It was apparently the practice when the D.& R. G. Railway Co. was building and extending its lines, for some of its officers individually or through other companies to buy up the sites of future towns as soon as their surveyors had determined upon the location.

As it happened with section 10, which Ex-Governor Hunt had picked as the logical place for the new town of Alamosa, Andrew Branson, his son Andrew Jr., and Lawander Hendricks had homesteaded a large part of it some years before.

In 1876 Dr. W. A. Bell came into possession of New Madrid Certificate No. 338, a very interesting document, which entitled him to 640 acres of land, open to filing, anywhere in the United States. Through this certificate, Dr. Bell took up the 280 acres still available in section 10, 280 acres in section 9, adjoining it on the west and 80 acres in section 15 on the south.

In May 1877, long before work extending the rails across the valley was started, James Luttrell approached the Branson's and bought for $1000.00 their two homesteads comprising 320 acres, of which 240 were in section 10.

In September of that same year Dr. Bell located Lavander Hendricks, who it appears had left his ranch on the Rio Grande, not permanently perhaps, but anyway the acknowledgements on the sale of his 160 acres to Bell were made in Arapahoe County.

It might be well here to give a very brief biography of Dr. Bell, who was so closely connected with Alamosa's inception.

Dr. Wm. A. Bell was born in Ireland and raised in London where his father was an eminent physician. Following the family bent, he studied medicine and after taking his degree came, in the winter of 1866 to the United States, on a tour of recreation. Through friends in Philadelphia he became attached to the Kansas Pacific Railway.
survey which was being made by General W. J. Palmer and during the two years of association in this work a strong and lasting friendship grew between them.

They were also closely united in the formation of the D. & R G. Railway Co., which General Palmer headed with Dr. Bell as Vice President. He was also actively interested in many large enterprises, among them the Colorado Central Improvement Co., which in later years was to become the C. F. & I. Co., and he succeeded in interesting a great deal of foreign capital in Colorado ventures.

In January of 1878, James Luttrell deeded his holdings to Dr. Bell, and that spring, April 4th, the Alamosa Town Company was incorporated, with Col. Chas. B. Lamborn, President, Wm. Wagner, Sec., and John Harvey as Treasurer.

Col. Lamborn had been under Gen. Palmer in the Civil war, was manager of the C. C. I. Co. of which the General was President, and was connected with several other land and improvement corporations. John Harvey had a large coal and hay business in Leadville and was later well known in the valley through his large ranch west of La-Jara where he raised horses.

On April 9th, 1878, Dr. Bell gave a Quit Claim Deed to the D. & R. G. on a one hundred foot right-of-way through section 10. On the same day he gave the Union Contract Co. a Quit Claim Deed on two hundred feet each side of the railway right-of-way and including the land where this company later built the Shops and coal sheds.

On April 17th, he deeded approximately sixteen hundred acres of land in and surrounding section 10, to the Alamosa Town Company.

The Plat of Alamosa was put on record May 13th. The town was in two parts, from Third Street to Sixth on the north side of the railway, and from Seventh to Tenth Street on the south side. The
west line was E. Street now Edison and the East line at N. Street
one block east of what is now East Avenue. All Streets were eight feet wide
except 6th and 7th which were 50 feet. All lots 25 ft. by 100 ft.
except those reduced by the Rio Grande River.

A very interesting thing about the plat of Alamosa, is the fact
that the five hundred feet between 6th and 7th Streets was never in-
cluded in the incorporation, as Dr. Bell gave the Quit Claim Deeds
directly to the Railway Co. and the Union Contract Co.

So far as can be learned this land, though it lays in the heart
of the city, has never been included and has never legally come under
the jurisdiction of the City government.

A peculiar thing about all this activity in the sale and trans-
ferring of land is the fact that Hendricks and the elder Branson did
not receive their patents until May 16, 1878, Andrew Branson Jr.'s
patent was issued on October 1st, and over seventy lots had been sold
by the Town Company before Dr. Bell's patent was granted November 19,
1878.
The early settlers of Guadalupe were undoubtedly troubled by high waters from the Conejos river. The location they had selected was on low ground and must have at times been flooded, for in the summer of 1855, the year following the founding of the settlement, Major Lafayette Head moved to the higher ground on the south bank and built a home.

It was in this year that Father Montano came to Guadalupe as priest. He too must have preferred the higher ground, for under his inspiration and guidance the parishioners erected a building about five hundred feet south of Major Head's establishment and dedicated it to My Lady of Guadalupe. Although it is agreed that it was a crude affair, some saying that it was built of cottonwood logs placed upright and tied and mudded together, as a jacal (pronounced Hakal) meaning stockade, while others say the original building was of adobe and surrounded by a stout jacal. Whichever it was, the construction was rugged as the parishioners did not intend that their place of worship be desecrated nor their services interrupted by any band of marauding savages.

In 1857, Father Montano was relieved by Father Jose Miguel Vigil who had been located at Espanola. The original settlers had been joined in increasing numbers by immigrants from the south. Servilleta had been founded about two miles below Guadalupe and Mogote had appeared five or six miles above, while in every direction homes were built and small farms cultivated.

Father Vigil, feeling "El Jacal" inadequate in such a rapidly growing community planned a new, and for those times, pretentious structure. Work on the new church was commenced early in July 1858, the new walls surrounding the old original building, which was used until the new edifice was completed. Bishop Lamy visited the parish. 
on July 22nd, 1858, and found the walls had been laid to the
height of three or four feet. Work progressed slowly, for the par-
ishioners were poor and much of their time was needed tending their
fields and flocks. However, the structure was completed, and in
June 1863, Bishop Lamy returned to consecrate the church and to
dedicate it to My Lady of Guadalupe, who was, and still is, the
patron saint of the community.

From time to time improvements and refinements were added un-
til the church was one of the most beautiful and best equipped in
southern Colorado.

In 1927, a disastrous fire occurred and the building was de-
stroyed, leaving only the two towers and the front of the old or-
iginal church standing. An interesting story is told of the fire.
The smoke rolled up in dense black clouds and the heat was intense,
but when the fire was finally brought under control it was observed
that the image of My Lady of Guadalupe in her niche above the door
had come through the conflagration unharmed. There was no signs of
smudging or heat blisters, the statue remained as white and clean as
the day it had been placed there.

The church was immediately rebuilt, incorporating the remain-
ing part of the old original structure into the new structure and
was dedicated by Bishop Tihan of Denver on December 12, 1927.
Settlement of the San Luis Valley

With the settlement of the town of San Luis in 1851, a permanent population was established in the San Luis Valley. San Pedro, four miles above San Luis on the Culebra river, sprang up in '52, and some miles below, a hamlet known as San Acacia appeared in 1853.

After a summer spent in the southern end of the valley, Jose Maria Jáquez and his party went to their homes in New Mexico and returning in October of 1854, with their families, household goods and livestock, and settled at Guadalupe.

Undoubtedly the valley was well known by the Mexicans and there very possibly had been prospective settlers in it before who had been discouraged by the Indians.

Fort Massachusetts was established on the Ute Creek in 1852 and a troop of cavalry stationed there as a protection for the settlers, but still the Indians continued for some years to be a menace, stealing and occasionally murdering the white inhabitants. The Guadalupe settlers had built their town around a large plaza and the stock was kept there at night. In the spring of 1855, the Indians swooped down on the stock just after it had been turned out to graze for the day, and drove off every head. Even in the face of these difficulties settlers continued to come in, both Mexicans and Americans, and the troubles with the Indians continued with a number of killings on both sides.

In 1865 the Military at Fort Garland had orders to settle the trouble and a meeting was held there of both the Mexican settlers and the Indians. A debtor and creditor
balance was struck over the lives lost on both sides, and the difference squared with the payments of ponies and cattle, and the matters began to go along peacefully.

By 1865 we find La Loma on the north side of the river from the present Del Norte, and "Seven Mile Plaza" already established. There were a number of settlers along Saguache Creek, and Saguache City and Milton, situated of the flats to the east were rivals in 1867 for the Saguache County seat. Undoubtedly some Mexicans lived, or had lived near the present town of Villa Grove. The people in the Saguache County hauled their grain to San Luis, or as they called it—Culebra, to have it ground into flour, and supplied a great deal to the Indian agency located some miles above their settlement. Between San Luis and Conejos the road crossed the Rio Grandes at a ford, about a mile above the mouth of the Conejos. Another road went north from Conejos crossing the river at La Loma. Another road used, in travel between Saguache and San Luis, when the river was high, cut straight across the country between the towns, used by Mears when he freighted from Denver via Pueblo and Sangre de Cristo Pass to Saguache in the late '60's and early '70's.

Several families settled in the Rock Creek district in the early '70's and with the increased activity in the San Juan country, Del Norte appeared in 1872 and grew rapidly, being a base of supplies for the western country and used by the miners as a wintering place.

For sometime the freighters used the old road from Fort Garland, southwest to the ferry which Mr. Stewart had built at the ford north of the mouth of the Conejos, continuing
to the west over the road used by the Rock Creek Community, on to Del Norte, and to Lake City.

When the stage line was established, with a daily stage carrying passengers and mail each way, a shorter route was chosen. The line came from Pueblo through the Wet Mountain Valley, up Bass Creek, across Maxwell Park and down the Sangre de Cristo Creek to Fort Garland. From there the line went on west, through Washington Springs, to the river, travelling the north side to Del Norte. Another line ran north along the foot of Mt. Blanca, angled northwest through the dry Lames' country to Saguache and over the old agency road to Lake City.

By the year 1874 there were sixteen white families living along the Rio Grande River between Del Norte and where the Conejos emptied in.

They received mail and did their trading at Del Norte, where supplies were still high priced. A poor grade of locally ground flour, dark and coarse, cost $1.00 a sack.

That same year a petition for a Post Office was circulated, and receiving the requisite number of signers, the Wayside Post Office was opened at the Maddox Ranch, about a mile north of the present Alamosa. That same year a school was established there and D. R. Smith, bound for Del Norte, decided that it was a good location for a store.

Smith bought a small piece of ground adjoining the ranch, from L. C. May, erected a building, and put in a stock of goods.

The community had a cemetery about a mile and a half southwest of the Maddox ranch which was used up to 1881.
When the Leadville excitement started in 1877, a number of the later settlers along the river, who did not have well established ranches, sold or abandoned thier places and left to try their hand at mining.

The Denver and Rio Grande Railway had surmounted Veta Pass, and the end of the rails was at Garland City. Through a gentlemans agreement between the forwarding company and the rail officials, this remained the terminus during '77 and was quite a town. The Forwarding Company had large warehouses, where foods to be freighted to the San Juan were stored, there were several hotels, livery and freighting stables, and other businesses connected with the building of a railway and the shipping of goods by wagon. The usual saloons were of course, there in numbers.

With the advent of 1878 decided changes began to appear in the vicinity of the 'big bend', as this part of the river was termed.

Ex-Gov. Alex C. Hunt, president of the Rio Grande Construction Co., and in charge of the building of the railroad, had surveyed the route from Garland City west. He picked the location where the bridge was to span the Rio Grande, and named the new terminal on the west bank of the river, Alamosa.
When I came to the San Luis Valley
as told by Mary Jane Cole to C. E. Gibson, Jr.

Mrs. Mary Jane Cole.

Father had written to a friend of his who was already in
the valley about the opportunities there, and had received
such a favorable reply, that on May 26th, 1879 we loaded up
our belongings and started west. There were two big wagons
with four horses each, and two smaller wagons, with only one
team apiece, and a number of loose horses. We had the haying
machinery, mowers and rakes, the household goods, and our clo-
thes. The trip was really a lark and we all enjoyed it, though
at Dodge City we were rather nervous when some very rough look-
ing men admired our big Missouri mules. It was rather a relief
when we had traveled several days journey from there, and still
had the mules. We were scared again going through the Indian
country in Western Kansas but nothing happened to us.

During the day we mixed the bread in a large tin bucket,
let it rise, and then would bake it when we camped for the night.
As soon as a stopping place had been decided on, the stove was
set off and the children scurried around for wood or buffalo
chips. In the morning we made only enough fire to get a light
breakfast so the stove would not be too hot to load. Each of
the family had a chair and Mother and I had a bed in one of the
wagons with a spring and mattress.

The day before we left we had a batch of baby chickens hatch
and we took them along. Each night their box was opened and they
would run and pick around, perfectly at home. They grew so fast
during the six weeks we were on the road that their box had to be
enlarged several times. We also had a six weeks old colt along,
which our neighbors had said would never stand the trip. He did get sore-footed and we made him some mocassins out of an old pair of shoes. Every two weeks we laid over a day and did the family washing, even scrubbing our chairs and cleaning everything just as if we were at home.

None of us had seen the mountains before and our excitement was intense when one day far in the distance we saw a low blue line along the horizon. From day to day these grew until at last we reached Pueblo and could see mountains north and south as far as the eye could reach, with Pikes Peak looming white in the haze to the north.

We went through the town of La Veta and camped in the canyon below the Muleshoe curve. While we were there a train came over the Pass and in awe we watched it crawl along the edge of the cliffs, wondering if our friends in Missouri would believe that railroads could be built in such impossible places. There were two toll-gates on the Veta Pass road, one on the other side and one at Placer on this side.

On May tenth, we camped on the east side of the river, across from Alamosa. I stayed in camp, but the boys crossed on the railroad bridge which was planked over, and came into town. When they returned they reported it was a pretty tough place, with every other building a saloon.

The next day we went on up the river, crossing near either the Shocks of Dorris ranch and continuing on south. It was south or west of what is now La Jara that we came to a natural open meadows and here we camped. All summer we mowed, raked and stacked hay,
moving as the cooler fall weather came on, to a small unfinished
log cabin, which we chinked and made habitable, on Spring creek.
We had to keep an eye on our loose stock which grazed close by
where we worked. When a covered wagon came by the horses would
look up, take a few more bites and then start following after it,
as they had been in the habit of doing for the six weeks we were
on the road.

In the late fall father bought a baler, baled the hay and
had no trouble disposing of it to the freighters, at thirty
dollars a ton, which, as it had cost nothing but the labor, made
a profitable summer. We then moved back to the Rio Grande and:
father bought the premiems of John and Tom Elsner adjoining
the ranch where Al Cole lived.

That winter father made a trip to the mountains and brought
back some wood from which he made a loom. It was the first in
this country, so far as I know, and people from miles away brought
in rags and we made carpets, for them. We were not very impressed
with the industry of the people, they didn't bother to raise
gardens. I guess we fell into their ways ourselves pretty quick
for the best garden we ever raised was the first year we were
off the ranch.

In 1881 Al Cole and I were married. Al raised hay and grain,
and in the fall and winter baled hay all over the valley. Adam
Shellabarger, Steve Kinney, the Dickey Bros., Pat Wilkins and
later, Billy Adams, were some of the men for whom he baled. One
time he freighted a load of hay to Leadville which brought him
$125 a ton.
In 1891 we opened a store in Alamosa in the Manders block, but a little later, feeling the rent was too high we bought a piece of ground from Sandy Oliver, and put up the building where the Mt. Blanca Drug Store is now located. Here we handled hay, grain, groceries and some dry goods.
Entries picked at random from the Journal of the F.W. Posthoff Store at Fort Garland. Mr. Posthoff evidently had stores at Costilla and Conejos, and also did a banking business.

Thursday September 1, 1864.
Dr. L. B. McLain
2 Looking Glasses $22.00
Cigars .50
1 pt. Whiskey (Negro) .65

John Lawrence
6 Bott. Ale $6.00
2 Bott. Wine 6.00

September 8th, 1864.
Capt. W. A. Van Wliet
Whiskey $1.00
4 lbs. Shot 2.00
1 lb. Powder 2.00
1 Box Caps 1.25

September 14th, 1864.
T. Gaussin
Cigars $.50
Wash Bowl 6.00
2 Bars Soap .75
10 yrs. Muslin 6.00
1 pr. Shoes 2.50

Lieut. W. B. Moore.
1 Bott. Port Wine $3.00
3 yrs. Velvet 4.00
2 yrs. Cambric 1.00
1 piece V. Ribbon 3.00
1 yrs. Muslin .60
1 can Tomatoes 1.25
Candy .15
Tobacco 1.50
2 Bott. Champagne 7.00
6 Bott. Ale 6.00
1 lb. Nuts 1 Haisins 1.50
1 Bott. Whiskey 1.25

September 15th, 1864.
Major L. Head.
1 pr. Pants $14.00
1 Coat 24.00
1 Vest 6.00
September 15th, 1864.

R. F. Cordua
7 lbs. Sugar 62  $4.37
5.1 lbs. Coffee 5.00
1 lb. Powder 1.00
1 paper Soda .50
1 lb. nails .38
1 paper Tobacco .40
1 lb. Cheese .25
1 Box Sardines 1.00
1 Box Crackers .50

R. E. Easterday
1 Reg. Nails 100 lbs. 30 $30.00

September 17th, 1864.

Dr. L. B. McLain
3 lbs. Crackers 50 $1.50
1 can Peaches 1.25
2 cans Chicken 2.50
1 Bott. Wake up 3.00

Capt. Chas. Kerber
5 lbs. Shot 2.50
2 cans Oysters 2.50
1 Bott. Schnopps 2.50

(The following entries I take to be evidences that a banking business was done. I think Aborn was manager of 'La Costilla' the store at that place.)

Monday September 26th, 1864.

James Aborn
To Amt. Order of John Frazer $100.00
To Amt. Order of M.V. Stevens 150.00
To Amt. a/c Gov. Gilpin 128.67

By Draft $1840.00

Gov. W. Gilpin
By Jas. Aborn $128.67

October 1st, 1864.

John Lewis
31 lbs. Sugar 62 1.88
1 Bott. Whiskey 1.25
1 Blanket 8.00
1 lb. Crackers .50
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 1st, 1864</td>
<td>Mrs. Lizzie Jenks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 paper Pins</td>
<td></td>
<td>.25</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 yd. Velvet</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.50</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 qt. Coal Oil</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 lb. Candy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raisins &amp; Fruits</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 5th, 1864</td>
<td>Marshall A. C. Hunt</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Bott. Brandy Peach</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 7th, 1864</td>
<td>Capt. Stilwell</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/2 Gal. Coal Oil</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 lb. Starch</td>
<td></td>
<td>.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 13th, 1864</td>
<td>T. T. Tobins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 lb. Salt</td>
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<td>November 5th, 1864</td>
<td>J. D. Cook</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 lbs. Lead</td>
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<td>Mrs. Lizzie Jenks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 lb. Prunes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 Spool Thread</td>
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<td>.25</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 Paper Needles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dr. A. E. Waggoner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Basin &amp; Pitcher</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Large Tin Can</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.50</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Shoe Brush</td>
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<td>.50</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Clothes Line</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 doz. Clothes Pins</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.50</td>
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<td>January 24th, 1865</td>
<td>Thomas Tobins</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 qt. Cherry Brandy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24 yds. Calico</td>
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<td>12.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 pt. Jam &amp; Jum</td>
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<td>1.25</td>
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<td>February 27th, 1865</td>
<td>George Hindeale</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 1/2 yds. Broadcloth</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>35.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Novel</td>
<td></td>
<td>.50</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 lb. Best Smoke Tobacco</td>
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<td>2.50</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playing Cards</td>
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<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John Lewis</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 plug Tobacco</td>
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<td>.75</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 lb. Soda</td>
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<td>.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1st, 1865</td>
<td>Dr. C. R. Waggoner</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>By 1 mo. Pay a/c, less 5% Income Tax</td>
<td>$37.50</td>
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September, 22, 1865.

A. J. Cordera
1 can Sardines  $  .75
20 lbs. Potatoes  5  1.00
4 lbs. Butter  3.00

S. E. Sturrett
5 lbs. Coffee  $ 4.50
5 lbs  3.50