his trouble with foreign policy and a recalcitrant Senate, the President suffered a physical collapse en route to Wichita after the Pueblo speech. This time the train sped eastward with a man whose physical and political future was as dark as it had been bright in 1894.

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<sup>20</sup> Link, *Wilson*, p. 34.

<sup>21</sup> *Colorado Springs Gazette*, October 7, 1912, p. 1; October 8, 1912, p. 1.

## Sands of Sand Creek Historiography

BY MICHAEL A. SIEVERS

In the dawn of November 29, 1864, the fatigued Colorado Volunteers under Colonel John M. Chivington's command saw the objective of their all-night march—Black Kettle's and Left Hand's Cheyenne and Arapaho village on Sand Creek. Throughout the previous spring and summer the Plains tribes had raided the overland routes, interrupting the mails and causing a supply shortage in Colorado settlements. Outlying ranches and isolated settlers also had fallen prey to the marauding Indians. Demanding protection, Coloradoans repeatedly sought severe punishment for the Indians. With the approach of fall Black Kettle, counseling with Territorial Governor John Evans at Camp Weld and subsequently with Major Edward W. Wynkoop at Fort Lyon,



assumed that his peace overtures had been accepted and his band was safe on Sand Creek from punitive army attacks. But more militant Coloradoans had their way, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho on Sand Creek were attacked at dawn by Chivington.

In the aftermath of the event a controversy arose which has continued unabated down to the present day. Since 1864 participants in the affair, other citizens, concerned humanitarians, novelists, and historians have heatedly debated the "Sand Creek Massacre." Yet, despite the seemingly endless stream of publications on the subject, no one has attempted to analyze the literature from a historiographical point of view. Even Raymond G. Carey's centennial article on Sand Creek, although somewhat historiographical, is more concerned with a synthesis of the historical puzzle.<sup>1</sup> Thus, it would seem that a historiographical treatment of this controversial event is needed.

An inquiry of this type cannot and does not claim to be based on all of the myriad sources, for changing attitudes are reflected in such diverse histories as those of agriculture and land policy. Moreover, the sheer number of works on the subject demands judicious selectivity and requires an emphasis upon important works which are accessible to readers. Although writers disagree on many aspects of the incident, considerable consensus concerning the major events of the attack itself has been reached. Thus, this historiographical view will consider a number of highly speculative questions around which much of the controversy has centered. In addition to this objective is an attempt to place Sand Creek literature in a broader perspective and to suggest some areas of fruitful research opportunities.

Two key points of contention among historians have been whether prior to 1864 the Cheyenne and Arapaho were openly hostile and whether they had formed a confederation or conspiracy to expel white settlers. Many authors agree that there was, in fact, no general Indian uprising until the spring of 1864. Carl Ubbelohde, for example, expressed that opinion when he wrote in his text *A Colorado History* (1965) that "isolated incidents of harassment of traffic on the overland trails and occasional, limited stock-running and horse-stealing from ranchers" were the only conflicts with the Indians prior to the spring of 1864.<sup>2</sup>

In searches of an explanation of why the Cheyenne and Arapaho suddenly became hostile in 1864, the cause of hostility

<sup>1</sup> Raymond G. Carey, "The Puzzle of Sand Creek," *The Colorado Magazine* 41 (Fall 1964):279-98.

<sup>2</sup> Carl Ubbelohde, *A Colorado History* (Boulder: Pruett Press, 1965), p. 106.

has been variously explained. According to some, the answer lies in part in the attacks by troops during the spring of 1864 on three Cheyenne villages. Lonnie J. White, "From Bloodless to Bloody" (1967), has argued that if the Arkansas Indians were friendly previous to the engagements such was not the case afterwards. For their part Stan Hoig in *The Sand Creek Massacre* (1961) and Donald J. Berthrong in *The Southern Cheyennes* (1963) contend that the death of Cheyenne Chief Lean Bear during one of these encounters further contributed to the Indians' uneasiness. Reginald S. Craig, however, argued in *The Fighting Parson* (1959) that the engagements probably had little impact as the Indians "enjoyed savage torture and killing, and would inflict suffering and massacre . . . entirely without provocation." According to both George Bird Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (1915), and Stan Hoig, the Arapaho joined the revolt when Chief Left Hand was fired on as he approached Fort Larned to offer his aid in recovering horses, stolen from the post during a Kiowa raid. Both Ray Allen Billington in *Westward Expansion* (1960), a standard text, and Helen Hunt Jackson in her *A Century of Dishonor* (1881) contend that Indian resentment of the Treaty of Fort Wise and the government's failure to fulfill its terms were important factors in the uprising of 1864. As negotiated in 1861, the treaty envisaged relinquishment of most Cheyenne and Arapaho lands in Colorado Territory in exchange for annuities.<sup>3</sup>

The Civil War as a contributing factor has also been extensively debated. LeRoy R. Hafen, a distinguished and prolific historian of Colorado, has remained unswerving in his belief that "intelligent Indians saw in the Civil War their opportunity."<sup>4</sup> Others who have concurred with Hafen's interpretation were Eugene Parsons in *The Making of Colorado* (1911), Jerome C.

Smiley in his *History of Denver* (1901), and W. B. Vickers in his *History of the City of Denver* (1880). In a study of *The Civil War in the Western Territories* (1959), Ray C. Colton went so far as to say that the Indians of Colorado probably received "encouragement and material aid from the Confederate officials." Yet, Grinnell had earlier pointed out that Confederate attempts to form an alliance with the Plains Indians were signal failures, and William C. MacLeod noted in *The American Indian Frontier* (1928) that the uprising would have occurred in 1864 in spite of the Civil War.<sup>5</sup>

A few historians such as Percy Fritz in *Colorado* (1941), Frederic L. Paxson in his text *The Last American Frontier* (1910), and Robert L. Perkin in *The First Hundred Years* (1959) have observed that perhaps the Indians were reacting at last to the general western movement and dispossession of their homelands. But of all the historians who have argued that the tribes were peaceable until 1864, the most eclectic approach from one view has been that of William T. Hagan in *American Indians* (1962). "By June, 1864," he has concluded, "the combination of provocative actions by white intruders, the propaganda of Confederate agents, and the withdrawal of Federal troops, had stimulated among the Cheyennes and Arapahoes an unusual burst of activity."<sup>6</sup>

While the aforementioned authors generally maintained that the Plains Indians were peaceful until the spring of 1864, others have subscribed to the view that the Indians had formed a coalition prior to 1864 to drive out the settlers. An exponent from the latter group is Wilbur Fisk Stone, who edited the four-volume *History of Colorado* (1918-19). "By autumn of 1864," according to Stone, "the Indian uprising was in full force, . . . all of it according to the plan they had so carefully wrought during the preceding years." A similar position has also been taken in James H. Baker and LeRoy Hafen's *History of Colorado* (1927) as well as by Ray C. Colton, Katherine L. Craig in

<sup>3</sup> Lonnie J. White, "From Bloodless to Bloody: The Third Colorado Cavalry and the Sand Creek Massacre," *Journal of the West* 6 (October 1967): 540-41. Donald J. Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), pp. 186-87. Stan Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), p. 75. Reginald S. Craig, *The Fighting Parson: The Biography of Colonel John M. Chivington, Great West and Indian Series*, vol. 17 (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1959), pp. 150-51, 157. George Bird Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (1915; reprint ed., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 147. Hoig, *Sand Creek Massacre*, pp. 80-81. Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1960), p. 657. Helen Hunt Jackson, *A Century of Dishonor: A Sketch of the United States Government's Dealings with Some of the Indian Tribes* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1881), p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Colorado: A Story of the State and its People* (Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1943), p. 209. LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., *Colorado and its People: A Narrative and Topical History of the Centennial State*, 4 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1948) 1:309. LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, *Our State: Colorado, A History of Progress* (Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1966), p. 151. LeRoy R. Hafen, *Colorado: The Story of a Western Commonwealth* (Denver: Peerless Publishing Co., 1933), p. 166.

<sup>5</sup> Eugene Parsons, *The Making of Colorado: A Historical Sketch*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: A. Flanagan Company, 1911), p. 175. Jerome C. Smiley, ed., *History of Denver, with Outlines of the Earlier History of the Rocky Mountain Country* (Denver: Times-Sun Publishing Company, 1901), p. 402. W. B. Vickers, *History of the City of Denver, Arapahoe County, and Colorado* (Chicago: O. L. Baskin & Co., Historical Publishers, 1880), p. 42. Ray C. Colton, *The Civil War in the Western Territories: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), p. 150. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, pp. 127-28. William C. MacLeod, *The American Indian Frontier* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1928), p. 490.

<sup>6</sup> Robert L. Perkin, *The First Hundred Years: An Informal History of Denver and the Rocky Mountain News* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1959), p. 263. Percy Fritz, *Colorado: The Centennial State* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1941), p. 204. Frederic Logan Paxson, *The Last American Frontier* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1910), p. 244. William T. Hagan, *American Indians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 107.

Craig's *Brief History of Colorado* (1923), and J. P. Dunn in *Massacres of the Mountains* (1886). More recently Harry E. Kelsey has argued in his biography of John Evans, *Frontier Capitalist* (1969), that the urgings of the Minnesota Sioux, who had participated in the 1862 outbreak and had managed to flee, also agitated the Cheyenne and Arapaho. Edgar McMechen previously had pointed to the influence of the Sioux in his biography of Evans.<sup>7</sup>



"Sioux chief forbidding passage through his country," read the caption of an illustration in an 1884 history for juvenile readers.

The strongest and most pervasive arguments for the conspiracy theory have come generally from the pens of Coloradoans who lived when Sand Creek was still fresh in the minds of themselves and others. Particularly forceful in this regard are the Colorado histories which were written near the turn

of the century and which today are generally recognized as "standard" works. Thus, William N. Byers' *Encyclopedia of Biography of Colorado* (1901), Frank Hall's *History of the State of Colorado* (1889), Jerome Smiley's *Semi-Centennial History of the State of Colorado* (1913), and Wilbur Stone's *History of Colorado* (1918-19) have all accepted the conspiracy theory.<sup>8</sup>

A notable opponent of this interpretation is LeRoy Hafén. In his view, while the Indians did intend to take advantage of the Civil War, there is still "some question as to whether or not the Indians intended to launch a war against the whites." Stan Hoig also has maintained that when the Indian war came in 1864 "there was, in fact, neither confederation nor attack." Berthrong argued that there is no evidence of a confederated Cheyenne-Arapaho war against Colorado Territory until a series of incidents escalated into the Plains Indian war of 1864. Robert M. Utley is equally certain that until the spring of 1864 the Cheyenne and Arapaho had no intention of launching a general war upon the settlers. This he makes clear in his history of Indian-army relations during the 1848-65 period entitled *Frontiersmen in Blue* (1967).<sup>9</sup>

Since 1864 no marked progress has been made in ascertaining whether a confederation had been formed and whether the Cheyenne-Arapaho were hostile. During any period since the event historians have taken both views, but more recently most have attempted to refute the hostility-conspiracy theory. In part, this reexamination has resulted from historians' increased emphasis upon the lack of documentation of the theory in primary sources as an indicator that no confederation existed. It is significant that historians who have questioned the existence of confederation and hostility prior to 1864 were generally his-

<sup>7</sup> Wilbur Fisk Stone, ed., *History of Colorado*, 4 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1918) 1:90. James H. Baker and LeRoy R. Hafén, eds., *History of Colorado*, 5 vols. (Denver: Linderman Co., Inc., 1927) 1:376-77. Colton, *Civil War in the Territories*, p. 149. Katherine L. Craig, *Craig's Brief History of Colorado for Teachers and Students*, 2nd ed. (Denver: Welch-Haffner Printing Co., 1923), p. 68. J. P. Dunn, *Massacres of the Mountains: A History of the Indian Wars of the Far West, 1815-1875* (1886; reprint ed., New York: Archer House, Inc., 1958), pp. 350-51. Harry E. Kelsey, Jr., *Frontier Capitalist: The Life of John Evans* (Denver: State Historical Society of Colorado and Pruett Publishing Co., 1969), pp. 137-40. Edgar C. McMechen, *Life of Governor Evans: Second Territorial Governor of Colorado* (Denver: Wahlgreen Publishing Co., 1924), p. 116.

<sup>8</sup> William N. Byers, *Encyclopedia of Biography of Colorado* (Chicago: Century Publishing and Engraving Co., 1901), pp. 70-71. Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, 4 vols. (Chicago: Blakeley Printing Co., 1899) 1:327-28. Jerome C. Smiley, ed., *Semi-Centennial History of the State of Colorado*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1913) 1:411-19. Stone, *History of Colorado*, 1:90.

<sup>9</sup> LeRoy R. Hafén and Francis Marion Young, *Fort Laramie and the Pageant of the West, 1834-1840* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1938), p. 316. Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, p. 36. Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes*, pp. 157, 163, 175-76, 184-85, 194-95. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, p. 137. Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indian, 1848-1865* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967), pp. 281-87.

torians by training, inclination, and profession while those who supported the conspiracy theory were not always of this group. But much of the question remains conjecture and depends largely on what sources and interpretations a particular writer may wish to employ. In fact, the whole issue of what constitutes hostility was one which contemporary Indian agents, army officers, and the Congress were never able to resolve fully. From the view of Sand Creek historiography, however, the question of hostility-confederation is part and parcel of the issue of the peacefulness of the Indians camped on Sand Creek.

Distinctly of the opinion that the Indians at Sand Creek were friendly is Thomas D. Clark, who asserted in his text *Frontier America* (1969) that "evidence seems to be all but conclusive that Black Kettle and White Antelope's people were of peaceful intent." One measure of the Indians' amity, according to Paul I. Wellman, *Death on Horseback* (1947), was their willingness to permit white traders into the camp. Moreover, Dee Brown pointed out in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970) that the Indians were "so confident . . . of absolute safety, they kept no night watch except of the pony herd." Jerome Smiley is an interesting example of a historian who perhaps altered his opinion of the "Sand Creek Massacre" over the years. In editing his 1901 *History of Denver* he apparently accepted the argument that the Indians had stayed near Fort Lyon so they could demand protection in case of an emergency but at the same time permit war parties to go out. Twelve years later, however, when he assumed the position of curator at the State Historical Society of Colorado, Smiley's *Semi-Centennial History of Colorado* stated: "If the Sand Creek Indians really were not friendly, . . . they were singularly lacking in wariness." Why else, he queried, were few effective weapons and no sizable amount of ammunition found in the wreckage of the village?<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, there are those authors who are convinced that Black Kettle and his band were hostile. J. P. Dunn, for example, contended: "It is usually difficult to disprove an Indian's protestations of friendship, . . . but if ever it was done it was here. Black Kettle had admitted his hostility." In his *Life of Governor Evans* (1924), Edgar McMechen agreed with the claims of scouts that "the rendezvous on Sand Creek was but a shelter from which war parties were issuing secretly." Deploy-

ing his own definition of hostility, Frank Hall, a Coloradoan and participant at Sand Creek, asserted in his *History of Colorado* (1889) that only the Cheyenne were hostile since they, unlike the Arapaho, had not surrendered their arms at Fort Lyon.<sup>11</sup>

Between these opposite positions are many variations. Many writers have conceded that Black Kettle thought a peace agreement had been reached when his band went into camp on Sand Creek. Hafen, for instance, repeatedly has asserted that "they apparently considered themselves as having complied with the governor's directions and thus secure from attack." This view has been held also by Ray Allen Billington, Ray Colton, William MacLeod, Robert Perkin, Jerome Smiley, and Carl Ubbelohde.<sup>12</sup>

Another group of historians such as Fairfax Downey in *Indian Wars of the U.S. Army* (1962), although admitting that Black Kettle and Left Hand may have been hostile during the summer, maintain that by the fall of 1864 these chiefs sincerely sought peace. Attempting to account for Black Kettle's suddenly peaceful inclination, John Tebbel in *The Compact History of the Indian Wars* (1966) contended that the chief had seen the light "because he had become convinced that his tribesmen could expect nothing but disaster if they continued to fight."<sup>13</sup> Other writers have argued that the Indians apparently sought peace due to the approach of winter and their desire for safety from attack during that season. Several texts on western history such as Billington's *Westward Expansion* (1960); LeRoy Hafen, Eugene Hollon, and Carl C. Rister's *Western America* (1970); William MacLeod's *The American Indian Frontier* (1928); and Robert E. Riegel and Robert G. Athearn's *America Moves West* (1964) have subscribed in varying degrees to this view.<sup>14</sup> Approaching the issue from another angle, Robert Utley argued in *Frontiersmen in Blue* (1967) that Black Kettle had remained peaceable throughout the summer and that only with the approach of fall were some of the hotheads, who had spent

<sup>10</sup> Dunn, *Massacres of the Mountains*, p. 356. McMechen, *Life of Governor Evans*, p. 131. Hall, *History of Colorado*, 1:344.

<sup>11</sup> Hafen, *Colorado, The Story of a Western Commonwealth*, pp. 169-70. Hafen and Hafen, *Colorado: A Story of the State and its People*, p. 213. Hafen and Young, *Fort Laramie*, p. 326. Billington, *Westward Expansion*, pp. 657-58. Colton, *Civil War in the Territories*, p. 156. MacLeod, *The American Indian Frontier*, p. 496. Perkin, *The First Hundred Years*, p. 268. Smiley, *Semi-Centennial History of Colorado*, 1:420. Ubbelohde, *A Colorado History*, p. 107.

<sup>12</sup> Fairfax Downey, *Indian Wars of the U.S. Army, 1776-1865* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1963), p. 225. John Tebbel, *The Compact History of the Indian Wars* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1966), p. 215.

<sup>13</sup> Billington, *Westward Expansion*, p. 657. LeRoy R. Hafen, W. Eugene Hollon, and Carl Coke Rister, *Western America: The Exploration, Settlement, and Development of the Region beyond the Mississippi*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 356. MacLeod, *The American Indian Frontier*, p. 496. Robert E. Riegel and Robert G. Athearn, *America Moves West*, 4th ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1964), p. 480.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas D. Clark, *Frontier America*, 2nd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), p. 701. Paul I. Wellman, *Death on Horseback: Seventy Years of War for the American West* (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott Co., 1947), p. 72. Dee Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970), p. 87. Smiley, *History of Denver*, p. 409. Smiley, *Semi-Centennial History of Colorado*, 1:425.

the summer raiding, willing to accept the leadership of the peace faction. Still other authors have maintained that some warriors at Sand Creek were indeed hostile but that Black Kettle sincerely desired peace. Frank Spencer, for instance, asserted that probably "some of the younger warriors in these bands were guilty of atrocities," and as David Lavender pointed out the influence of Black Kettle or any chief over the warriors was "by no means complete."<sup>15</sup>

When one moves from the problem of the Indians' disposition to that of the attitude of government officials, the whole question of the Indians' peacefulness is further complicated by the outcome of Governor Evans' and Black Kettle's meeting at Camp Weld on September 28, 1864. Those who maintain that a peace settlement was reached have reasoned that Black Kettle's embrace of Evans and Wynkoop at the council's end and his willingness to pose for a picture certainly indicate that the chief himself believed that an agreement had been concluded. Yet, Nolie Mumey has argued in his article "John Milton Chivington: The Misunderstood Man" (1957) that "the Indians left the meeting angry and defiant." Admitting that no one can determine precisely what was decided, Utley observed that the chiefs left content, believing that peace had been achieved but were "unaware of the nuances that qualified the agreement in the minds of Evans and Chivington." A large percentage of the historians, however, have argued either that nothing was decided at the council or that Evans and Chivington did not hold out an offer of peace.<sup>16</sup>

From the time of the publication of Frank Hall's *History of Colorado* in 1889 until the 1960s, most authors have not analyzed Evans' alleged resistance to peace or have attributed that refusal to the fear that Washington would think that Evans had manufactured the Indian threat. In 1963 Donald J. Berthrong injected a new element into the study of the meeting in his tribal history of *The Southern Cheyennes*. Evans, he claimed, refused to make peace because of his desire to decisively resolve the question of the Indians' title to Colorado. Following the appearance of Berthrong's book, Raymond G. Carey contended in "The Puzzle of Sand Creek" (1964) that even if one

disregards the interwoven issues of land titles, politics, and public opinion, it made sense that Black Kettle's offer was refused since he could not possibly guarantee peace. Besides, continued Carey, even a short cease-fire would have expired after the Third Regiment had been mustered out leaving the territory unprotected. The argument was further joined by Harry Kelsey, *Frontier Capitalist* (1969), who repeated Carey's contentions and attempted to justify Evans' denial on the grounds that since the Cheyenne-Arapaho had been hostile the decision of peace was properly in the hands of the military. Moreover, "Evans' refusal to make peace at Camp Weld was a prudent decision based on good evidence that the Indians were not sincere in their request for peace."<sup>17</sup> At least for the present, the debate of the 1960s concerning the council has failed to clarify significantly an already exceedingly complex problem.

Finally, there is the question of whether Wynkoop and his successor Major Scott Anthony had promised peace and protection after Black Kettle's return to Fort Lyon. On this point Grinnell concluded: "It seems clear that Wynkoop did promise the chiefs protection." Anthony's motives in the supposed continuation of Wynkoop's agreement have been questioned by many historians. Grinnell, for example, argued that Anthony, while promising the Indians they could remain in peace, at least until his request for instructions was answered, really desired to keep the bands near the post in hopes of an opportunity to attack them. Janet Lecompte, a Colorado Springs free-lance writer who followed the pattern earlier set by Grinnell, wrote in her "Sand Creek" (1964) article that "the Indians understood, as did all the officers and civilians at Fort Lyon, that they were to be safe at their camp on Sand Creek." Questioning Anthony's moral standards, Ralph K. Andrist wrote in *The Long Death* (1969) that Anthony's "principles swung like an unlatched gate in the plains wind." But to most historians, Wynkoop's and Anthony's alleged promises of peace are of minor importance in understanding the reasons for Sand Creek.<sup>18</sup>

Once again, as with the issues of hostility and conspiracy, no conclusion as to whether or not the Indians camped at Sand Creek were hostile is discernible. Through the whole of Sand Creek literature, accounts have been written from both points of view, not to mention all the shaded variations between. The

<sup>15</sup> Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue*, pp. 290-91. Frank C. Spencer, *Colorado's Story* (Denver: World Press, Inc., 1930), p. 96. David Lavender, *Bent's Fort* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1954), p. 356.

<sup>16</sup> Nolie Mumey, "John Milton Chivington: The Misunderstood Man," 1956 *Brand Book of the Denver Westerners* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing Co., 1957), p. 139. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue*, p. 291. For other examples, see the writings of LeRoy Hafen; Byers, *Encyclopedia*, p. 73; Craig, *Craig's History*, p. 71; McMechen, *Life of Governor Evans*, pp. 133-34; Smiley, *Semi-Centennial History of Colorado*, p. 420; Tebbell, *Compact History*, p. 242.

<sup>17</sup> Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes*, p. 211. Carey, "The Puzzle of Sand Creek," p. 291. Kelsey, *Frontier Capitalist*, pp. 149-50, 153.

<sup>18</sup> Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, pp. 165-67. Janet Lecompte, "Sand Creek," *The Colorado Magazine* 41 (Fall 1964):327. Ralph K. Andrist, *The Long Death: The Last Days of the Plains Indian* (1964; reprint ed., New York: Collier Books, 1969), p. 88.

central difficulty confronting historians revolves around the reliability of two types of evidence. On the one hand are official accounts, some of which demonstrate the Indians' hostility. On the other hand is such evidence as the presence of women and children in the camp, the alleged absence of arms and ammunition in the wreckage of the village, the willingness to do business with white traders, and Black Kettle's desire to counsel. It is doubtful that a synthesis of these two types of contradictory evidence would resolve the question beyond the point that some warriors were hostile and some were not. Perhaps such a conclusion, in any case, would fail to account for the attack.

A third major question among historians is the morality of the "Sand Creek Massacre." Historians have generally agreed that men, women, and children were killed and bodies mutilated and scalped. Thus, the historiographical issue has gravitated toward the extent and justification for such acts rather than to the occurrence of "atrocities." Yet, many writers seem to have avoided the question of justification by using excerpts of testimony taken during the three Sand Creek investigations or by using at times vivid description; herein, from a historiographical view, lies the central difficulty. Does, for example, graphic phraseology represent an author's condemnation of Sand Creek or merely an attempt to enliven a manuscript? Both explanations are plausible, but at this point it is perhaps more important to note that most writers have chosen to avoid explicit statements concerning "atrocities."

A small group of historians have argued that Coloradoans' fear of Indian raids may explain the fervor with which the Colorado volunteers attacked the camp. Although claiming that "there could be no excuse for such brutality," Stanley Vestal emphasized in *Warpath and Council Fire* (1948) that "there had been too many atrocities committed by Indians." Another reason for the "brutalities," according to John Tebbel (*Compact History of the Indian Wars*, 1966), was that Colorado volunteers had known "wives, sweethearts or friends" who had suffered at the hands of the Indians and as a result "could not feel compassion for the slaughter of Indian women at Sand Creek." To both Stone and Vickers the engagement was, in the light of Indian depredations throughout the spring and summer, "a mere reprimand" and a "fight after the most approved Indian fashion."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Stanley Vestal, *Warpath and Council Fire: The Plains Indians' Struggle for Survival in War and in Diplomacy, 1851-1891* (New York: Random House, 1948), p. 74. Tebbel, *Compact History*, p. 216. Stone, *History of Colorado*, 1:90. Vickers, *History of the City of Denver*, p. 42.



An inflammatory interpretation of an attack on emigrants.

One of the most comprehensive explanations for the alleged "atrocities" was Reginald S. Craig's *The Fighting Parson* (1959). His roll call of causes included the personal grievances of the soldiers for Indian "atrocities" against Whites, the raising of the Third Regiment specifically to fight Indians, and the frontiersmen's conviction that the best way to fight Indians was on their own terms. Interestingly, Craig expressed these sentiments not in the text of his book but in a long footnote.<sup>20</sup>

It is perhaps significant that Frank Hall, a participant in the incident, strongly questioned in his *History of Colorado* (1889) the necessity for "atrocities." Casting aside the issue of "whether the battle of Sand Creek was right or wrong," he asserted that "these fiendish acts can never be palliated. . . . It will not do, as some have done, to fall back to the atrocities of the Indians upon our people as a justification." Displaying considerable insight, Lonnie J. White has recently cautioned

<sup>20</sup> Craig, *The Fighting Parson*, pp.200-01n.

historians that one could hardly expect anything but "atrocities" when federal authorities permitted the use of "local, relatively untrained, emotionally involved volunteers."<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, the majority of historians dealing with the problem of justification of Sand Creek "atrocities" have shied away from such clear-cut statements as those cited above and have been content to use rather lurid language.<sup>22</sup> Athearn and Ubbelohde in their *Centennial Colorado* (1959) history have restricted themselves to the opinion that "the slaughter that ensued could hardly be called a battle." More suggestive was Helen Hunt Jackson's indictment of Sand Creek as "one of the foulest massacres which the world has seen." Other historians such as Paul Wellman, William T. Hagan, and Irvin M. Peithmann in his *Broken Peace Pipes* (1964) have said little more than that women and children were killed indiscriminately and without pity. Whether or not these writers have condemned Sand Creek as a whole or the "atrocities" in particular is largely left up to their reader's interpretation.<sup>23</sup>

The relative unimportance of "atrocities" as a separate historiographical issue when compared with other questions perhaps accounts for the absence of a penetrating analysis into the "atrocities" question. In fact, the highly moral nature of the issue probably has induced some writers to stay clear of it. But more than likely most historians have elected to direct their attention toward an assessment of blame for the entire incident with the implicit understanding that criticism of the "Sand Creek Massacre" can be taken to mean condemnation of the "atrocities" committed there.

One aspect of the incident upon which most writers agree is that Sand Creek did result in a general uprising among the Plains Indians. Contemporary and present-day Coloradoans and nonresidents generally have agreed that the episode indeed did result in an outbreak. Percy Fritz in his history *Colorado* (1941) and Hubert Howe Bancroft's *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming* (1890), for example, noted that as a result

of Sand Creek the Indians' bitterness increased. Both Stone, *History of Colorado* (1918), and Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes* (1963), contend that the engagement created a unity among the tribes which otherwise might never have been achieved.<sup>24</sup> Finally, one group of writers, who perhaps became a little carried away, declared that "most of the great tribes between Canada and the Red River were on the warpath" as a result of Sand Creek.<sup>25</sup>

A few writers have been at loggerheads with what seems to be a consensus that Sand Creek did cause a general uprising. Setting out to see that Colonel Chivington be "exonerated and placed in his rightful niche," Nolie Mumey in "John Milton Chivington: The Misunderstood Man" (1957) claimed that Sand Creek "broke the power of one of the most hostile tribes of Indians." Also taking a firm position was J. P. Dunn, *Massacres of the Mountains* (1886), who argued that "Sand Creek brought on that war just about as much as the battle of Gettysburg brought on the late civil war. . . . The general war had been in progress since the early spring of 1864."<sup>26</sup>

A perceptive analysis of this theme is that of Lonnie White's article "From Bloodless to Bloody" (1967). "The basic cause of future conflict" in his opinion was not Sand Creek but "the rapid advance of white civilization." Also assuming a more cautious position was William H. Leckie's *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains* (1963), which asserted that "whatever the long-term consequences, the immediate result of Sand Creek was an Indian war of unprecedented scope and violence."<sup>27</sup>

Writers generally have ignored or at least not given careful consideration to the problem of cause and effect. Some have apparently assumed that the relationship of Sand Creek to the subsequent Indian uprising was logical, since the outbreak followed on the heels of the engagement. Although some have hinted at the importance which western migration played in

<sup>21</sup> Hall, *History of Colorado*, 1:350-51. Lavender, *Bent's Fort*, p. 360. White, "From Bloodless to Bloody," p. 577.

<sup>22</sup> For samples see Colton, *Civil War in the Territories*, pp. 157-58. Downey, *Indian Wars of the U.S. Army*, p. 225. Fritz, *Colorado*, p. 205. Parsons, *Making of Colorado*, pp. 190-91. U.S., Department of Interior, National Park Service, *Soldier and Brave: Indian and Military Affairs in the Trans-Mississippi West, Including a Guide to Historic Sites and Landmarks*, National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, vol. 12 (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Robert G. Athearn and Carl Ubbelohde, *Centennial Colorado: Its Exciting Story* (Denver: E. L. Chambers, Inc., 1959), p. 39. Jackson, *Century of Dishonor*, p. 87. Wellman, *Death on Horseback*, p. 73. Hagan, *American Indians*, p. 108. Irvin M. Peithmann, *Broken Peace Pipes: A Four-Hundred-Year History of the American Indian* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1964), p. 68.

<sup>24</sup> Fritz, *Colorado*, p. 208. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming, 1540-1888* (San Francisco: History Company Publishers, 1890), p. 468. Stone, *History of Colorado* 1:94-96. Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes*, p. 225.

<sup>25</sup> *Soldier and Brave*, p. 21. See also Andrist, *The Long Death*, pp. 91-92. Bvers, *Encyclopedia*, p. 77. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, p. 181. Hoig, *Sand Creek Massacre*, p. 174. Stephen Longstreet, *War Cries on Horseback: The Story of the Indian Wars of the Great Plains* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1970), p. 148. Tebbel, *Compact History of the Indian Wars*, p. 258. Ubbelohde, *A Colorado History*, pp. 109-10. Utey, *Frontiersmen in Blue*, pp. 300-01.

<sup>26</sup> Mumey, "John Milton Chivington," p. 145. Dunn, *Massacres of the Mountains*, p. 373.

<sup>27</sup> White, "From Bloodless to Bloody," p. 577. William H. Leckie, *The Military Conquest of the Southern Plains* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 24.

provoking the war, this aspect has been ignored largely as an explanation. But of the issues considered here that of a general uprising is the least controversial.

Of all the issues in Sand Creek historiography the riddle of who or what should be held accountable for this specific incident has been the subject of an almost unbelievable proliferation of theories. Second only to that of the Indians' peacefulness, the issue of responsibility has attracted the most attention. On this topic the role of key officials has been most often debated; for Chivington, Evans, General Samuel R. Curtis, and General Patrick Connor all have come in for a share of the blame. A few historians on a more abstract and broad scale have implied that the aforementioned men were merely conscious or unconscious agents of "manifest destiny." In that estimation the coming of the white settler with all his "cultural baggage" made a conflict on the pattern of Sand Creek inevitable, only the time and place remaining to be chosen. Finally, an emerging school has attributed Sand Creek to the failure of the Bureau of Indian Affairs to smooth the effects of western expansion upon the Indian.

Since Colonel John M. Chivington has been the subject both of much severe criticism and of praise, let us first consider his case. In the opinion of Caroline Bancroft in *Colorful Colorado* (1959), Edgar McMechen in *Life of Governor Evans* (1924), Frederic Paxson in *The Last American Frontier* (1910), and Paul Wellman in his *Death on Horseback* (1947), the colonel acted entirely on his own initiative in ordering the attack.<sup>28</sup> Others, however, have argued that Chivington's actions were certainly in accord with the general orders and expressed sentiments of his superior, General Samuel R. Curtis. Some of Colorado's better known historians, LeRoy and Ann Hafen, *Colorado* (1943), Jerome Smiley, *Semi-Centennial History of Colorado* (1913), and Wilbur Stone, *History of Colorado* (1918), all have concurred in this view. Even George Bird Grinnell, who is noted for his criticism of Sand Creek, stated that "reports seem to indicate that they [Chivington and Anthony] were encouraged by their superior officers." Yet, Eugene Parsons has suggested in *The Making of Colorado* (1908) that it made little difference whether Chivington had received direct orders because he assumed that the camp was hostile and that the "only effective way of dealing with redskins was with



John M. Chivington

powder and ball," a view of Chivington somewhat concurred in by Robert Perkin in *The First Hundred Years* (1959).<sup>29</sup>

According to two historians, Chivington's motives in attacking the Sand Creek camp were entirely honorable, and the resulting controversy was largely a frame by his enemies. Nolie Mumey, for example, argued that Chivington's only purpose was to open up communications to the Missouri River. But "the decisive battle of Sand Creek," in his opinion, "was converted into a 'massacre' by the enemies of Colonel Chivington." Like Mumey, Reginald S. Craig also entertained the opinion in his biography of *The Fighting Parson* (1959) that Chivington's enemies sought to make political capital out of the incident. He pointed particularly to Indian Agent Samuel G. Colley and trader John Smith, who allegedly lost a lucrative market as a result of Sand Creek. There also were other enemies, continued Craig, including the jealous officers and troopers of

<sup>28</sup> Caroline Bancroft, *Colorful Colorado: Its Dramatic History* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing Co., 1959), p. 67. McMechen, *Life of Governor Evans*, pp. 136-37. Paxson, *The Last American Frontier*, p. 259. Wellman, *Death on Horseback*, p. 71.

<sup>29</sup> Hafen and Hafen, *Colorado: A Story of the State and its People*, p. 213. Smiley, *History of Colorado*, p. 420. Stone, *History of Colorado*, p. 93. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, p. 167. Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming*, pp. 466-67. Downey, *Indian Wars of the U.S. Army*, p. 225. Hafen, *Colorado: The Story of a Western Commonwealth*, p. 170. Hall, *History of Colorado*, 1:352. Parsons, *The Making of Colorado*, p. 196. Perkin, *The First Hundred Years*, pp. 270-71.

Chivington's command plus the antistate faction who hoped to gain politically at his expense.<sup>30</sup>

The character of Chivington also has come in for a good deal of criticism. In his journalistic account of the Indian wars entitled *The Long Death* (1964), Andrist commented that Chivington "somehow never got even within shouting distance of the real meaning of the religion he was trying to preach." Steven Longstreet, *War Cries on Horseback* (1970), also asserted that "bigotry, intolerance, and the Old Testament rode out with Colonel J. M. Chivington." Moreover, novelists Dorothy Gardiner in *The Great Betrayal* (1949) and Irving Werstein in *Massacre at Sand Creek* (1963) have constructed much of their plots around Chivington's concept of Christianity.<sup>31</sup>

Given the decision to attack the Cheyenne and Arapaho at Sand Creek, historians have gone on at great length to analyze Chivington and ascertain the influences upon him which might have prompted the attack. Such factors have included General Patrick Connor's somewhat confused jurisdiction concerning the overland trails, Chivington's loss in the November 1864 elections, and what appeared to be his constant striving for power and glory.

The influence of Brigadier General Patrick Connor in command of the District of Utah has been the focus of increased interest during the last decade. Raymond G. Carey in his two articles "Another View of the Sand Creek Affair" (1960) and "The Puzzle of Sand Creek" (1964) has explored this aspect more fully than any other writer. According to him, the political machinations of Ben Holladay resulted in Connor's assignment to protect the overland routes from Fort Kearny west to Salt Lake, including Chivington's district. Even though Connor lacked authority to commandeer Chivington's troops, Carey noted that the former did press demands for a temporary loan of some of the colonel's men. For that reason plus the nature of Connor's duties, Chivington may have been apprehensive that Connor was "proposing to step out on . . . stage . . . when his [Chivington's] own expedition had begun moving." Thus, in the words of Carey, Connor's presence, "added to all of the other possible pressures on Chivington, may well have contributed the stimulus necessary to drive him to extreme and desperate measures." Apparently only Stan Hoig, George Bird

Grinnell, and Robert Utley in addition to Carey considered Connor's influence worth mentioning.<sup>32</sup> In fact, Connor's role even recently has been considered relatively minor.

Although in the November 1864 election Chivington was victorious in his bid to be a representative to Congress if Colorado's statehood were ratified, he was defeated in the same election by his same opponent for territorial delegate. This defeat has been pointed to as a cause of Sand Creek. Such was the stand taken by Irving Werstein in his novel *Massacre at Sand Creek* (1961). "Chivington wanted more than recognition," proclaimed Werstein. "He wanted political power as well as personal glory." Michael Straight in *A Very Small Remnant* (1963) also pointed to Chivington's political ambitions. Raymond G. Carey concluded, however, that "whether or not Chivington, after the disastrous election, staged the attack on Sand Creek in an effort to repair his damaged political 'image' cannot be clearly established."<sup>33</sup>

According to some historians, Chivington's personal and political ambitions played a key role in the "Sand Creek Massacre." For one thing, the rebuff of Chivington's hopes of being promoted to brigadier general instead of colonel after turning back the Confederate invasion at La Glorieta Pass, according to Janet Lecompte, "Sand Creek" (1964), left him "humiliated but not humbled" and perhaps fed his "thirst for glory." If Chivington's striving for power and recognition has been correctly related, the seemingly constant pressure of Coloradoans and the "Bloodless Third" for the letting of Indian blood—any Indian blood—also could be a factor. During the election campaign, for example, the antistate faction, according to Lonnie White, made much of Chivington's and Evans' responsibility "for the territory's poor state of defense." Or, as Janet Lecompte put it, "soldiers and citizens alike were itching for a fight."<sup>34</sup>

The most complete analysis of all the pressures upon Chivington has come from the pen of Carey, who has made Sand Creek, particularly Chivington, one of his specialties. Apparently unsatisfied with simplistic interpretations that Chivington alone was responsible for Sand Creek, probing deeper Carey has attempted to apply a multi-causal explanation to the "Sand

<sup>30</sup> Murney, "John Milton Chivington," p. 141. Craig, *The Fighting Parson*, p. 205.

<sup>31</sup> Andrist, *Long Death*, p. 79. Longstreet, *War Cries on Horseback*, p. 145. See, for example, Dorothy Gardiner, *The Great Betrayal* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1949), pp. 45, 54-64; Irving Werstein, *Massacre at Sand Creek* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), pp. 122-23, 140.

<sup>32</sup> Carey, "The Puzzle of Sand Creek," p. 293. Raymond G. Carey, "Another View of the Sand Creek Affair," *The Denver Westerners Monthly Roundup* 16 (February 1960):9-12. Hoig, *Sand Creek Massacre*, p. 134. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue*, p. 293. Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*, p. 167.

<sup>33</sup> Werstein, *Massacre at Sand Creek*, p. 29. Michael Straight, *A Very Small Remnant* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), pp. 139-40. Carey, "The Puzzle of Sand Creek," p. 287.

<sup>34</sup> Lecompte, "Sand Creek," p. 316. White, "From Bloodless to Bloody," p. 545.

Creek Massacre." In one article, "Another View of the Sand Creek Affair" (1960), he went to great lengths to analyze Chivington; but, as he confessed, "we have no sound knowledge of Chivington's psychological composition" other than that his was a "prominent, aggressive, dominant personality . . . not accustomed to failure." Summarizing the variety of influences upon Chivington, Carey concluded in "The Puzzle of Sand Creek" (1964) that Chivington intended to "use his small force as effectively as he could to reduce Indian strength . . . to overawe other bands." Moreover, Chivington probably realized he could by a successful engagement "top the record of Patrick Edward Connor, . . . meet the public demand for forceful action, . . . move toward a solution of the problem of land titles and occupancy, and fulfill the desire of the 'hundred daysters' for action. He could regain the hero's stature . . . and restore his ballot-box appeal."<sup>35</sup>

Second in importance to Carey's writings is Reginald S. Craig's less sophisticated attempt to tell the "full story of Colonel Chivington" including Sand Creek in two chapters of *The Fighting Parson* (1959) entitled "History Perverted" and "Battle at Sand Creek." As might be expected from a glance at the chapter headings, Craig maintained that Chivington's intention had been only to "parley on terms of surrender," but in cutting off the pony herds the troops were fired upon and a general engagement ensued. In addition, with communications cut off and no signs of a large-scale surrender of hostiles, Chivington had decided to "bring the raiders under control" and "teach them that they could no longer play the game of summer warfare followed by a winter of peace without punishment." Obviously, Craig did not believe that Black Kettle was friendly, or, if he was, an attack on friendlies could not help but cow the Plains Indians into submission.<sup>36</sup>

Next to Colonel Chivington, Territorial Governor John Evans was roundly reproved by contemporaries for his alleged role in the Sand Creek affair. In fact, some historians have cited the incident as the prime reason for his removal from the governor's post. During the year immediately following Sand Creek, nonresidents and the territory's antistate faction connected Evans with the incident. This was also particularly true of some eastern newspapers and the commissions which inves-

<sup>35</sup> Carey, "Another View of the Sand Creek Affair," pp. 5-6. Carey, "The Puzzle of Sand Creek," pp. 294-96. For other attempts to synthesize various pressures on Chivington, see Lecompte, "Sand Creek," pp. 315-18; White, "From Bloodless to Bloody," p. 557.

<sup>36</sup> Craig, *The Fighting Parson*, pp. 178, 190.

tigated Sand Creek. At the same time Coloradoans generally denied Evans' involvement as evidenced by the continued growth in his influence and prestige after 1864. Or else it mattered little if he was, in fact, partially responsible. From a historiographical view, Evans' role in Sand Creek has never raised as much fervor among historians as has Chivington's. Indeed, until the appearance of the land title question during the 1960s, Evans' involvement in the incident has not been much of an issue.

One recent critic picking up where contemporaries of Evans left off was Ralph Andrist, *The Long Death* (1964). In his opinion, the governor "had advocated war with the Plains Indians from the time he took office." Frederic Paxson in *The Last American Frontier* (1910), Irvin Peithmann in *Broken Peace Pipes* (1964), and the National Park Service's publication *Soldier and Brave* (1963) have also questioned Evans' innocence in the affair.<sup>37</sup>

In 1963, however, consideration of Evans' role in Sand Creek took another turn with the appearance of the land title question in Donald J. Berthrong's *The Southern Cheyennes*. The mainstay of Evans' Indian policy, according to Berthrong, was the consolidation of all Colorado Cheyenne and Arapaho on the Arkansas River Reservation (Sand Creek) in order to destroy the Indians' occupancy title to Colorado Territory. Thus, Indian consent to the Fort Wise Treaty or one along those lines was essential. But when the tribesmen refused to counsel with him in 1863, Evans, according to Berthrong, "moved systematically to prove that the Plains Indians were hostile. His motivation was simply to force a situation which would enable him to clear Indians from all settled regions of Colorado." Clearly, the impression left by Berthrong was that Evans was not above violent means to resolve the land question if the traditional treaty method failed. Dee Brown's attempt to detail the "conquest of the American West as the victims experience it" in *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (1970) also pointed to the importance of the land question. "Cheyennes and Arapahos abandon[ed] all claims to the Territory of Colorado. And that of course," claimed Brown, "was the real meaning of the massacre at Sand Creek."<sup>38</sup>

Rallying to the defense of Evans has been former State His-

<sup>37</sup> Andrist, *Long Death*, p. 76. Paxson, *Last American Frontier*, p. 259. Peithmann, *Broken Peace Pipes*, p. 66. *Soldier and Brave*, p. 21.

<sup>38</sup> Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes*, pp. 160-61, 165-69. Brown, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, pp. xvi, 102.



John Evans

torian of Colorado Harry Kelsey. Attempting to clear the governor's name, he concluded in his biography of the *Frontier Capitalist* (1969) that despite Evans' lack of knowledge he was sincerely concerned with the Indian's welfare and worked diligently to settle the grievances of the Plains tribes. But "his efforts were frustrated by his political opponents in the territory and by indecisive and inept officials in Washington." In reply to Berthrong's implication that Evans deliberately sought to provoke an Indian war to clear title to Colorado, Kelsey argued that he as well as William E. Unrau, "A Prelude to War" (1964), made the land question "seem more important than it actually was," especially since there is no record that Evans was "overly concerned about extinguishing the Indian titles." In essence, Kelsey laid much of the blame for Sand Creek and Evans' failure to resolve peacefully the land question at the doorstep of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Evans' plan, for example, of separating the friendly and hostile Indians was "thoroughly emasculated." Moreover, Commissioner William P. Dole's economy drive did little to aid Evans in his efforts to "civilize" the Cheyenne and Arapaho. "By a tragic coincidence," lamented Kelsey, "the very tribes that Evans had identified as potential sources of trouble were the ones to suf-

fer most from Dole's austere budget policy, which made them even more disgruntled." Although conceding that Evans' major objective was to obtain agreement to the Fort Wise Treaty and consolidate the two tribes on Sand Creek, Robert Utley did not contend in *Frontiersmen in Blue* (1967) that Evans sought to provoke a war after the failure of his 1863 peace efforts.<sup>39</sup>

In recent years the Bureau of Indian Affairs and its handling of affairs in Colorado has been more fully explored as one explanation for the "Sand Creek Massacre." In some accounts, one does encounter references to Dole's alleged cousin, Upper Arkansas Agent Samuel G. Colley, and his supposed misappropriation of annuities; but few historians have attempted to establish a relationship between the bureau's conduct and Sand Creek.

Most of Harry Kelsey's views regarding the bureau have already been detailed; but one additional aspect, which appeared in *The Colorado Magazine* prior to his biography of Evans, needs to be examined. In "Background to Sand Creek" (1968), Kelsey, attempting to redirect the approach of historians, asserted that "the question of whether Colonel Chivington massacred peaceful Indians at Sand Creek is simply the wrong one to ask." Although not stating explicitly what is the right question, he implied that "the gross mishandling of Indian relations at the federal and local levels" is a topic worthy of a more complete investigation. As earlier discussed, Dole's "mishandling" consisted of his "austere budget policy" and nepotism. While Colley not only failed to keep his superior, Governor Evans, advised of events among the Cheyenne and Arapaho, it has been said that he also was in league with his son Dexter in the misapplication of annuities.<sup>40</sup> Although somewhat novel in the historiography of Sand Creek, Kelsey's position is not an unusual explanation for Indian wars, particularly among the nineteenth-century Indian reformers. But one of the merits of Kelsey's treatment, from another perspective, is his suggestion that the role of the Indian commissioner in the making and affecting of policy is in need of a more careful and complete examination.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Kelsey, *Frontier Capitalist*, pp. 131-32, 136-39, 142-43, 151-52, 297n. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue*, p. 284. William E. Unrau, "A Prelude to War," *The Colorado Magazine* 41 (Fall 1964):299-313.

<sup>40</sup> Harry Kelsey, "Background to Sand Creek," *The Colorado Magazine* 45 (Fall 1968):282, 300. Kelsey, *Frontier Capitalist*, pp. 150-51.

<sup>41</sup> Kelsey appears to be following his own suggestion as evidenced by his article "William P. Dole and Mr. Lincoln's Indian Policy," *Journal of the West* 10 (July 1971):484-92, and his recent Huntington Library research grant for the study of Indian policy during Lincoln's administration.



Albert G. Boone

In 1964 a pioneer article appeared in *The Colorado Magazine* regarding the bureau's conduct of affairs during the years immediately preceding Sand Creek. William E. Unrau in his article entitled "A Prelude to War," like Kelsey at a later date, pointed out that Colorado Indian affairs were "approaching anarchy" because of Albert G. Boone's and Colley's dual appointments as agents to the Upper Arkansas Agency. The crux of Unrau's argument, however, was the failure of the bureau to resolve peacefully the land question. Of crucial importance in that failure was article 11 of the Fort Wise Treaty which permitted Colorado town dwellers to purchase their plots at the minimum price. But the amendment was stricken by the Senate leaving the citizens of Denver in particular with no clear title. As a result the issue was forced back to the agents and especially to Colorado Superintendent of Indian Affairs John Evans who "in his eagerness to dispose of the land problem . . . devised plans for the immediate removal of all Cheyenne and Arapaho to the Sand Creek Reservation." As a result of the ensuing controversy, Dole in the end extended "blanket authority" to Evans to "adopt such a kind of policy as may be found expedient," which resulted in an attempt to negotiate a new treaty in 1863. But the effort failed, causing Evans to warn

Washington that in the opinion of qualified observers "unless a new treaty is accomplished, there will be an Indian war." Commenting on this "ominous prediction," Unrau noted that seventeen months later Chivington and his volunteers "slaughtered some one hundred and fifty Cheyenne men, women, and children at their lonely camp on Sand Creek."<sup>42</sup> Unrau's implication, then, is that the failure of the bureau to resolve the land issue set in motion a chain of events culminating in the "Sand Creek Massacre." But he is exceedingly careful not to assign a cause-and-effect relationship to the land title problem and Sand Creek. Moreover, unlike Berthrong, Unrau does not suggest that Evans' plans included a deliberate effort either to provoke or to capitalize upon an Indian war to settle the title question.

Of all the explanations and justifications for Sand Creek, the western movement in the broadest sense has been largely neglected. Certainly Sand Creek was, as Carey noted, "a minute and unimportant battle, as battles go." But it seems strange in view of the persistence of the controversy and the ensuing Indian war that historians have tended to see the causes of the incident from the perspective of personalities. This is especially true since the Indian hostility and the attitudes of white actors in the drama were shaped in some measure by the spirit of manifest destiny and progress. Western expansion as one reason for the Plains Indians' hostility was articulated by Ray Allen Billington in *Westward Expansion* (1960). He asserted that a few chiefs, in fact, "realized they were caught in a vise between the mining frontier . . . and the agricultural frontier. . . . They must resist or be exterminated." Edgar McMechen in his *Life of Governor Evans* (1924) and Robert Perkin in *The First Hundred Years* (1959) expressed opinions similar to Billington's. But none of them applied their views specifically to the "Sand Creek Massacre."<sup>43</sup>

In conclusion, there are a number of other reasons cited by historians for the affair which have not been fully developed. For instance, the Third Regiment of Colorado Volunteers were, according to historians, recruited for the expressed purpose of killing Indians. And in the mind of Craig (*The Fighting Parson*, 1959), the long weeks of training and no action had caused the troopers "to clamor to be led against the hostile Indians or disbanded." Another cause which is yet to be fully explored in

<sup>42</sup> William E. Unrau, "A Prelude to War," pp. 302-07, 309-13.  
<sup>43</sup> Carey, "The Puzzle of Sand Creek," p. 281. Billington, *Westward Expansion*, pp. 656-57. McMechen, *Life of Governor Evans*, pp. 138-39. Perkin, *The First Hundred Years*, p. 259.

conjunction with the "Hundred Daysters" is the impact of contemporary public opinion upon Chivington and Evans. Janet Lecompte, for example, hinted in her "Sand Creek" (1964) article that a jittery populace had forced the hand of authorities. Although not specifically citing Sand Creek, Perkin asserted that both the *Rocky Mountain News* and the residents of Denver City "share a large measure of responsibility for precipitating the actual Indian wars which followed in the late sixties and seventies."<sup>44</sup>

Of course, there are additional historiographical issues and variations of those themes besides the discussions presented here. But most historians have been concerned primarily with the conspiracy-hostility theory, the peacefulness of the Indians at Sand Creek, rational explanations for "atrocities," Sand Creek as the cause of a general uprising, and who and what should be held responsible for the whole affair.

The multitude of reasons cited by historians has failed in actuality to clarify the "who and the what" of the "Sand Creek Massacre" and points out that one of the biggest obstacles confronting the student is the absence of an able synthesis. Although Raymond G. Carey has moved in this direction, even a full-length narrative account, for example, was not available until the appearance of Stan Hoig's *The Sand Creek Massacre* in 1961. Perhaps the primary reason for the lack of a comprehensive study has resulted from historians' overt specialization in one aspect or view of the incident. Certainly, specialized discussions do aid in understanding a larger historical puzzle, but when historians have taken the specialized field of western history, subdivided it into Indian wars, and reduced that subdivision further to a particular battle, the result has been an overemphasis upon sometimes downright trivial facets of the incident. The question of whether Black Kettle erected an American flag when the troopers bore down on the village is one such example. Perhaps part of the reason for overspecialization can be attributed to the controversial nature of the event. Some writers well may have felt duty-bound either to defend or to condemn the incident, while others finding the debate too hot have avoided forming any significant conclusions. Also, the very complexity of the event and, at the same time, its minuteness have contributed to detailed accounts. The types of primary sources available, which fail to document some of the crucial questions, have added further to the emphasis upon some-

<sup>44</sup> Craig, *The Fighting Parson*, p. 177. Lecompte, "Sand Creek," pp. 320-22. Perkin, *The First Hundred Years*, pp. 258-59.

times relatively minor and tangential viewpoints where documentation can be had. Moreover, the attention of some upon "who" rather than "why" and the confusion of the two has contributed to specialized accounts. The end result has been a proliferation of theories to a point that almost defies human comprehension.

*The site of the "Sand Creek Massacre."*



Until recently historians have concentrated on personalities, Indian hostility, and justifications in a sometimes superficial way. Of course, a firm foundation for synthesis and reexamination has been laid by these accounts, but within the last decade attempts to view these issues with greater sophistication and depth have been clearly in evidence.

The advent of a second generation of interpretation can be attributed to a number of factors. First, the Sand Creek affair has attracted recently the attention of university-trained, pro-

fessional historians. Second, this new group of writers is more removed by geography as well as time, which probably will result in a more disinterested treatment. Third, historical interpretations of the American Indian, Indian policy, and military involvement have undergone some drastic revisions in recent times and cannot help but influence accounts of the affair. Fourth, since a historian is in some measure a product of his times, the growing concern with minority history and modern-day "power" movements surely has had some impact. Fifth, the increased emphasis upon multi-causation of historical events should result in a more comprehensive analysis. Finally, modern historians have available to them primary sources never before readily accessible, especially the records of the bureau and those of the war department. More complete utilization of these sources might enable the verification as well as modification of some of the more commonly accepted views of Sand Creek.

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# Fort Stevens, Fort Reynolds, and the Defense of Southern Colorado

BY MORRIS F. TAYLOR

In the summer of 1866 the Military District of New Mexico was extended temporarily into Colorado north to the divide separating the Platte and Arkansas drainages, with an eastern boundary running through Pueblo and the crossing of the Purgatoire River east of Trinidad. Orders were issued in Santa Fe for establishment of a military post "at some point within the region of the upper Huerfano [River] . . . to cover the settlements along the Fontaine-qui-bouilt [sic], Upper Arkansas, Huerfano, and Purgatoire Rivers, from incursions of the Ute Indians, as also to protect those settlements from raids that may be made by the Indians of the Plains."<sup>1</sup> The post was to be called Fort Stevens, subject to approval by the Secretary of War.<sup>2</sup>

The vast drainage of the Arkansas River in Colorado had only one military post, that of Fort Lyon on the Arkansas adjacent to Bent's New Fort and about sixty-five miles from the Kansas line. Gettysburg veteran Captain and Brevet Major David S. Gordon, with Company D, Second Cavalry, the only troopers under his command at the post,<sup>3</sup> had all he could do to protect wagon trains and the U.S. mail on the Mountain

<sup>1</sup> U.S., Army, Department of the Missouri, Orders establishing and discontinuing Fort Stevens, Colorado Territory, August 15, 1866-September 26, 1866, General Field Orders no. 5, July 26, 1866, Record Group 98, National Archives. Typescript in State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* It was named for Major General Isaac I. Stevens, who was killed in the battle of Chantilly, Virginia, September 1, 1862. Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 3, 1903* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 1:923. The secretary of war was Edwin M. Stanton, in the cabinet of President Andrew Johnson. For the published documents of Fort Stevens see "Fort Stevens," *The Colorado Magazine* 43 (Fall 1966):303-07.

<sup>3</sup> Post Return of Fort Lyon, July 1866, Microcopy 617, Roll 659, National Archives Microfilm Publications; Heitman, *Historical Register*, 1:465.



Early view of the Arkansas River emerging from the mountains.

Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. There was hardly any settlement that far down the Arkansas; but along the river above its confluence with the Huerfano, it was a different matter. Soon after the creation of Colorado Territory in 1861, a stagecoach passenger on the Kansas City, Canon City, and Santa Fe Express line observed as a traveler from Pueblo down the Arkansas:

Along its borders are improved farms, their crops looking very promising, and the amount of land under cultivation indicating a strong faith in the richness and fertility of the soil of the extensive bottom lands of Colorado. We were surprised at the goodly character of the improvements, the number of houses, the many men employed in field labor, and amount of stock grazing in the verdant valleys. . . . Fine ranches were passed, the land by its lay indicative of richness, and we met several emigrant teams—adventurers with their household treasurers [sic] seeking a new home in the gold regions of the Rocky Mountains.<sup>4</sup>

The last reference, of course, was to burgeoning mining camps like California Gulch in the mountains west and northwest of the little Arkansas River town of Canon City. By 1866 those varied conditions of settlement had increased significantly.

The military post closest to many of those developments was Fort Garland in the San Luis Valley, but it had the disadvantage of being on the other side of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. To reach Fort Union, New Mexico, one had to cross the less formidable Raton Pass. That post was the main quartermaster and ordnance depot for the Military District of New

Mexico;<sup>5</sup> so when that subdivision was expanded into Colorado to include the new Fort Stevens, Fort Union was the supply base for the project rather than Fort Lyon or one of the Kansas posts. It was from the big New Mexico post that Captain and Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Andrew J. Alexander moved into Colorado with Company G, Third Cavalry, and Companies F and H, Fifty-seventh Volunteer Infantry (Colored), to establish Fort Stevens on a site near the base of the Spanish Peaks. The location was chosen with the assistance of Colonel Ceran St. Vrain, formerly of the First New Mexico Volunteer Infantry and Brigadier General Christopher (Kit) Carson, recently commandant at Fort Union and then at Fort Garland.<sup>6</sup>

Fort Stevens had the shortest existence of any post in Colorado. When Lieutenant General William Tecumseh Sherman, commander of the Military Division of the Missouri,<sup>7</sup> inspected it in mid-September he concluded that there was no justification for a post at that location and ordered its construction to be stopped.<sup>8</sup> That judgment was rendered despite some alarming Indian depredations that had happened in the vicinity a short time before. A Ute-Jicarilla Apache buffalo hunt south of the Arkansas River that summer had not been successful, and hunger stalked those people. In mid-June a band of Tabeguache Ute under Chief Shavano raided ranches on the Huerfano River, and in early September Plains Indians hit along the same stream in the neighborhood of Joseph B. Doyle's ranch. Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Alexander at Fort Stevens sought advice from Brigadier General Carson, at Fort Garland, who simply told him to take a mounted detachment to the mouth of the Huerfano River for a firsthand reconnaissance.<sup>9</sup>

In accordance with General Sherman's decision, Fort Stevens was discontinued under orders dated September 26,

<sup>5</sup> Robert M. Utley, *Fort Union National Monument, New Mexico* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1962), pp. 50-52; Chris Emmett, *Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 310.

<sup>6</sup> *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 5, 1866, p. 4; James Harrison Wilson, *The Life and Services of Brevet Brigadier General Andrew Jonathan Alexander, United States Army* (New York: n.p., 1887), p. 96; Heitman, *Historical Register*, 1:286, 2:151; Emmett, *Fort Union*, p. 412; Duane Vandebusch, "Life at a Frontier Post: Fort Garland," *The Colorado Magazine* 43 (Spring 1966):140-41.

<sup>7</sup> The division included the Departments of the Arkansas, the Platte, Dakota, and the Missouri; the Military District of New Mexico was part of the last named department. U.S., Army, Military Division of the Missouri, *Outline Descriptions of the Posts in the Military Division of the Missouri, Commanded by Lieutenant General P. H. Sheridan* (1876; reprint ed., Bellevue, Nebr.: Old Army Press, 1969), pp. 3, 116. Cited hereafter as *Outline Descriptions*.

<sup>8</sup> Wilson, *Life of Andrew Jonathan Alexander*, p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> Morris F. Taylor, "Ka-ni-ache," pt. 1, *The Colorado Magazine* 43 (Fall 1966):296-97.

<sup>4</sup> *Canon City Times*, July 15, 1861, p. 4.

1866.<sup>10</sup> Before the orders could be transmitted from Santa Fe, however, Alexander and his troopers had to hasten southward in early October to Trinidad, which appeared to be threatened by a band of nearly destitute Mohuache Ute, led by Chief Ka-ni-ache. On October 3 there was an indecisive skirmish. After the fight the Mohuaches moved northward towards the Huerfano River, ironically and unsuccessfully trying to steal some horses at Fort Stevens on the way to the San Luis Valley.<sup>11</sup>

Abandonment of Fort Stevens left southern Colorado, east of the mountains and south of the Platte-Arkansas Divide, as unprotected as before<sup>12</sup> with only Fort Lyon in the eastern part. The number of farmers, ranchers, miners, and townsmen along the upper Arkansas continued to grow; and there was no apparent decline in the potential danger from Indians of mountain and plain.

Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, commander of the Department of the Missouri with headquarters at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, planned a campaign in the spring of 1867 against the Plains tribes, particularly the Cheyenne. Part of his strategy was the deployment of troops in Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico. Very vulnerable to Indian attacks were stage stations of Butterfield's Overland Dispatch along the Smoky Hill route from Fort Wallace, Kansas, to Denver, Colorado Territory. As part of the protection planned for the stage line, a company of the Fifth Infantry was ordered to Reed's Springs between the Big Bend of Sandy Creek (Arkansas drainage) and East Bijou Creek (Platte drainage), where the infantrymen would be joined by a company of the Seventh Cavalry and a military post built.<sup>13</sup>

Because of the quick development of hostilities and the need for troops in active field operations, some of the posts along the Smoky Hill route were not established. The troops ordered to build the one at Reed's Springs, however, were transferred to Pueblo, Colorado Territory, where they were to

remain until the inspector general, Brevet Brigadier General Randolph B. Marcy, would select a site on the upper Arkansas River for a large military installation.<sup>14</sup>

On June 8 sixty-one men of Company F, Fifth Infantry, commanded by Captain Simon Snyder, arrived at Pueblo from Reed's Springs.<sup>15</sup> Apparently the cavalry unit—Company L, Seventh Cavalry—assigned to Reed's Springs did not get there before the orders establishing the post were rescinded. Instead, Company L was ordered from its base on the South Platte River at Fort Morgan, Colorado Territory, directly to Pueblo with forty days of subsistence stores, enough grain forage to last until June 1, and necessary entrenching and other tools. Both companies were to take "prompt measures to cover themselves, the stores and the horses, for the ensuing winter."<sup>16</sup> There was a delay for unknown reasons, and it was not until June 28 that First Lieutenant Lee P. Gillette, Second Lieutenant Henry H. Abell, Brevet Major and Assistant Surgeon Justus M. Brown, and forty-one men of Company L, Seventh Cavalry,<sup>17</sup> rode into Pueblo. Captain Snyder then gave more formal organization to his command, appointing Gillette as acting assistant quartermaster and assistant commissary of subsistence.<sup>18</sup>

Inspector General Marcy picked a site for the new fort about nineteen miles down the Arkansas from Pueblo, marking the place with three stakes on the crest of a bluff about 1,100 feet from the south bank of the river. The location was about two and a half miles above the mouth of the Huerfano and about the same distance from Charley Autobees' Plaza on the latter stream. Marcy informed Major General George Washington Getty, commanding the Military District of New Mexico, that if there were any question about the exact spot, it could be settled by Captain William Craig and Charley "Audeby" (Autobees), who were with him when the choice

<sup>14</sup> Orders and Circulars, General Orders no. 77, May 14, 1867.

<sup>15</sup> U.S., Army, Department of the Missouri, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Post Returns of Fort Reynolds, Colorado Territory (1867-72), Post Return of Pueblo, Colorado, June 1867, Microcopy 617, Roll 1005, National Archives. Hereafter cited as Post Returns of Pueblo or of Fort Reynolds. The captain's direct orders to proceed to Pueblo were issued in Santa Fe, New Mexico; he was told (by letter from headquarters of the Department of the Missouri) to send his returns and reports to Santa Fe. Post Return of Pueblo, June 1867; Post Return of Fort Reynolds, July 1867.

<sup>16</sup> Orders and Circulars, General Orders no. 77.

<sup>17</sup> The commanding officer of Company L was Captain and Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Michael V. Sheridan, brother of Major General Philip H. Sheridan. One source (C.W.A. Interviews, Pam. 359/33, p. 105, State Historical Society of Colorado Library) says that Captain Sheridan was stationed at Fort Reynolds. The Post Returns of Fort Reynolds, July 1867-August 1868, the period when Company L was there, show that Captain Sheridan was on detached service, acting as aide-de-camp to his brother.

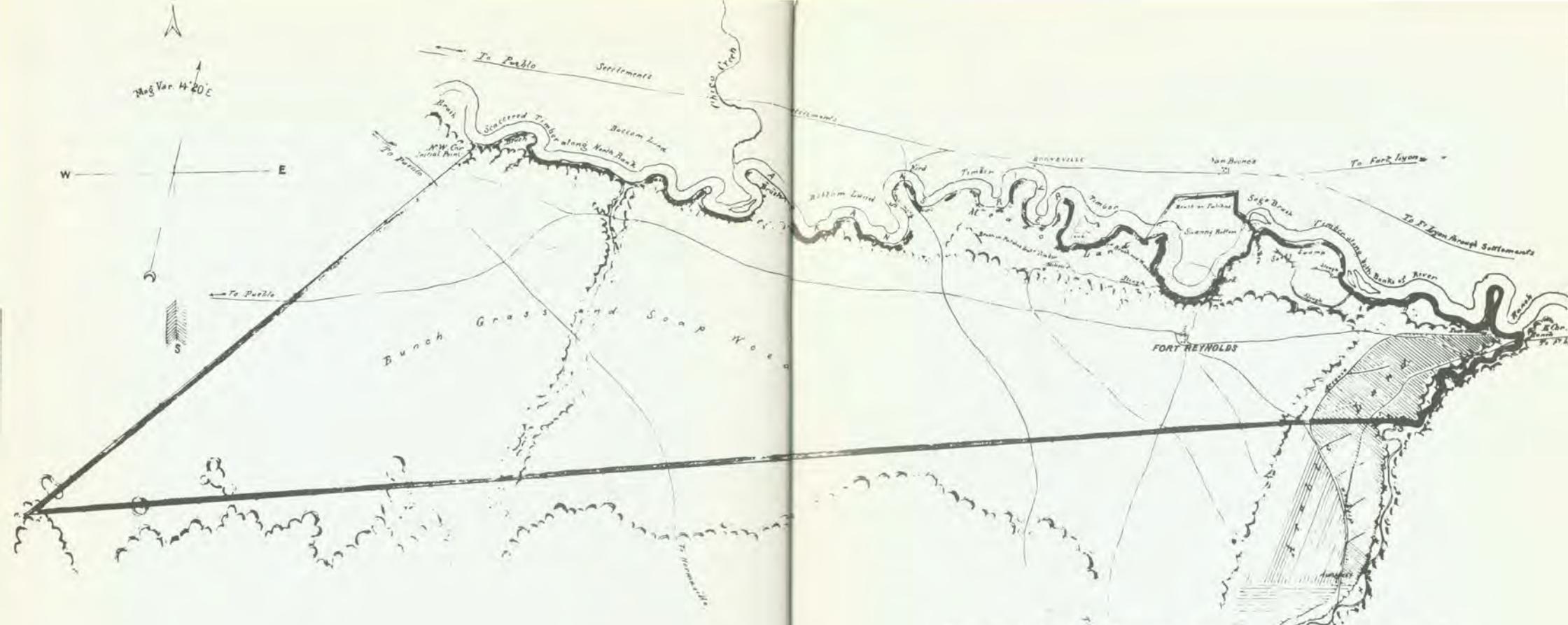
<sup>18</sup> Post Return of Pueblo, June 1867; Post Return of Fort Reynolds, July 1867; *Colorado Tribune* (Denver), August 9, 1867, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Orders establishing and discontinuing Fort Stevens, September 26, 1866; *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, October 10, 1866, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Wilson, *Life of Andrew Jonathan Alexander*, pp. 97-98; Taylor, "Ka-ni-ache," 43:296-300.

<sup>12</sup> *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, October 8, 1866, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> U.S., Army, Department of the Missouri, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, Orders and Circulars, General Orders no. 55, March 28, 1867, Record Group 94, National Archives; Frank A. Root and William E. Connelley, *The Overland Stage to California* (Topeka, Kans.: Privately printed, 1901), p. 398; Herbert M. Hart, *Old Forts of the Southwest* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1965), p. 185. Reed's Springs was known also as Reed's Station and was at Kuhn's Crossing on the west bank of Reed's or Spring Creek, a tributary on the East Bijou. Margaret Long, "The Smoky Hill Trail in Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine* 11 (March 1934):106.



Survey of the Fort Reynolds Military Reservation, May 1868.

was made.<sup>19</sup> Marcy's letter to Getty indicates that the northward projection of the Military District of New Mexico still existed.

The presence of Captain William Craig brought a new aspect to the demand for a fort in that locale. A West Point graduate, Craig resigned his commission in 1864 to devote his time to being agent for Ceran St. Vrain in the development of the alleged 4,096,000-acre Vigil and St. Vrain (Las Animas) Grant,<sup>20</sup> the outboundaries of which embraced the site of the new fort. The dollar-a-year lease of a twenty-three-square-mile military reservation, negotiated by General Marcy and signed June 12, 1867,<sup>21</sup> was hardly productive of financial

profit for the grant claimants; and Craig saw military protection as an inducement to large numbers of settlers, whom he wanted to attract onto the rest of the property.<sup>22</sup>

The new post was planned as one of the largest forts on the plains; there was an unconfirmed report that Brevet Major General Andrew Jackson Smith, commander of the Military District of the Upper Arkansas, would transfer his headquarters from Fort Harker, Kansas.<sup>23</sup> From Fort Leavenworth came orders on July 1 directing Captain Snyder to move his command to the new site down the river. The name, Fort Reynolds, was said to have been picked by General Hancock

<sup>19</sup> Janet Lecompte, "Charles Autobeas," pt. 9, *The Colorado Magazine* 35 (October 1958):306; Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios and Posts Commonly Called Forts West of the Mississippi River to 1898* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 41.

<sup>20</sup> See Morris F. Taylor, "Capt. William Craig and the Vigil and St. Vrain Grant, 1855-1870," *The Colorado Magazine* 45 (Fall 1968):301-21.

<sup>21</sup> Huerfano County, Original Record 2, p. 182, in Huerfano County Courthouse, Walsenburg. The reservation was proclaimed by President Andrew Johnson on June 22, 1868. *Outline Descriptions*, p. 140. That source errs in stating that the land was claimed under Spanish and Mexican grants. There was only

one grant, and that was made in 1843 by the Republic of Mexico. On June 12, 1867, Marcy obtained from Craig a lease for a reservation adjacent to the new Fort Lyon. That post was on public domain on the north bank of the Arkansas, a couple of miles below the mouth of the Purgatoire; but the easternmost part of the Vigil and St. Vrain Grant was close enough to be within the desired limits of a reservation. In August Craig was authorized to have a trading post at Fort Lyon. Post Return of Fort Lyon, August 1867.

<sup>22</sup> In January 1868 Craig obtained permission to cut hay on the reservation. Post Return of Fort Reynolds, January 1868.

<sup>23</sup> *Colorado Tribune*, May 21, 1867, p. 1; *ibid.*, August 14, 1867, p. 2.

to honor John Fulton Reynolds—West Pointer, Mexican War veteran, major general of volunteers, colonel of the Fifth Infantry, and a corps commander in the Army of the Potomac, who was killed at Gettysburg on July 1, 1863.<sup>24</sup> Transfer of the garrison was made on July 2,<sup>25</sup> and that night Captain Snyder's little force camped on the location that was later described:

[The site is] upland, or prairie, about 60 feet above the level of the Arkansas River. For some distance the prairie slopes abruptly to the very margin of the river, while east and west of this point it is separated from the river by an intervening bottom, sometimes to nearly the extent of a mile. . . . Toward the southwest the prairie extends about a mile, and then descends abruptly to the lowland bordering the Huerfano River. In a westerly and northwesterly direction the extent of the prairie is indefinite, but it is intersected by occasional ravines which terminate in the valley of the river. The general direction of the Arkansas River, in the vicinity of the post, is usually considered to be from west to east. The river is very tortuous in its course, making many very sudden turns, and following any given direction for but a short distance. By this means the valley is more thoroughly watered than it would be otherwise. The river has evidently changed its course very frequently, many of its old beds being visible.<sup>26</sup>

The original garrison was quartered in tents during much of the summer of 1867, but plans moved ahead with contracts for lumber, shingles, and lath being awarded by Lieutenant Gillette, acting assistant quartermaster. Reports continued to circulate that "Reynolds" would be one of the largest forts on the plains; more particularly, it was said in the press, without amplification, that the Seventh Cavalry would be "rendezvoused" there for a thorough reorganization.<sup>27</sup>

But Fort Reynolds achieved neither the size nor the importance predicted. The District of the Upper Arkansas was only a temporary subdivision,<sup>28</sup> and Fort Reynolds might have been considered a new district headquarters. Because Brevet Major General Smith, commanding the Upper Arkansas, was also colonel of the Seventh Cavalry, about that time his attention was diverted by a serious flare-up of Plains Indian hostility

in western Kansas and Nebraska and eastern Colorado, where much of the Seventh Cavalry was involved in a wide-ranging campaign, which featured a task force under the command of Brevet Major General George A. Custer, lieutenant colonel of the Seventh.<sup>29</sup> General Smith spent a difficult summer, fraught with miserably wet weather, a cholera epidemic, and the prima donna qualities of Custer, which resulted in the latter's court martial, followed by suspension from rank and command and forfeiture of pay for one year. Indian attacks on settlers, wagon trains, mail stages, the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad, and even military units and posts were so frequent and threatening that General Hancock himself, with an escort of seventy men, rode across the beleaguered plains of Kansas and Colorado in June as far as Denver, afterward returning to Fort Harker.<sup>30</sup> Under those circumstances the Seventh Cavalry doubtless was ready for some reorganization. If the regiment would assemble, or at least have headquarters, at Fort Reynolds, the slow and insufficient construction of the new post made accommodation impossible.

Work on Fort Reynolds was contemporary with that on the new Fort Lyon, almost sixty miles downstream and twenty miles upstream from the original Fort Wise—Fort Lyon site.<sup>31</sup> At both posts there were plans to have essential buildings ready by winter; but a proportionately greater effort was expended on Fort Lyon, which was a key point on the Santa Fe Trail and closer to the sources of Plains Indian hostilities. Simple statistical evidence will prove the point.

Captain and Brevet Brigadier General William H. Penrose had one company of cavalry and three of infantry at the outset at Fort Lyon, while Captain Snyder had only one cavalry and one infantry company in July.<sup>32</sup> Construction started at Fort Lyon with a civilian employment roster of two foremen, fifty-six stone masons, nine carpenters, and one hundred and fifteen laborers; but no civilian workers were listed at Fort Reynolds until the September post return showed eleven masons, six carpenters, twenty-nine laborers, and three well-diggers. By November Fort Reynolds still had only fourteen masons, twelve carpenters, twenty-nine laborers, and three

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, August 9, 1871, p. 1; Post Return of Fort Reynolds, July 1867; Heitman, *Historical Register*, 1:825; Frazer, *Forts of the West*, p. 41; George McC. Miller, "Fort Reynolds, Colorado Territory," in U.S. War Department, Surgeon General's Office, *A Report on Barracks and Hospitals, with Descriptions of Military Posts*, Circular no. 4 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870), p. 316.

<sup>25</sup> Post Return of Fort Reynolds, July 1867.

<sup>26</sup> Miller, "Fort Reynolds," p. 316.

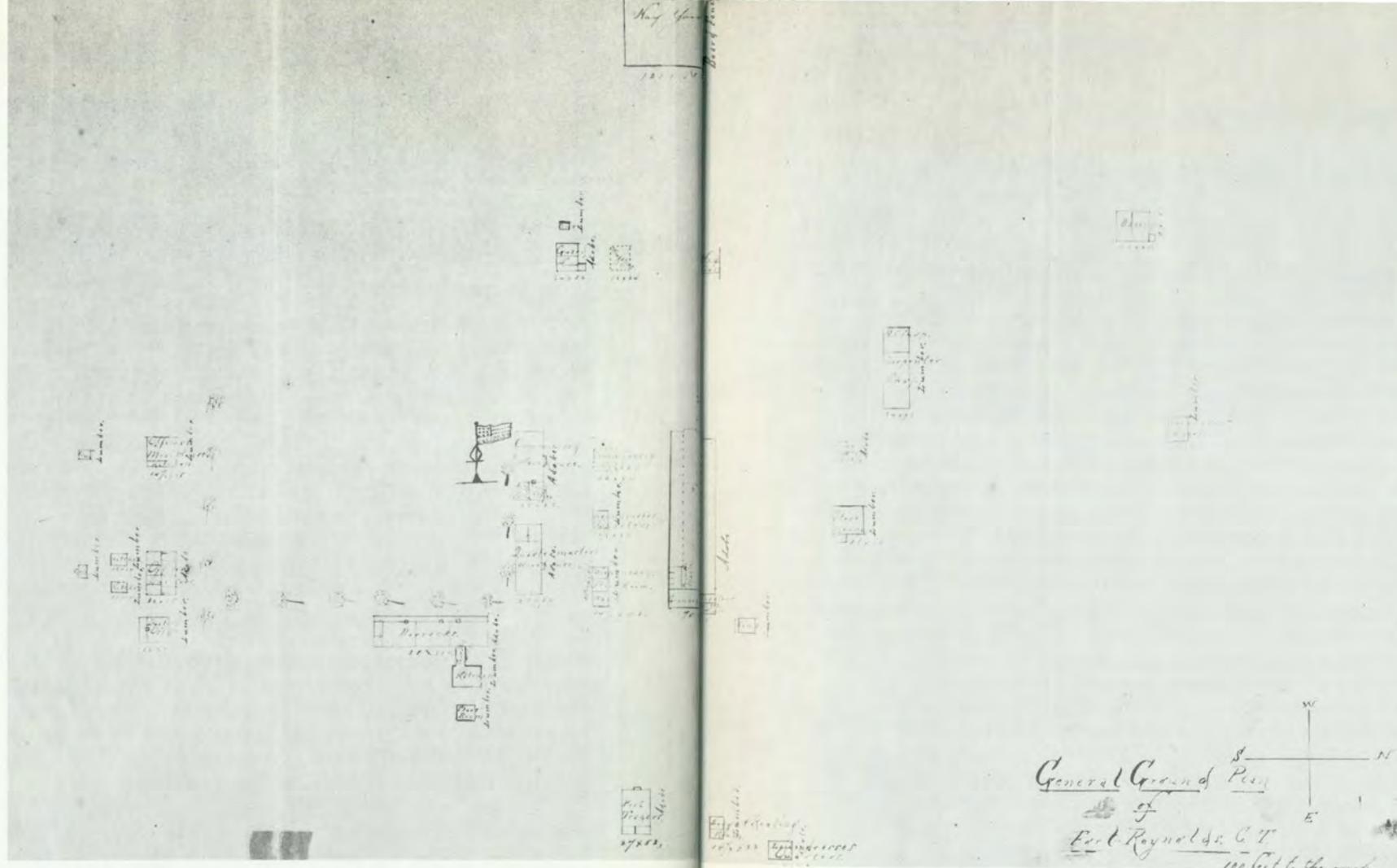
<sup>27</sup> *Colorado Tribune*, August 9, 1867, p. 1. The *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, May 5, 1870, p. 1, remarked that Fort Reynolds was intended to be a large post but was never completed.

<sup>28</sup> Minnie Dubbs Millbrook, "The West Breaks In General Custer," *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 36 (Summer 1970): 114-15, 115n.

<sup>29</sup> For the plains warfare that summer see Millbrook, "The West Breaks In General Custer," pp. 113-48, and *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), June 26, 1867, p. 3; Millbrook, "The West Breaks In General Custer," p. 130.

<sup>30</sup> Post Return of Fort Lyon, June 1867. The original fort was heavily damaged by the flooding Arkansas River, which determined the change of location. LeRoy Boyd, *Fort Lyon, Colorado: One Hundred Years of Service* (Colorado Springs: H & H Printing Company, 1967), p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Post Return of Fort Lyon, June 1867; Post Return of Fort Reynolds, July 1867.



well-diggers.<sup>33</sup> The energies of the well-diggers were wasted at Fort Reynolds. No satisfactory water supply was ever obtained from that source, nor were adequate springs found in the vicinity. Arkansas River water, which one post surgeon said "always seemed to be sufficiently good and wholesome for all practical purposes," was brought up to the fort in water wagons.<sup>34</sup> By the winter of 1867-68 Fort Lyon's accommodations for men and animals were far more extensive and substantial. Fort Reynolds never overcame the lead.

The plan of Fort Reynolds was developed around a parade

ground, which measured 455 by 400 feet, the north-south axis being the longer.<sup>35</sup> Some of the first buildings—the first hospital, some of the officers' quarters on the south side, and a few buildings in the northern part of the post—were of frame construction, characterized by upright boards with battening. In time, more substantial structures of adobe bricks and plaster with shingle roofs were built, these including the quartermaster and commissary storehouses, the guardhouse, one of the barracks, and a set of officers' quarters, which were one story and a half with dormer windows. Adobe ovens were

<sup>33</sup> Post Return of Fort Lyon, June 1867; Post Returns of Fort Reynolds, July-November 1867. At both places there were, of course, other civilian employees such as clerks, blacksmiths, wagonmasters, and teamsters.

<sup>34</sup> Miller, "Fort Reynolds," p. 318.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 317. A later commandant, Brevet Captain Charles A. Curtis, ordered shade trees to be planted around the parade ground, and by 1870 young cottonwoods were growing along the northern and eastern sides and part of the southern side. *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), June 18, 1868, p. 3; Miller, "Fort Reynolds," p. 317.

put into the frame bakery, and adobe bricks were used in walls of the horse corral.<sup>36</sup> In charge of making adobes for the fort was Antonito Chavez, who lived at nearby Autobees Plaza on the Huerfano.<sup>37</sup>

Autobees took the business opportunity presented by the new fort to convert one of the rooms of his plaza to a saloon and dance hall. Three-fourths of a mile from the fort he had another place, which he let for a whiskey shop.<sup>38</sup> Two miles away on the north bank of the Arkansas was the tiny settlement of Booneville, named for its founder and most prominent resident, Colonel Albert Gallatin Boone, great grandson of the renowned Daniel. It was also the post office address for Fort Reynolds.<sup>39</sup> Mail communication was a bit roundabout because Barlow, Sanderson and Company had recently taken its stagecoaches off the Arkansas Valley run between Pueblo and Bent's Old Fort, leaving the so-called Denver and Santa Fe Stage line (from Denver through Pueblo to Trinidad) as the fort's closest outside contact.<sup>40</sup>

Although this paper is not intended to present a detailed history of Fort Reynolds, certain developments must be noted in their relationship to the changing features of the Military Department of the Missouri. Captain Simon Snyder and Company F, Fifth Infantry, left the post on October 10; Company L, Seventh Cavalry, remained as the garrison with Lee P. Gillette, recently promoted to captain, as commandant.<sup>41</sup> On November 7 the garrison was reinforced by the arrival from Fort Sumner, New Mexico, of Company D, Fifth Infantry, commanded by First Lieutenant and Brevet Captain Charles A. Curtis.<sup>42</sup> That New Mexico post was on the verge of deactivation because of the collapse of a policy requiring interned Navajo and Apaches to practice agriculture in the vicinity.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Miller, "Fort Reynolds," pp. 317-18.

<sup>37</sup> Daisy Roberts Malone, "Fort Reynolds One of the Ghost Spots of this Region," clipping in Early History of Pueblo Scrapbook, vol. 5, p. 16, Pueblo Regional Library, Pueblo.

<sup>38</sup> Lecompte, "Charles Autobees," pt. 5, *The Colorado Magazine* 35:306. Autobees later (1870) operated the government ferry across the Arkansas River at Fort Reynolds. The boat, built by the quartermaster's department, was capable of carrying a loaded six-mule army wagon. *Colorado Chieftain*, June 2, 1870, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> Post Return of Fort Reynolds, July 1867; *Outline of Posts*, p. 139.

<sup>40</sup> Morris F. Taylor, *First Mail West: Stage Lines on the Santa Fe Trail* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1971), pp. 138-39.

<sup>41</sup> Post Returns of Fort Reynolds, September-October 1867.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, November 1867. Captain Curtis occasionally served as post commander. One obvious admirer described Curtis' quarters as being almost palatial, "evidence of eastern taste and culture." *Colorado Chieftain*, July 30, 1868, p. 2. Later he became professor of military science at his alma mater, Norwich University in Vermont. *Ibid.*, p. 3; Post Return of Fort Reynolds, April 1869.

<sup>43</sup> Post Return of Fort Reynolds, November 1867; Frazer, *Forts of the West*, p. 104; Hart, *Old Forts of the Southwest*, p. 80.

Fort Marcy at Santa Fe had recently been abandoned, the military establishment in the New Mexican capital being redesignated as the Post at Santa Fe and retaining the headquarters of the Military District of New Mexico.<sup>44</sup> The orders directing Captain Curtis and Company D to proceed to Fort Reynolds were issued in Santa Fe,<sup>45</sup> but extensions of the Military District of New Mexico into Colorado had been revoked, Fort Reynolds being included (since August) in the District of the Upper Arkansas.<sup>46</sup> Headquarters was Fort Hays, Kansas, which was the railhead of the Union Pacific Eastern Division Railroad, 289 miles west of Fort Leavenworth.<sup>47</sup>

Despite such organizational confusion life at Fort Reynolds soon became routine and probably very dull. Beginning with the post return of December 1867, and with rare exceptions thereafter, a notation appeared that "the troops of this command have been doing ordinary garrison and fatigue duty" or words to that effect.<sup>48</sup> Emigrant traffic along the Arkansas Valley had sharply declined, Captain Gillette reporting in October that no wagon trains had passed the fort during the month of October.<sup>49</sup> All in all, there was not very much that was interesting or exciting for one hundred and seven men and five commissioned officers to do in a place that must have seemed unattractive to most men from green and humid parts of the country. In fairness, however, it should be noted that at least one observer felt that "if our lot had been cast as an enlisted soldier in the regular army, we would wish no better fortune than to be sent to Fort Reynolds."<sup>50</sup>

The first call for troops from Fort Reynolds on detached service came not from any difficulties with Indians but from an ethnic disturbance in Trinidad about ninety miles to the south. Locally known as the Trinidad War, it was the result of Mexican-Anglo frictions of rather obscure origin.<sup>51</sup> A de-

<sup>44</sup> Post Return of Fort Lyon, August 1867; Frazer, *Forts of the West*, p. 101; Hart, *Old Forts of the Southwest*, p. 121.

<sup>45</sup> Post Return of Fort Reynolds, November 1867.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, August 1867. Headquarters of the Military District of the Upper Arkansas was transferred in 1868 to Fort Harker, Kansas. U.S. Army, Department of the Missouri, Adjutant General's Office, Letters received, 1868, Endorsement of Captain Curtis' report of February 27, 1868, Record Group 94, National Archives.

<sup>47</sup> Post Return of Fort Lyon, May 1867; Taylor, *First Mail West*, p. 123; Frazer, *Forts of the West*, p. 54; Hart, *Old Forts of the Southwest*, p. 140.

<sup>48</sup> Post Return of Fort Reynolds, December 1867 and passim.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, October 1867. Report of trains passing Fort Reynolds, Memorandum connected with Post Return. In July 1868 the *Colorado Chieftain* noted that travelers had almost deserted both the Arkansas and the Platte River routes. *Colorado Chieftain*, July 16, 1868, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Post Return of Fort Reynolds, November 1867. Exact Return of Troops at Fort Reynolds, Supplement; *Colorado Chieftain*, July 30, 1868, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> Morris F. Taylor, *Trinidad, Colorado Territory* (Trinidad: Trinidad State Junior College, 1966), pp. 60-76.

tachment of three noncommissioned officers and twenty privates, commanded by First Lieutenant Henry H. Abell, recently promoted, left the post on January 4, 1868, and rode to Trinidad in snow and severe cold to "quell a riot," returning to Fort Reynolds on January 16. Actually, Abell's detachment was a reinforcement for Captain and Brevet Brigadier General William H. Penrose, commandant at Fort Lyon, who hastened to Trinidad with a composite force from the cavalry and infantry companies of his garrison. The arrival of "Uncle's Boys" calmed the controversy, and the whole operation amounted to little more than a kind of military occupation for a few days.<sup>52</sup>

If monotony was not relieved, time was certainly occupied for some of the men when orders came through that all "civilian mechanics" would be discharged, building operations would be suspended, and enlisted men would be detailed to perform the duties of civilian employees. The latter were reduced to one clerk, four carpenters, and one blacksmith in February; and in March two more carpenters were discharged.<sup>53</sup>

It is doubtful if Fort Reynolds ever was of major economic importance to the region.<sup>54</sup> At no time was there a large amount of civilian employment, and the garrison was always too small<sup>55</sup> to bring a freshet of dollars in circulation after a paymaster's visit. Much of the money probably was absorbed by the nearby whiskey shop and the saloon-dance hall in Autobees Town (or Plaza). The latter place was a problem to the commandant of Fort Reynolds. One occasion ended in a shooting affray, when Charley Autobees' son-in-law, known as French Joe, gave a Saturday night fandango on October 10, 1868, which was attended by some soldiers and civilians from the fort. When the trouble was over, a carpenter lay dead and a soldier severely injured.<sup>56</sup>

If not important economically, the fort sometimes was a center of social activity, drawing settlers from as far away as Mace's Hole (Beulah), southwest of Pueblo. Dances followed by bounteous suppers were popular, and those parties added variety to an otherwise rather drab life led by some of the officers' wives. A banjo strummed by A. M. Swartz and violins played by the Chilcott boys—nephews of George M.—were

often sources of music.<sup>57</sup> Possibly, though, the parties at the fort were rather sober affairs because there was a very active chapter of Good Templars (Rescue Lodge No. 9, originally organized by Company D, Fifth Infantry, at Fort Sumner, New Mexico) to give the temperance touch.<sup>58</sup> Other forms of amusement occasionally were available. In celebration of July 4, 1868, for example, there was a series of races—burro, mule, pony, and horse races with American, Mexican, Indian, and Negro jockies, according to the *Colorado Chieftain*; the Good Templars turned out in procession, and there were orations and toasts—with pure cold water.<sup>59</sup>

Farmers and other civilians did receive some economic benefits from the post, of course; in such dealings the officer best known to them was Lieutenant John J. Lambert, Company D, Fifth Infantry, who served as quartermaster and commissary of supply from July 1868 to November 1871.<sup>60</sup> The *Colorado Chieftain* made the dual observation in August of 1868 that the fort drew its supplies from the surrounding rich countryside and that it was the War Department's intention to keep the fort there to protect the farmers and ranchers.<sup>61</sup> In October authorization was received at Fort Reynolds for the purchase of an unlimited supply of corn for the use of troops on the plains, at \$1.20 per bushel sacked or \$1.00 in bulk. Purchases were to be made locally to assist the farmers; if they could not meet the stipulated prices, the corn would be acquired in Kansas.<sup>62</sup> Advertisements appeared in the Pueblo paper in November asking for bids to furnish 325 tons of hay, to be delivered between December 5, 1868, and January 1, 1869. Most of the ranchers along the Huerfano River were selling to Lieutenant Lambert, giving the fort for a while a lively appearance because so many wagons and teams were unloading corn, hay, and wood, while others were taking on grain to be transported to Fort Lyon.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>52</sup> A. M. Swartz, "Early Days in the Arkansas Valley," *The Colorado Magazine* 4 (December 1927): 190.

<sup>53</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, June 11, 1868, p. 2; Aurora Hunt, *Major General James Henry Carleton, 1814-1873: Western Frontier Dragoon* (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1958), p. 336. A second lodge was later organized, and it was said that most of the men were reclaimed from intemperance. *Colorado Chieftain*, July 30, 1868, p. 2. There is no indication, however, that Charley Autobees' saloon or the whiskey shop were in danger of going out of business.

<sup>54</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, June 25, 1868, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> Post Returns of Fort Reynolds, July 1868-November 1871. After the disbandment of Fort Reynolds, Lambert resigned his commission and became editor and publisher of the *Colorado Chieftain* in Pueblo. Barron B. Beshoar, "No Windy Promises," *The 1961 Brand Book of the Denver Posse of the Westerners* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing Co., 1962), p. 97.

<sup>56</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, August 6, 1868, p. 1.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, October 22, 1868, p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, November 26, 1868, p. 2, and December 31, 1868, p. 3. Strong demand

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71; Post Return of Fort Reynolds, January 1868.

<sup>53</sup> Post Returns of Fort Reynolds, February-March 1868.

<sup>54</sup> At their inception, Fort Reynolds and the new Fort Lyon were looked upon as potential economic benefits to the Arkansas Valley. *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, August 19, 1867, p. 2.

<sup>55</sup> From August 1868 the Fort Reynolds garrison was never more than one infantry company, often under strength. Post Returns of Fort Reynolds, August 1868-May 1872.

<sup>56</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, October 15, 1868, p. 3.

A public auction was advertised at Fort Reynolds for July 24, 1869, at 10:00 A.M., offering condemned quartermaster stores consisting in part of one horse, one mule, wall tents, common tents, harness, shovels, spades, carpenter tools, and blacksmith tools for cash.<sup>64</sup> Another advertisement appeared in March 1870 for a sale of about three thousand pounds of damaged government bacon, some of it good and sound, to the highest bidder.<sup>65</sup> Only two months previously the *Colorado Chieftain* had noted that the government contract for bacon was being filled by Pueblo County farmers with pork of their own raising.<sup>66</sup> In November John Hughes of Denver was awarded a contract for 2,500 pounds of bacon at \$0.23 per pound.<sup>67</sup> A contract for 450 cords of cottonwood was divided among several Pueblo residents—George H. Puntenev (*sic*), Robert Grant, Isaac Bullock, and Mark L. Blunt.<sup>68</sup> Lieutenant Lambert called for bids for 1,800 bushels of shelled corn and advertised a sale of 307,020 pounds of hay at the warehouse at Fort Reynolds in November 1870. Messrs. L. F. Bartels and Company of Denver was awarded a contract for 13,000 pounds of flour at \$.0497 per pound.<sup>69</sup>

Also, there was the post trader with whom neighboring farmers and ranchers could do business. As early as October 1867 exclusive right to trade at Fort Reynolds was granted to the firm of Clough and Nichols,<sup>70</sup> and in early 1869 A. Clough and Company, Post Traders, advertised general merchandise, groceries, hardware, and queensware for sale.<sup>71</sup> Although Samuel Hatch of Fort Lyon was appointed post trader at Fort Reynolds in October 1870,<sup>72</sup> it was nearly a year before Clough and Company moved to the east bank of the Huerfano near its mouth, the new place of business being known as Huerfano Junction.<sup>73</sup>

In the matter of protection against Indians, Fort Reynolds operated in a secondary capacity. The regular garrison of a single infantry company from August 1868 to May 1872<sup>74</sup> pre-

for grain and forage at Fort Lyon had been stimulated by the quartermaster's responsibility to supply the forces of Generals Penrose and Carr, campaigning to the south as part of General Sheridan's three-part winter campaign against the Plains Indians.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, July 22, 1869, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, March 24, 1870, p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, January 13, 1870, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, November 17, 1870, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, October 6, 1870, p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, November 3, 1870, p. 3; *ibid.*, November 17, 1870, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> Post Return of Fort Reynolds, October 1867.

<sup>71</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, March 11, 1869, p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, October 20, 1870, p. 3; Post Return of Fort Reynolds, October 1870.

<sup>73</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, August 3, 1871, p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Post Returns of Fort Reynolds, June 1867-May 1872.

vented active participation against the Plains tribes and the Ute, all of whom were well mounted. In September 1868 Major General William A. Nichols, assistant adjutant general of the Military Division of the Missouri, was proceeding up the Arkansas towards Fort Reynolds on an inspection tour, when his twenty-man escort warded off an attack by apparently thirty Plains Indians near Point of Rocks. The *Colorado Chieftain* said that General Nichols would spare no effort to get reinforcements to Fort Reynolds.<sup>75</sup> That may have been his intention, but he certainly was not successful. Fort Reynolds' one cavalry company had been transferred to Fort Larned, Kansas, because the latter was better located to deal with the Plains tribes.<sup>76</sup> When General Sheridan organized his campaign for the winter of 1868-69, basing his operations mainly on Camp Supply, Indian Territory, Fort Lyon, Colorado Territory, and Fort Bascom, New Mexico Territory,<sup>77</sup> involvement of Fort Reynolds was limited to that of a supply base, chiefly for collection and shipping of grain.<sup>78</sup> The continuing auxiliary role played by the officers and men of Fort Reynolds was recognized by Denver's *Daily Rocky Mountain News* in its comment that the post was no longer important for protection, except in the case of a Ute war, but did retain value as a supply depot.<sup>79</sup>

Although his Company D, Fifth Infantry, had been at Fort Reynolds since November 1867, Captain and Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Henry B. Bristol did not join the post from recruiting service in Detroit, Michigan, until March 13, 1869.<sup>80</sup> Much of his service, however, had been in New Mexico, and his brevetcy had been granted for that generally but "particularly for his untiring zeal and energy in controlling the Navajo tribe at the Bosque Redondo and his praiseworthy efforts in advancing their condition from that of savages to that of civilized men."<sup>81</sup> Such a characterization bears the hallmark of the 1800s.

<sup>75</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, September 24, 1868, p. 3; U.S., Army, Military Division of the Missouri, *Record of Engagements with Hostile Indians within the Military Division of the Missouri, from 1863 to 1882, Lieutenant-General P. H. Sheridan, Commanding* (Chicago: Headquarters, Military Division of the Missouri, 1882), p. 13. Cited hereafter as *Record of Engagements*.

<sup>76</sup> Post Return of Fort Reynolds, August 1868. Major and Brevet Lieutenant Colonel J. G. Tilford, Seventh Cavalry, remained in command at Fort Reynolds until the middle of October. *Ibid.*, August, September, October, 1868; *Colorado Chieftain*, August 27, 1868, p. 3, and October 22, 1868, p. 3. Tilford reported that four persons were killed by Indians near Colorado City on September 4 (*Record of Engagements*, p. 12), but he was unable to give chase.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>78</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, October 22, 1868, p. 3; *ibid.*, December 31, 1868, p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, May 5, 1870, p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Post Returns of Fort Reynolds, November 1867, March 1869.

<sup>81</sup> Heitman, *Historical Register*, 1:246.

As commandant at Fort Reynolds Colonel Bristol must have found that circumstances contrasted with life at the Bosque Redondo and Fort Sumner. For instance, he and a detachment from Company D aided a group of men from Pueblo, guided by Charley Autobeas and his sons (Mariano and Jose), in laying out a wagon road across untraversed country to the Kansas Pacific Railroad town of Kit Carson, a route of eighty-eight miles to the northeast and forty miles shorter than the existing one. Leaving the Arkansas Valley road almost opposite the fort, the new route went via Prospect Spring, Bluff Spring, Antelope Springs, Camp Council, Four Mile Creek, Little Sandy Creek, Butte Creek, Wild Horse Spring, Camp Division, Rush Creek, and Big Sandy Creek to Kit Carson, which was mainly a tent town at the time. Most surprising to the men of the road survey party was the large number of wild horses seen along the way.<sup>82</sup> Soon the *Colorado Chieftain* commented that the new road was being traveled "right smart."<sup>83</sup>

When threats of Indian hostility grew rapidly again in the spring and summer of 1870, of prime concern was protection of construction crews of the Kansas Pacific Railroad (formerly the Union Pacific Eastern Division), building across the plains of eastern Colorado into Denver. Attacks on railroad parties in Kansas began in April. On May 16 Indians made a concerted assault along thirty miles of the Kansas Pacific, followed by raids on Lake Station and Hugo Station, Colorado, on May 18 and 21 respectively.<sup>84</sup> To meet the widespread challenge, an attempt was made to coordinate the forces at Fort Wallace, Kansas, and Forts Lyon and Reynolds, Colorado, under the command of Brevet Major General Charles R. Woods, who established his field headquarters at Kit Carson with units of the Seventh Cavalry and the Fifth Infantry.<sup>85</sup>

The smallness of the Fort Reynolds garrison ruled out any significant part in General Woods's strategy, but an order from him did send two noncommissioned officers and eight privates from Company D to guard settlements along Black Squirrel Creek, also known as Chico Creek.<sup>86</sup> Also, during the summer of 1870 a troop of cavalry (Company M, Eighth Cavalry, apparently from Fort Garland) was stationed near Colorado City as a precautionary measure, using Fort Reynolds as a supply

<sup>82</sup> Post Return of Fort Reynolds, December 1869; *Colorado Chieftain*, December 9, 1869, p. 3, and December 16, 1869, p. 2; Lecompte, "Charles Autobeas," pt. 10, *The Colorado Magazine* 36 (January 1959):62.

<sup>83</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, January 13, 1870, p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> *Record of Engagements*, p. 30.

<sup>85</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, June 2, 1870, p. 3; Heitman, *Historical Register*, 1:1058.

<sup>86</sup> Post Return of Fort Reynolds, May 1870; Kenyon Riddle, *Records and Maps of the Old Santa Fe Trail* (Raton, N.M.: Raton Daily Range, 1949), p. 38.

base.<sup>87</sup> But so slight was Fort Reynolds' contribution to the general military effort that its abandonment was being considered that summer (1870), it being said that Colonel Bristol would transfer the post to Cedar Point on the Kansas Pacific Railroad.<sup>88</sup>

In the fall orders went out to post commanders in the Department of the Missouri directing that as much ice as possible be put up during the winter; in the post return of February 1871 the facts that his men were filling two icehouses and manuring the post garden were the only special items that Colonel Bristol had to report.<sup>89</sup> Quartermaster Lambert that summer supervised construction of a new adobe hospital to replace the old plank-and-battening structure with the canvas roof, while rumors circulated that Fort Reynolds would be abandoned, the military reservation to revert to the public domain.<sup>90</sup> Colonel Bristol stated publicly that he had no orders to abandon the post, but he did say he would not be surprised to get marching orders to go to Arizona or the line of the Northern Pacific Railroad.<sup>91</sup>

Captain J. Ford Kent, Third Infantry, replaced Colonel Bristol, who then expected to be transferred to Fort Harker, Kansas. Kent and his Company G marched in on October 23 from Hugo Station, on the plains of eastern Colorado.<sup>92</sup> Despite reports of imminent abandonment, the Department of the Missouri made plans to sustain Fort Reynolds during the immediate future. Bids were called from Fort Leavenworth to supply fresh beef for one year to Forts Lyon, Reynolds, and Garland in Colorado Territory.<sup>93</sup> At that time Fort Reynolds had accommodations for eighty men and sixty horses, whereas Fort Lyon could house three hundred twenty men and three troops of cavalry horses.<sup>94</sup>

The Third Infantry unit turned out to be the last garrison at Reynolds. On April 23, 1872, an order was issued at Fort Leavenworth that Company G should proceed to Fort Lyon, leaving one commissioned officer, one corporal, and nine pri-

<sup>87</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, October 13, 1870, p. 3. It appears that two companies of the Seventh Cavalry were stationed at Colorado City in 1869 also. They were under orders from Major General John M. Schofield, commanding the Department of the Missouri. *Ibid.*, August 19, 1869, p. 3, and August 26, 1869, p. 3; *Outline Descriptions*, p. 116.

<sup>88</sup> *Daily Central City Register*, August 2, 1870, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup> Post Returns of Fort Reynolds, November 1870, February 1871.

<sup>90</sup> Undated and unnumbered scrapbook, Pueblo Regional Library; Miller, "Fort Reynolds," p. 318; Post Returns of Fort Reynolds, July-August 1871.

<sup>91</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, September 28, 1871, p. 3.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, October 5, 1871, p. 3, and October 26, 1871, p. 3; Post Return of Fort Reynolds, October 1871.

<sup>93</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, March 21, 1872, p. 3.

<sup>94</sup> *Outline of Posts*, pp. 139-40.

vates as a guard over the public property left there.<sup>95</sup> As part of the same policy, and for similar reasons, Fort Harker in Kansas was closed down.<sup>96</sup> Both terminations were part of the declining activity in the last phase of the American western frontier.

Abandonment was ordered because settlement of the region was rapid and there was no really threatening Indian presence.<sup>97</sup> Yet, a lingering worry about a recrudescence of hostilities had brought protest against closure some months before it happened. The Colorado territorial legislature on February 9, 1872, approved a memorial to the secretary of war asking that a military post be established at "Pishapa" (presumably Apishapa, an early settlement on the stream of that name east of present Aguilar), which would be close to country "exposed to depredations from Indians as well as lawless men from Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado" for years.<sup>98</sup> The proposed fort on the Apishapa never was built; only Fort Lyon and Fort Union remained active during the last days of Indian contacts in southeastern Colorado and northeastern New Mexico.

The parade ground and buildings of Fort Reynolds were left to natural deterioration, eventually hastened by plundering farmers and ranchers. Settlement of the military reservation was delayed because of the unsettled question of reversion to claimants of the Vigil and St. Vrain Grant, from whom the reservation had been leased.<sup>99</sup> When finally it was decided that the twenty-three-square-mile tract should be opened as public domain, an Act of Congress of June 19, 1874, authorized the secretary of war to sell it.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Post Return of Fort Reynolds, May 1872.

<sup>96</sup> Frazer, *Forts of the West*, p. 54.

<sup>97</sup> Lecompte, "Charles Autobeas," pt. 10, *The Colorado Magazine*, 36:68; *Colorado Chieftain*, May 2, 1872, p. 3; *Colorado Transcript* (Golden), May 8, 1872, p. 2. The rate of settlement was great enough that a U.S. Land Office was established at Pueblo in January 1871. *Colorado Chieftain*, January 19, 1871, p. 3.

<sup>98</sup> Colorado Territory, Legislative Assembly, *General Laws, Private Acts, Joint Resolutions, and Memorials, Passed at the Ninth Session [1872] of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Colorado* (Central City: D. C. Collier, Printer, 1872), pp. 234-35.

<sup>99</sup> *Colorado Chieftain*, May 2, 1872, p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> U.S., Secretary of State, *The Statutes at Large of the United States, from December, 1873, to March, 1875, and Recent Treaties, Postal Conventions, and Executive Proclamations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1875) vol. 18, pt. 3, p. 85.

# First Ladies of Colorado: Emma Fletcher Thomas

BY HELEN CANNON

Charles Spaulding Thomas, governor of Colorado from 1899 to 1901, was a gifted speaker, well-known for his philosophical commentaries, often tinged with a caustic wit, on life and his fellowman. He was, however, well aware of his own foibles. On an occasion when a newspaper reporter asked his opinion on marriage, he replied: "I must believe in marriage because of my own experience, even tho [sic] I realize that it is no longer binding or regarded as an institution, sacred or otherwise. I also admit that to have lived with me, to have put up with my disposition and traits entitles my wife to a high place in heaven."<sup>1</sup>

His wife for over sixty years was Emma Gould Fletcher. She was born in St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada, on December 25, 1853,<sup>2</sup> the youngest of the six children of Thomas and Elizabeth Gould Fletcher.<sup>3</sup> Thomas Fletcher had come to the United States in 1817 at the age of two years with his parents, who settled in New York State. Elizabeth Gould's father was the fifth generation of Goulds in America, who also had come from England and settled in New York State.<sup>4</sup> Thomas Fletcher and Emma Gould married in Middleport, New York, on June 17, 1841. They moved to St. Catherines, Ontario, Canada, about 1845 and returned to the United States about 1860, taking residence at Kalamazoo, Michigan, where they lived the remainder of their lives. Chronicles of Kalamazoo record that he was

<sup>1</sup> *Denver Post*, December 28, 1933, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Record of Marriage, no. 2072, Kalamazoo County, Michigan, December 29, 1873; Certificate of Death, no. 14755, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Denver, October 18, 1940.

<sup>3</sup> The 1860 census lists William G., 17, and Charles F., 15, both born in New York; and James, 14, Mary E., 12, Anna E., 9, and Emma, 6, born in Canada. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Kalamazoo County, Michigan*, 9-126-27.

<sup>4</sup> Quantrille McClung, comp., "Governors of Colorado: Charles Spaulding Thomas, 1899-1901," *Colorado Genealogist* 21 (April 1960):37-46.

a successful foundryman, rearing a family of six children and giving them all a good education.<sup>5</sup>

Emma Fletcher and Charles S. Thomas were married in Kalamazoo, Michigan, on December 29, 1873. The wedding was held in the Fletcher home with the Reverend J. F. Conover, rector of St. Luke's Episcopal Church, officiating.<sup>6</sup> Thomas had been a law student at the University of Michigan from 1869 to 1871, and in the summer of 1870 he pursued his studies in the law office of Robert F. Hill in Kalamazoo. While in that city he met Emma, whom he described as being then "a gentle, smallish, and very pretty little girl."<sup>7</sup> After receiving his law degree in the spring of 1871 and investigating a number of possible locations, Thomas decided to try his fortune in Denver, Colorado. Before leaving for his new permanent home, he paid Emma a visit. They reached "an understanding," for he was too poor to marry and was starting the Denver adventure on borrowed money. He arrived in Denver on December 18, 1871. Professional prospects looked dismal the first year, but by the spring of 1873 he had a law office with Thomas M. Patterson and shingle reading: "Patterson & Thomas." With this financial encouragement the "understanding" culminated in an engagement in the summer of 1873 and the subsequent marriage.<sup>8</sup>

The beginning of prosperity came to the young Thomases by 1875. Besides his budding private law practice he was appointed city attorney that year at a salary of \$1,000 which was raised the next year to \$1,500. Their house at 545 Champa Street rented for \$15, and other living costs were proportionate. The farsighted Mr. Thomas versed himself in mining law, a rapidly growing branch of the legal profession in the vicinity of Denver. By 1879 the clientele of Patterson and Thomas in Leadville had grown so large that Mr. Thomas decided to move there and open a branch office. How Emma Thomas liked her six-year sojourn in this overgrown mining camp during the years 1879-85 is unknown, but certainly it was a most exciting and lucrative period in her husband's career.<sup>9</sup>

When Charles and Emma Thomas moved back to Denver in 1885, they had been married almost twelve years, three of their five children had been born with the second son on the way, and Charles had achieved a fair share of professional and

<sup>5</sup> *Kalamazoo Daily Gazette*, April 11, 1882, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, January 2, 1874, p. 2; Record of Marriage.

<sup>7</sup> Sewell Thomas, *Silhouettes of Charles S. Thomas* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1959), p. 14.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 14, 16, 18, 19.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19, 29-31, 55.



financial success. In 1887 they moved into what proved to be their permanent Denver home, an attractive brown brick house, designed and built by the well-known architect Edward Morgan, in the fashionable Capitol Hill area at 1609 Sherman Street. The two-story structure was enlarged in 1892 to three stories, and a wing was added to the north side.<sup>10</sup> If not an architectural improvement, it was imposing and more commodious to meet the needs of the growing family<sup>11</sup> as well as being more adequate for its future function—the Governor's Mansion.

<sup>10</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 12, 1959, p. 34; *Denver Post*, March 20, 1960, p. 2A.

<sup>11</sup> For vital statistics and genealogical data on the Charles Spaulding Thomas family see McClung, "Governors of Colorado." The children were Helen Anna, born 1874; Edith Marie, born 1882; Charles Sewell, born 1884; Hubert Fletcher, born 1885; and George Kenneth, born 1892.



Charles S. Thomas

In 1898 Charles S. Thomas was nominated by the Democratic Party and endorsed by the Silver Republican and Populist Parties for governor. He did not care for the office but accepted the nomination and was elected by a majority vote. The inaugural ceremonies on January 10, 1899, set the tone for the administration to follow. According to one newspaper report: "No ceremony of inauguration has been more simple. . . . For lack of ostentation in its entirety the inauguration ceremony of 1899 will be without precedent in Colorado's history."<sup>12</sup> Governor Thomas characterized his administration as the most economical in the state's history, giving for reasons that the state had not yet recovered from the depression of 1893, the state budget was depleted, taxes were difficult to collect, and borrowing was beyond his powers. He professed later that as a governor he was "pretty much of a failure"<sup>13</sup> and that his administration was uneventful.<sup>14</sup>

The "first ladyship" of Emma Fletcher Thomas, other than the entertaining which accompanies a governorship, similarly seems to have been uneventful and devoted to her normal activities. The austerity of the inauguration relieved her of the burden of the traditional inaugural ball, and an unostentatious regime would have been compatible with her personal taste. Her activities outside of the home were never numerous. Neither she nor the governor were members of a church, although in 1901 she was president of the Needlework Guild of Denver—

a nonsectarian organization composed at that time of twenty units whose purpose was to provide clothing and household linens to the poor of the city and needy transients.<sup>15</sup> She was an active member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and a charter member of the Colorado Chapter when it was organized in 1904.<sup>16</sup> Her greatest interest was in the Visiting Nurse Association, founded in 1891 and dedicated to serving the health needs of the community, particularly miners. Mrs. Thomas was a member of the governing board in 1900.<sup>17</sup>

In 1913 Emma was called upon to fulfill new duties when her husband was appointed United States Senator from Colorado in January 1913 to fill the unexpired term of Charles J. Hughes. He was elected to this office in 1915 and remained in the post until 1921. This was an office he both wanted and liked, in contrast to the governorship. In the personal account of his life written for his children he records: "A seat in the Senate of the United States had been the one ambition of my life since one December morning in 1884, when I sat for the first time in the Senate gallery and witnessed one of its sessions."<sup>18</sup> The years spent in Washington were equally enjoyed by Mrs. Thomas and the children, all now grown, who were sporadically in and out of the Washington residence. Emma Thomas was very soon recognized as an attractive addition to the Washington scene, so it was quite natural that when the woman suffrage question was pending in the Congress, her opinions should be sought by the press. It is through one such interview that Colorado history owes this characterization of its first lady from 1899 to 1901:

Mrs. Thomas has a gracious presence, rather reserved but entirely cordial and affable. As wife of the governor she gained a wide reputation for tact and sympathetic interpretation of her obligations. Mrs. and Miss Edith Thomas were not conspicuous in the recent agitation before Congress [on] March 4 regarding suffrage, but they fulfilled every duty. Mrs. Thomas is such a distinguished example of the woman who can preside with consummate grace over her home, can train such a large and highly successful family, can make her husband completely happy and comfortable and yet take an active interest in politics, that her very name is a force to conjure with. Both she and Miss Edith testified to their personal experience, and as Mrs. Thomas goes back to the times before women were given

<sup>12</sup> *Denver Times*, November 17, 1901, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Dorothy Buren, ed., *History, D.A.R. in Colorado, 1894-1953* (Colorado Springs: Dentan Printing Co., 1952), p. 15; National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, *Lineage Book* (Washington, D.C.: Daughters of the American Revolution, 1904), no. 46156.

<sup>14</sup> This association became the Visiting Nurse Service of the City and County of Denver in 1948. Visiting Nurse Association, *Seventy-five Years: Visiting Nurse Association* (Denver: Privately printed, 1965), pp. 5, 15, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Papers, Box 9, F2, p. 152.

<sup>12</sup> *Denver Republican*, January 10, 1899, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Denver Post*, June 24, 1934, p. 4; *ibid.*, June 25, 1934, pp. 1-2.

<sup>14</sup> Charles Spaulding Thomas Papers, Box 9, F2, p. 107, State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

the suffrage, the comparison is testimony which cannot be ignored even by the most intolerant of the antis. Mrs. Thomas is decidedly literary in inclination, though she has written but little. Miss Edith finds keen delight in books, and she and her mother pass much time in the libraries. They also go often to hear the debates in Congress something which they enjoy above all that Washington offers. They know state politics to the least detail, but they also know national affairs and can converse with the most astute. Mrs. and Miss Thomas are not excessively fond of social life, though they have mingled freely in officialdom and have performed all traditional duties affiliated with their position. . . .

Speaking on [the] vital topic [of suffrage], Mrs. Thomas said:

"I have lived in Colorado since my marriage in 1873, and that makes it about twenty years before the right of suffrage was conferred. For it was in 1893 that the legislature conferred full suffrage on all the citizens of the state and on all equal rights to aspire to any political office and to hold it. Naturally I was interested in the movement and watched its development, but I cannot claim to have hastened the consummation or even to have influenced except perhaps in the moral sense. As a rule the mother of a young and growing family has problems enough at home to give more than a transitory glance at such theoretical measures as the state-wide right to vote.

Then I think that women of today are broader as a rule while just as domestic and wedded to home as the woman of the early seventies. Having the right to vote, I have always deemed it not only a privilege but a duty to exercise it. In the finer analysis I think that anything which draws husbands, wives, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers and their children closer together is a good thing, whether it relates to politics, to religion or to the less important phases of life. Now, I find that voting does draw members of a family more closely together, even when they disagree on political measures or candidates. . . .

In the west we have the strong, useful, versatile woman who is always part of pioneer life. Few of the criticisms that flow from pen and pulpit and forum against the idler apply to us, for we have had to build our city in a wilderness and women have taken such a large part in the upbuilding that we stand a lesson to those who oppose suffrage. Men and women working together is the natural order, and the result in Colorado has been most encouraging. We are now attempting something colossal and unique in municipal reform, and that is our park system, which aims to connect our city with the great amphitheater of hills about by a magnificent chain of parks and splendid roadways. . . . It is merely to repeat what is known to all who know anything of Denver's wonderful [park-system] to say that women have fostered the idea most generously and have contributed liberally, sometimes it being even personal sacrifice to do so. Women more than men, I think, know the value of health, and in this vast inter-urban park we are providing health for the generations to come."<sup>19</sup>

Late in 1928 ex-Senator Thomas closed his Washington law office and the Thomases returned to Denver to spend the re-

<sup>19</sup> Margaret B. Downing, "Mrs. Charles Spaulding Thomas, Wife of the Senator from Colorado," Thomas Papers, Box 15, F4, Scrapbook, clipping.



*Emma Fletcher Thomas in 1925.*

maining years of their lives. He and Emma observed their sixtieth wedding anniversary on December 29, 1933, at a celebration that gave the Denver newspaper reporters an opportunity to question once again this renowned citizen on his views of the current scene and what life had meant to him. On the question of what comes after life, he looked long at Emma and said:

When I go out I want to be carted away without ceremony, but I can't believe I shall never meet her again.<sup>20</sup>

During the six months after this celebration his health failed rapidly, and he died on June 24, 1934. It was as though he had made a supreme effort to survive to share with Emma this milestone in their lives. According to his wishes there was no "silly fuss and nonsense" of a formal funeral, nor did his remains lie in state in the Capitol. During these last months he had written in longhand an autobiographical manuscript

<sup>20</sup> *Denver Post*, June 24, 1934, p. 4.

for his children. It was mostly about his career with a few references to his more personal life, but there is this tribute to Emma:

Our union has been a long and mutually happy one. Our days of poverty and of prosperity have been shared in common, and to her beautiful character, constant co-operation and unflinching encouragement, I owe whatever of success I may have achieved in social, professional and political affairs.<sup>21</sup>

After Charles's death Emma carried on, put her house in order, and calmly awaited her turn. She died at home, six years later, on October 16, 1940.<sup>22</sup> Through the years she had developed a personal religious creed similar to that of her husband, which did not include any form of public worship. So, pursuant with her wishes, her death was not marked by any service.<sup>23</sup> The private cremation was at Riverside Cemetery in Denver.

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Papers, Box 9, F1, pp. 52-53.

<sup>22</sup> The family home at 1609 Sherman Street and the state's Governor's Mansion from 1899 to 1901 was remodeled shortly after Mrs. Thomas's death, this time into an apartment building. Edith M. Thomas, the unmarried daughter, occupied a twelve-room apartment in the fifty-room house until she was hospitalized in February 1959. The house was open to visitors for the last time on May 15, 1959, at a public sale of the remaining valuable antiques and furnishings before demolition of the house for a parking lot. *Rocky Mountain News*, July 12, 1959, p. 34; *Denver Post*, March 20, 1960, p. 2A.

<sup>23</sup> *Denver Post*, October 16, 1940, p. 12; *Rocky Mountain News*, October 17, 1940, p. 16.