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A Story of Major Lafayette Head, told by Wm. Parrish to C.E. Gibson

Mr. Parrish operated Major Heads Mill at Conejos, and was intimately acquainted with him. This incident is related because it gives a true insight of the character of the Major.

"One winter, I dont exactly remember the year, Major Head was called to serve on the grand jury at Pueblo. There was a good deal of snow on the ground and the weather was very cold. The Major started out, taking a number of men with him in case difficulties were encountered. He hitched six horses to his hack and sent six more ahead to break trail. The snow made it impossible to go over Sanger De Cristo Pass so the party headed for Del Norte, planning to go via Saguache and Poncha Pass.

Evening found them still some distance from Del Norte, with the horses about played out.

Spying a light in the window of a cabin they turned that way, stopped and asked for lodging for the night.

"No," said the owner of the cabin. "We're not taking in any travelers."

"I'll be glad to pay for any trouble we put you to," replied the Major. "My men and I are very cold and we should at least like to come in and get warm."

"No," was the retort. "My wife is expecting a child soon and I dont want any men coming in here."

There was nothing to do but go on. After struggling through the snow the party decided they would have to camp, and a cold and miserable camp it was. In the morning they were covered with snow and nearly frozen, but managed to reach Del Norte without mishap. From there the road had been broken and the rest of the journey was accomplished under no great difficulty.

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One cold and snowy night several years later, Major Head was sitting before the fire in his comfortable home in Conejos, when there was a 'Hallo' outside and a knock on the door. There stood the man who had turned the Major away some years before. He was chilled and miserable, unable to get home because of the blizzard.

"Come in, come in," cried the Major heartily. "Manuel, put the gentlemans horse in the stable. Pull up to the fire side, and have a drink."

In the morning the man said he must be on his way, but the Major would not hear of it.

"Nonsense," he said. "No one should be out in this kind of weather. You stay right here by the fire until this storm is over and have a drink with me."

The blizzard lasted several days. Major Head insisted on his guest staying and not taking any chance with the weather.

"Do you know where I can hire some men?" the visitor asked.

"No I dont. No one works in this kind of weather," was the reply.

"Well I want to hire ten or twelve good men."

"What in the world for? Theres no kind of work to do in a storm like this."

"I want the men to take me out and kick me all around the Square," replied the man.

When the Major told me this story I asked him why he didnt slam the door in the fellows face when he first showed up.

"Well," replied Major Head. "in the first place, that wouldnt have been the right thing to do. And besides that, it was a lot more punishment to the man to have me take him in and treat him as I did."

This was typical of Major Lafayette Head. He always did the right thing, was subtle in his punishments, and was respected and loved by all.

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Memories of Placer, Colorado.

As told by Mrs. Jim Jones to C.E. Gibson Jr.

I was born in Michigan and came to Colorado Springs as a small child in 1873. My father, Laban Harold, went into the San Juan country that year on a prospecting trip with an Uncle named Bainter and two cousins. They staked several claims that year and went east to buy some mining machinery. In 1874 they started to freight this machinery to their claims, but when Washington Springs was reached the river was so high it had flooded the country and they were confronted with a sheet of water six or seven miles wide. For five weeks they laid at the springs waiting for the water to go down and then decided it would be too late in the season when they reached the San Juan so the trip was put off until the next year.

When they finally reached their claims they found they had all been jumped, and they returned to Colorado Springs. My father owned a shingle mill which he took to the Leadville country and sold there.

In 1877 the family moved to Garland City locating at the Big Hill Stage Station, where A. A. Arington was tender, about three miles above the town. The building was a large adobe affair built on three sides of a square in the Mexican style, and it was in a part of this that we lived. In Garland City, Myron Wilkins had a livery barn which he later moved to Alamosa, and his brother Oscar (Pat), had a ranch on Ute Creek where he raised hay for the cavalry horses at Ft. Garland. Al Springer, whose family lived at Garland City was the engineer on the first passenger train over Veta Pass, and Mr. Thomas

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another resident was later a judge in Alamosa.

In 1878, the railroad was built on to Alamosa and Garland City was abandoned, most of the buildings being moved on flat cars or wagons to Alamosa.

My father and several others moved up the Sangre de Cristo Creek to Placer, which grew into quite a town. The Railroad Co. had a round-house, coal shutes, a Y, and kept the 'helper' engines there. There was a great deal of mining being done up Placer and Grayback Creeks. My father located the iron mine which he sold to the Colorado Central Improvement Co., Later the Colorado Fuel & Iron Co. Three miles of railroad were built up Grayback Creek to the mine and as many as three hundred men employed there. After the discovery of the iron deposits at Orient, this mine was abandoned, as the ore could be mined much cheaper at the new place.

The first merchant in Placer was Baldy Sefton. He had a large general store with saloon in connection, and also operated the toll-gate where a charge of twenty-five cents a team was made. Joe Hamilton also had a store with a saloon in connection, in fact there were seven saloons in the town. Hank LaCounte was a tie and piling contractor for the railroad, and his wife was our first school teacher. Dr. Irwin was the first physician and he and father owned a drug store. Joe Smith worked at the saw-mill and later had charge of the Van Diest mine at Culebra. Mr. Sease was one of the well known men engaged in mining. The Mortons built and operated the Railroad Eating House, where the passengers on the east-bound train had their supper, and those on the west-bound their breakfast.

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In about 1887 several miles of the railroad track east of Alamosa were washed out by high water in the Rio Grande, and an excursion train bound for the San Juan country was held at Placer nearly thirty days while repairs were made. The passengers were taken care of by the railroad company and got their meals at the Mortons. The townspeople entertained them royally, putting on a dance every night, and in many other ways. I remember among the passengers some school-teachers from Boston and an English Lord.

Mr. Tate was the Postmaster and the Post Office was called Russell, though the name on the railroad depot was always Placer. J. J. Jones, father of Jim Jones with whom I grew up, had a contract with the railroad for ties and piling.

The town was strung along the canon for over a mile and there were eight or nine hundred people lived there.

Father was a Justice of the Peace and married several couples from Ft. Garland and other places. He and mother sometimes went to visit or have dinner with the officers and their families at the fort. He said they all had colored servants and lived very well.

At one time father was a Deputy United States Marshall. I well remember his coming in one winter night and strapping on his guns preparing to go after a man who had stabbed another in a saloon fight. Mother was afraid something would happen to him and cried when he left. He tracked the killer through the snow to a deserted cabin, captured him, and returned safely with his prisoner who was tried and sentenced in the court at San Luis. Another time a neighbor of ours, Mr Tethrow had a fine team

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of horses stolen. Father gathered a posse and trailed the two thieves over into the Wet Mountain valley, where they came up with them at their camp. On being called on to put up their hands the horse-thieves grabbed their guns and fired and the possemen killed them both. One of them turned out to be a girl about seventeen years old. The posse buried them where they had been killed.

In 1881 mothers health was bad and father decided to take her to the hot springs at Pagosa. He had heard that the people over there needed flour so at Alamosa he loaded up his wagon. The Allison gang were reported to be in that part of the country and father was very nervous about taking his family on the trip. As we got near Pagosa many people bought flour of us along the road. Among these was a prosperous sheep-man who had a large roll of money. Father asked him if he wasnt afraid to carry so much cash with the Allison about, but he just laughed and said he could take care of himself. It was only a few days later that he was rbbbed and murdered by the Allison gang.

My husband had a very sad experience when he was fourteen years old. He had been visiting a friend up at the iron mine, and on the 4th of July the two boys got on their ponys and came down to town to celebrate. They were shooting off fire-crackers out in the street in front of a saloon. A negro who cooked at the eating house had been gambling there all night and was standing in the door. He saw across the street the man whom he thought had fleeced him in the game and shot at him just as Jim's pal stood up. the bullet hit the boy in the head killing him instantly.

Carl Wulsten from over in the Wet Mountain valley had

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interested some capitalists in putting up a smelter at Placer, and lived there for some time in charge of this work. By the time the plant was finished the mines had about played out. The smelter, which had cost forty thousand dollars caught fire and burned to the ground without ever having treated a ton of ore.

Mr. Wubsten and his family then moved down near Ft. Garland to take charge of the "Mountain Home" Ranch. Father Marchand the owner having been called to Taos to take charge of the college there.

Father was well acquainted with Tom Tobins, the famous scout, who lived at Fort Garland. He told me about Tobins killing the Espinosa desperados and said he received a reward of \$1500. for their heads.

(Moccasin Bill, an old trapper, lived at Placer and played for the dances, assisted by Charlie Robinson. He was rather fond of his liquor and after each set he'd say, "Well boys, its a long time between drinks," and would repair to the saloon before he would start fiddling again.

Game was very plentiful in the mountains. I have known of my fathers bringing in as many as six deer in one day.

In 1890 the railroad was standard gauged and the route changed to come down Wagon Creek instead of Sangre de Cristo, and leaving Placer isolated. The town dwindled rapidly from then on until it became the 'ghost town' it is today.

Jim Jones and I were married in 1891 and went to Chama for thirteen years. We lived in Durango for two years and in Antonito for a short while, coming to Alamosa in 1905.

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My First Ten Years in the San Luis Valley

As told by Robert Bern to C.E. Gibson

Until I was fourteen years old, I lived on the East Side in New York City. Father was a cabinet maker and finisher for the Steinway Piano Co. ^{young. He} ~~was~~ became discouraged ^{after} twice, ^{losing} ~~at of his savings through the failure of banks,~~ ~~banks in which he kept his account closed.~~ Taking what money he had left, he loaded the family on the train, and on April 20th, 1879, we arrived in Alamosa. We went immediately to Del Norte and leased a small farm, about three miles east of town. As the Spring was still young we had plenty of time to put in a crop of buckwheat. Thirty days later a terrific hail storm ruined our crop prospects and ended our farming.

Work was scarce in the Del Norte district and plentiful in the Silverton country, so Father and I started for that place. The Barlow & Sanderson Stages, with their gaily painted coaches and dashing horses, had been one of the most interesting and exciting things I had seen and I was mighty glad to have a ride on one. The Stage Stations were about eleven miles apart, and the six horses were driven at a ~~good~~ run for the whole distance, ~~where~~ ^a fresh team would be ready and waiting, the change taking only a few minutes. I know we made the fifty-five miles from Del Norte to Antelope Springs, where the stage branched off for Lake City, in exactly five hours. There was no stage to Silverton, so at the springs we bought a burro, which cost us \$27, packed Father's carpenter tools on it and went on to Silverton afoot, over the well kept toll road used by the freighters.

This interview was obtained by Mr. Gibson of Alamosa while working on the Historical Society's C. W. A. Project. - G.

Father immediately went to work at \$1.00 an hour, making and putting in the woodwork and fixtures in the Sherwin & Houghton store building, and I got a job at \$70. a month and board, washing and caring for the silverware in the Walker House. After two months of this work, I took our burro, which was eating its head off, and packed grub to the Highland Mary Mine. Usually I could make two trips a day, pack a load up and ride the burro back, at \$3.50 a load. For a fourteen-year-old boy, I made good wages.

Ⓟ About this time I met a boy from Del Norte who offered to sell me his team, wagon and harness for \$200, and as I had been saving my money and had the cash, I took his offer. The very next day I found four passengers for Del Norte, at \$20. apiece, and from then on I put in several years taking freight or passengers from Alamosa to Del Norte and Silverton. Sometimes, if I only had a couple of passengers for Silverton, I would put in a couple of cases of eggs and a box of butter or maybe a sack of cabbage and a sack of potatoes. Eggs cost thirty-five cents a dozen at this time and brought \$1.10 in Silverton; butter cost thirty-five cents a pound and brought \$1.50; and cabbage and potatoes were a cent a pound in Alamosa and sold for ten cents a pound in Silverton.

I was just a kid of course, but into the ten years from 1879/ until I settled in Alamosa in 1889, I crowded a lifetime of adventure and experience.

One time Father and I were starting home from Silverton with his tools packed on a burro, when a big snow made it impossible to go to Del Norte direct, and it was

necessary to go south to Animas City ^{near} (near Durango), then to Pagosa, to Tierra ^{Amarilla,} ~~Amarilla,~~ to Tres Piedras, and into the valley from the south. This trip took us at least two weeks and four of those nights we spent out in the snow where it was at least forty degrees below zero. I well remember the last day, when we had a contest, and walked from Conchos to Del Norte. Father won, and I arrived several hours later, driving the burro.

Many incidents of those days ^{are impressed on} ~~stick in~~ my mind. I remember when two men had held up the stage from Lake City and shot the driver. Now just a plain holdup to relieve the passengers of their cash was no hanging offense, but when someone was shot or the mail was disturbed, it was necessary for the vigilantes to take a hand. The holdup men had been caught and were awaiting trial in the Del Norte jail, when one evening about forty of the vigilantes surrounded the jail, quietly took the prisoners out, and started down the river where the big cottonwoods grew. A good many of the more curious townspeople followed to see what ^{would} happen, but the vigilantes, not caring for an audience, snook them off.

My pal and I, however, went prowling along the river when suddenly a large, black-masked figure stepped in front of us. "Where in the hell do you kids think you're going," he asked. "Oh, we just wanted to see what's going on." I replied meekly. He peered at us in the gloom and then said, "Well, go on and take a look." We hadn't gone many steps when I suddenly felt a pair of boots in my face and we were at once completely satisfied with our excursion.

The freighting road between Alamosa and Del Norte went south to about where the "chicken-ranch road" now is, from there westerly about to the gun-barrel, northerly to what was later ^{Road} Lariat and later still Monte Vista and west to Del Norte. There was no stage directly to Silverton, the stage branching off at Antelope Springs ^{Antelope} for Lake City, while the freighters to Silverton went on up the river to Crooked Creek, through Road Canon and over Grassy Hill, and down to the river again. This detour was necessary because of the deep box canon about seven miles above Antelope Springs. There were three Toll Gates on this road, one at Wagon Wheel Gap, another at Antelope Springs, and the third beyond Grassy Hill, with a charge of \$2.00 a team at each gate, making a total of \$6.00 toll between Del Norte and Silverton for an outfit with only one team. You can see that this ^{amounted} to quite an item for the heavy freighters who used three, four, and five teams to the wagon. There were two more good pulls beyond Grassy Hill, after the road reached the Rio Grande again. One over Timber Hill, and the last and hardest over Stony Pass, ~~From~~ ^{this point} it was a long down grade to Silverton.

One time I had made a trip to Animas City, and when I rolled out of my blankets in the morning, found my team was missing. Looking around, I discovered my horses, each carrying a drunken miner, almost at the top of the hill. Grabbing up my rifle, I sent a shot after them and it had the desired effect. The miners rolled off the horses and went on afoot and I had my team back a short while later.

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Contrary to the impressions given by most wild west story writers, holding up the stage was not a common occurrence. Possibly twice a year the stage was robbed and it was seldom anyone was hurt.

On one trip out of Alamosa I had a light load of perishables and one passenger, a gambler bound for Del Norte. We stopped for lunch at the Half-Way House, a rancho owned by August Dupke, where we could get plenty of bread and milk for a dime. There was a crippled fellow there by the name of Burton, and we sat on a log and visited for a while after lunch. He was as pleasant a fellow as I ever met. That evening, I learned later, Burton held up the stage near the Dorris ranch. No one was hurt, he did not even have a gun, just used a stick as a bluff, but he made the mistake of meddling with the mail. If it had not been for this he would probably have been forgotten as he got away clear out of the valley, but the Federal Agents kept on his trail and several months later he was caught and sentenced to a long term in the penitentiary.

Alamosa, as the end of the rails, was a busy and prosperous town. The San Juan country was booming and in need of all sorts of machinery and supplies, and freighting gave work to a good many men. It seems to me there must have been two or three hundred transients in Alamosa every night, most of them engaged in freighting, and more than once I found the sleeping accommodations in Wilkins Barn rather crowded.

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When the railroad reached Del Norte in 1882, I quit freighting, and went up to the ^{Sagunto} Carnero mining camp, where I worked as a teamster at the Buckhorn Mine. After this I carried the mail from the camp, where the Post Office was called Biedell, to Green, near where La Garita now is. At this time footracing was my strong point and I was in training for the Firemen's Meet in Pueblo, as a member of the Del Norte Fire Brigade. There was a ^{Strike} ~~strike~~ on at the Buckhorn Mine and the miners had set off several blasts of giant powder trying to intimidate the owners. Going up to my boarding house that evening I was running, as was my habit, when George Southey, the Buckhorn foreman spied me. Not recognising me and wanting to be on the safe side he took a shot at me and just creased ~~the~~ ^{the} the top of my head. I was "out" for twenty-four hours, But luckily, being shot in the head did ^{not} ~~not~~ effect my running, and a month later I went to Pueblo and won the 1000-foot race, becoming Amateur ^{Champion} ~~Champion~~ of the state, to the glory of the Del Norte Fire Department.

The Annual Firemen's Meet was one of the big occasions in the state, and the rivalry between the teams of the different towns was keen. The Harry A. Mulnix Team of Trinidad, and the J. B. Orman Team of Pueblo, were the outstanding brigades of the state and the greatest competitors. It was not an uncommon thing for a town to hire professional runners for these contests. There were two kinds of races; the nub to nub, a straightaway run; and the wet race, in which the teams made the run, unreel the hose, coupled up, and the first to throw water was the winner.

Del Norte at this time had three brigades; the Engine Co^{mpany} with red shirts; the Hose Co^{mpany} with grey shirts; and the Hook and Ladder Co^{mpany} made up of younger fellows, with blue shirts.

Horse racing was also one of the popular out-door sports of those days. Several of us boys owned a sleepy looking horse we called Red Antelope, who lived up to his name. I think there was only one horse in the state that could beat him. One of our favorite pastimes was to "take" the Mexicans. We would hitch our horse to a light wagon and tour the country. When we could find a Mexican who owned what he thought was a fast horse we would match a race. The dejected appearing Red Antelope looked like easy pickings, but the result was always the same a very surprised Mexican with a very flat pocket-book. *H* We boys used to "horn in" sometimes on the Gallo races, a great sport with the Mexicans. A rooster was buried in the dirt so that just his head and neck stuck out. One at a time the boys would ride by at a gallop, lean from the saddle, and grab for the roosters head. Even when the rooster forgets to duck and one of the boys gets him, the race isnt over, as the purse belongs to the one who crosses the finish line with the rooster, and its anyones bird until then. It is plenty exciting and often a little rough, especially on the rooster.

To return to my days as a mail carrier. One day I was only fifty feet from Greene, *a stopping place on the Bogusche - Del Norte stage line, where* ~~when I heard a shot~~ the Biedell mail was dropped, when I heard a shot.



Miss Greene came running out the door and cried to me that she thought her brother Arthur had killed himself. It took me several minutes to find that this was true. He had been standing by the bed, and when he fell his body rolled under it. ~~Greene was just a stop for the Saguache-Del Norte stage, where the Biedell mail was dropped.~~ After Arthur's death Miss Greene refused to handle the mail any longer, so my route was extended clear to Del Norte and I used a buck-board instead of a saddle horse.

(By 1887 Biedell had dwindled so that the mail route was discontinued, and that summer Bill Goodacre and I went up to Emma to work on the Midland ^{railroad} which was then being extended beyond Leadville. ~~We left Del Norte with a bull-team, and took us seven days to go~~ the fifty miles to Villa Grove, ~~took us seven days.~~ The bull-whackers were so worn out when we arrived there that they spent most of the night refreshing themselves, so that it was necessary the next day for Bill, myself and a girl who was in the party to drive the teams. We worked that summer on the Midland as bull-whackers, driving a team of oxen with a ^c ~~shopper~~, and in addition I had the rather doubtful honor of being stable-boss, which meant it was up to me to see that the teams were in and ready to go to work in the morning, at no extra pay.

In the fall we drew our pay in a lump and started home, stopping the first night at Aspen, where we picked up five dollars in a foot race. The next night we hit Leadville and made a night of it, waking up in the morning practically broke. Of our summer's wages we had just seven dollars and a half left, so we could still eat, but it was a long old walk



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back to Del Norte. That cured me of ever letting anything like that happen again.

For six months after that I worked in the Del Norte depot, where Don Haywood was agent, as messenger boy and clerk. Don was pretty well fixed, as he was running a coal business on the side, with no bins or any other overhead attached to it. McCloskey, the town drayman, took the orders for the coal. When he had enough to make up a car, Haywood wired the mine to ship a car and McCloskey delivered it directly to the customer.

McCloskey's horse was also the town delivery system. If you bought a bill of goods at Middaugh's or Sniffer's, you would load them in McCloskey's wagon, which was kept hitched close by, drive home, turn the horse loose, and he would return to his stand.

The following year my brother and I took the mail contract between Del Norte and Summitville, which was then a thriving little town supporting thirteen saloons. It was there I saw my first electric lights. Tom Bowen was operating the Little Ida Mine there, and on our down trips, if not too heavily loaded, we would take out ten or fifteen sacks of concentrates and load them on the car. Sometimes it would take two or even three weeks to fill a car, but Haywood always held it as long as necessary.

On one trip, coming by what we called Bear's Den Hill, within a distance of not more than a quarter of a mile, six bears crossed the road ahead of us and we certainly had a time with our team. A horse seems to be more afraid of a bear than anything else in the world. In the winter we

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could use our team for only seventeen of the twenty-eight miles to Summitville, and the last eleven miles my brother and I had to travel on skis with the mail on our backs.

In 1889 Don Haywood was transferred to Alamosa, and made the move with the understanding that he was to take me along as his cashier. Our mail contract had some time to run yet, but that was satisfactorily arranged and ever since then I have been a resident of Alamosa.

Some of My Experiences as a Cowpuncher.

as told by Wesley Cole to C.E.Gibson Jr.

Two of my brothers were already in the valley when I came here in 1879. One had a ranch on the river about eight miles west of Alamosa and the other was a teamster with the freighting outfit which the Dickey Brothers owned.

The Dickey Brothers were cattlemen, running around twenty thousand head, but there was plenty of profit in freighting and one of them went to St. Louis and bought fifty four head of fine mules and seven wagons, making six, eight mule teams and one, six mule outfit.

Through my brother I got a job with the Dickeys and made several trips with the wagons to the San Juan country and one over to the Uncompahgre with supplies for the soldiers during the Indian scare.

The home ranch for the cattle operations was on Spring Creek and is now called the Medano.

The Dickey brothers also operated a large meat market at Leadville, their shop as I recall it being fifty feet wide and over a hundred feet deep. Every so often they would drive a bunch of a hundred and fifty head up there to butcher. It was on one of these drives that I got my first experience as a cowpuncher. I was really the cook for the outfit but had to take my turn at night-herding as the others did. I was plenty green on that trip. When it was my turn to herd I took the boss's horse which he kept saddled for

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emergency use. There was snow on the ground and that particular night we were camped near Buena Vista. The rider before me had made a track around the herd, in the snow and I was sleepily following this path when my horse stumbled, my saddle skirts gave a great flap, and up jumped the cattle and away they went like a bunch of wild deer. Somebody yelled 'Stampede' and there was plenty of excitement for a while, added to by the fact that the boss couldn't find his horse. I will never forget the tongue lashing he gave me when things finally got quieted down again. It was quite a job gathering up the cattle again and we never did find them all, though we picked up thirteen head on our way back.

I went with three of those beef drives to Leadville that winter. Returning from the second trip I built my fire one night against the foot of a big old pine tree. The heat started the pitch oozing out and it wasn't long before the whole tree became a great flaming torch.

The third trip, as I was leaning over the fire, the night we camped at Kerber Creek, a piece of burning willow stick popped into my eye. The pain was terrible and I didn't get any sleep or relief until we got to Leadville a week later. By then it was too late to save my eye, the cold, bright snow and infection had done their work and I have been blind in my right eye ever since.

I stayed on at the ranch until my eye was well, and then found that I was out of a job.

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Charlie Plowman was boss for Addee and Durkee at the Zapata Ranch, and offered me a job, if the loss of my eye didnt incapacitate me for riding. I told him I would be glad to try, and went on over to the ranch with him. He pointed out the horses I was to have and said I had better ride the gray that day. I saddled him in the stable and he nearly ran over me as I lead him out. I got my foot in the stirrup and just as I swung up, down went his head and he jerked the reins out of my hand. From then on that grey had everything his own way. Away we went, the horse bucking and bawling, and me flapping and flopping, both feet out of the stirrups and a death grip on the horn. Everyone was out to see the fun, even the Mexican woman who did the cooking, as that horse had a reputation and was always given to the new hands. Well I stayed on, not because I wanted to but I just didnt have time to get off. I got well acquainted with the grey that day and kept him in my string as long as I rode there.

Water was very scarce out in the valley and the cattle walked themselves poor getting a drink, so we drove surface wells here and there, put in a pitcher pump and a windmill and built tanks.

At round-up time we rode the whole valley, from Conejos to Villa Grove and the mesas and vegas along the sides. All the cattle outfits would send their hands and usually some extras, a cook-wagon, bedwagon, and five or

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six horses for each rider. The main diet was beef, beans, bread baked in a dutch-oven, and black coffee. There were thousands of cows handy but no one ever thought of milking one. The days were long and filled with plenty of hard work, but the \$22. a month and board were considered a fair enough wage.

There were Antelope everywhere in those days. They were a lot like sheep, that is if one ran across in front of you the whole bunch would follow, even if they had to run over you to do it. They were intensely curious. A red rag tied to the end of a stick and slowly waved above the brush would attract them so they would come right up to investigate. We killed plenty but I dont remember eating any: too much like sheep for cow men.

One day when I was in town I saw two men drilling a well at the corner of 6th and State. They had an anvil and some other iron tied on the rods for weight and walked round and round to do the drilling. They got the well down a couple of hundred feet and as far as I know it was the first artesian well in Alamosa.

After several years as a cow-puncher I got a job with the Railroad on the bridge gagg. My Father was a cabinet-maker and I knew how to use tools. Later I went into house building and then contracting which I have followed ever since.

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Copied from a paper owned by Jesus Velasquez, son of Vicente.

Guadalupe 1854.

Jose Maria Jaques	leader	Llanito, N. Mex.
Vicente Velasquez	15 yrs. old	" "
Jesus Velasquez		La Cueva "
Jose Manuel Vigil		" "
Jose Francisco Lucero		La Servilleta "
Juan Nicolas Martinez		" "
Santiago Manchego		La Cueva
Juan DeDios Martinez		" "
Antonio Jose Chavez		La Servilleta
Juan Antonio Chavez		Ojo Caliente
Ilario Atencio		" "
Juan De la Cruz Espinoza		" "

All of the above named persons came to settle on what is called Conejos River. They came in August 1854 and stop about 5 miles west from Guadalupe. They build a ditch from this point which they called El sedro redondo. This is the name they give the place where they stop not the ditch. They build this Ditch for about 8 to 10 miles long to what they called Sevilleta. Then they went back to their homes at N. Mex. and as they were going Home they met a regiment of Solder at Tres Piedras. They went Home to get ready and provisions so that they could stay here when they came back.

They came back in Oct. 1854. They stop at Guadalupe here they Build the Town. They build it in a circle with only two openings one on the south and one on the north here they put what livestock they had for fear of the Indians which they were in great numbers here at that time. They had came on ox carts and burros. They Brought with them wheat corn flour beans cattle horses sheep hogs and chickens.

Guadalupe 1854

But in March 1855 they had a bad Luck One morning as They Drove There Livestock to Pasture the Indians came from Ambush and drove all the Animals that the People had. The People had no Arms to fight with and the Indians were to many for the people so the Indians Took all of the Peoples Animals.

Mr. Jose Maria Jaques set out the first Grist Mill.

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Reminiscences of Mr. Owen Williams

as told to C.E. Gibson Jr.

I'm not an old-timer in the valley, yet I lived here in the early days, at Fort Garland in 1862.

I was born in 1859 and with my folks went to California Gulch, where my father mined in 1860 and 61.

In the fall of 1861 we moved down to Canon City, where Father and Benjamin Graham, his close friend, who has always been Uncle Ben to me, joined the Second Colorado Volunteers. Mother and I accompanied them to Fort Garland.

I was only a baby and the only incident of the trip that I remember is being carried through the snow on Uncle Bens Back.

In later years he stayed with my wife and I a great deal and told many tales of those early days. Ben Graham came to Colorado in 1858 or earlier, as an employee of a fur company. He had a number of trappers under him and travelled over a great part of the state.

Uncle Ben was with the wagon train which crossed the valley and went over Cumbres to locate Animas City, in 1860, following Bakers discoveries of the year before. They had a bad time. There were no roads and some places, they had to stop and build one before they could go on.

Years later, when Uncle Ben was staying with us at Edith he had a map showing where a small party of stragglers of this wagon train had camped. The main outfit had abandoned their town in disgust, and this small party, with their equipment packed on burros had stayed on to prospect further. They discovered gold but were harrassed by the Indians, and somewhere above Silvertons site, on their way to the head-waters of the Rio Grande, they buried their treasure and abandoned their outfit in order to travel faster and escape with their lives. From one of those men Uncle Ben got

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the map showing ~~their~~ last camp and where they had buried the gold. None of the original party ever returned to that place. Uncle Ben with the aid of the map and a great deal of searching found their camp. There were pieces of the pack-saddles, and on the trees where they had been hung, were the rings, grown fast. On this trip Uncle Ben was taken sick, and was unable to stay and locate the gold. He told me where the camp was and how to find the treasure, telling me to be sure and hunt it up. I just seemed never to find the time and uncle Ben never recovered from his illness and died at Monte Vista.

He was on one campaign against the Indians under Col. Chivington. On their chase they came across the bodies of two small girls who had been murdered, scalped, and left laying with stakes driven through them into the ground. A little further on was the horribly mutilated body of a woman, and beyond was the body of a man who had been hanged to a tree in a most revolting manner.

These fresh outrages so increased the anger of Col. Chivington and his men, against the murdering devils they were after, that when the soldiers caught up with the Indians on the edge of Stinking Lake, they drove them onto a point of land which projected into the lake and killed or drowned the whole band of four or five hundred Indians. Col. Chivington was censured for this but Uncle Ben says the Indians sure had it coming to them.

With some companions, Uncle Ben saw a fight between some Cheyennes and Kiowas, not far from Denver, and he said they were a vicious and nasty lot.

While at Fort Garland, the Captain of my fathers Company, James H. Ford, took in a half-starved Indian boy who came there. The boy belonged to a Mexican who had put him to herding a bunch of sheep. Captain Ford raised him and educated him, sending him to an eastern

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college. I'm not sure what became of Lorenzo Ford, but I heard that he returned to the valley and bought a bunch of sheep. The story says that he grazed them up in the sand-dunes country, and that during a terrific wind-storm, he and his sheep were buried by the sand.

Father was mustered out of the service at Independence in '64 and we went to Iowa where I was raised. I married there and in 1886 came to Colorado and located at Emma. There I had the change station and looked after the stock for two stage lines, the Carson line, which operated four-horse coaches, and the Western, which used six horses on their stages. Both outfits had big coaches which carried up to twenty-two passengers, and ran daily between Aspen and Glenwood Springs.

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From the Independent-Journal, Alamosa, Colo. May 3rd, 1888.

A Fatal Shooting Affray.
- - - - -

William Carson, Son of Old Kit, Shoots
and Fatally Wounds his Father-in-law,
Thomas Tate Toben, at Fort Garland
on Tuesday.
- - - - -

On Tuesday afternoon Fort Garland was the scene of a desperate encounter between William Carson, better known as Billy, ex-sheriff of Costilla County, and his father-in-law, Tomas Tate Toben, the old scout and Indian Killer, which will result fatally for the latter.

Heretofore the two men have been on good terms and no one anticipated any trouble between them. Tuesday both men had been drinking and about four o'clock in the afternoon they met in front of Carson's store. Toben had heard that Carson had been abusing his wife and accused him of the fact. One word lead to another until finally the old man told Carson he was a d--n liar. Carson hauled off and struck Toben in the eye with his fist, whereupon toben drew his pistol and

Fired At Carson

but failed to hit him. Under average circumstances Toben is a dead shot, but being greatly under the influence of liquor and having just received a violent blow on the eye, his aim failed him. Carson sprang back into the store thinking at first he was shot. Toben followed him up and fired again but with the same result. Carson grabbed his Winchester and quickly put a couple of shells into the chamber, then throwing down his gun on Toben, he fired. The bullet struck Toben in the groin and came out back of the left hip, making an ugly and fatal wound. Toben fell to the ground but raising himself on his elbow fired the remaining three shots in his pistol at Carson, and then tried to

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get at his cartridges so as to load again. Carson kept dodging about as the old man fired, all the time trying to use his Winchester again.

This ended the shooting, however and Toben was picked up and carried into a house near by, and a telegram was dispatched to Alamosa for Dr. Gale. Carson gave himself up and was taken before a justice of the peace who allowed him his liberty on giving a bond for \$5,000.

Billy Carson is the son of the famous scout, Kit Carson, and was for a number of years sheriff of Costilla county, during which time he distinguished himself as a

Brave And Fearless

officer. He is a married man, having married a daughter of Toben's, and at the time of the shooting was engaged in the general merchandising business at Fort Garland with Toben's son. Carson has the reputation of being a peacefull man, but one who does not hide behind a bush to escape danger. A life-long friendship has existed between the families of Carson and Toben, which has at last been broken in a tragedy

Tomas Tate Toben was about sixty-eight years old, having spent his life from a boy on the frontier. He was one of the prominent figures in the early days of Colorado, and was a bosom friend of Kit Carson the father of the man who shot him. His early days were passed in trailing the red skins and doing government scouting, and a history of his life would fill a large volumn. He was a

Dead Shot

and no man before had gotten the best of him. When he was drinking he was inclined to be ugly and if he started out gunning some one was sure to be killed. Some years ago when the Espinosa brothers were terrorizing this part of the country, it was Toben who finally called them to account. Large rewards had been offered for their capture and Toben took the job in hand. He left Fort Garland on their trail and in three days time he was back with their heads wrapped in a gunny sack. After a

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all these years of thrilling adventures and hair-breadth escapes, he at last meets with a violent death.

The old man said after the shooting that he expected to die in this way, but expressed a strong wish to get even with the man who shot him. Attorney Holbrook was sent for ^{and} last night Tobin made his will.

The people at the Fort all side with Carson and claim that the shooting was justifiable, but the Mexicans are against him and side with the Tobens. It is thought that more trouble will result from the shooting and as Carson is afraid that Toben's friends might attempt lynching, he goes constantly armed.

The Independent-Journal, Thursday May 24th, 1888.

Thomas Tate Toben, who was shot down by his son-in-law, William Carson some two weeks ago, is slightly improving. All hopes of his pulling through were given up at first, but now, owing to the wonderful constitution of the old man, he may possibly get well. Ninety-nine out of a hundred would not have lived twelve hours after receiving such an ugly wound.

The Independent-Journal, Thursday May 31st, 1888.

William Carson was on Wednesday last placed under \$2,000 bond for his appearance before the next grand jury for the shooting with intent to kill of T. T. Toben on May 2. - Ft. Garland Republican. -

Deputy sheriff Robinson arrested Mike Ortibiz on Wednesday last for threats made on May 2 that he would kill William Carson. Ortibiz was taken before Justice Fred Etter, who placed him under \$1,000 bond to keep the peace. Failing to give said bond he was taken to jail at San Luis to await the action of the grand jury. - Ft Garland Republican-

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The Independent-Journal, Alamosa, Colo. June 21st, 1888.

Fort Garland Republican.

Thomas Tate Toben's condition is about the same as this time last week, very little if any improvement noticable. On Thursday last Dr. Gale performed an operation on him with the use of chloroform, and extracted ten small pieces of fractured bone, which have heretofore deterred the healing of the wound. Mr. Toben may after this improve more rapidly. He is very weak, probably owing more to the warm weather than anything else.

(Alamosa Item.)

It is reported by Hon. W. H. Meyers that Tomas Tate Toben has improved so much that all danger is over, and that the chances are that he has many years still before him. Everbody will be glad to learn that the old scout's time has not yet come.

The Independent-Journal, June 28th, 1888.

Dr. J. A. Gale, the attending physician, visited, on Tuesday evening last, Tom Toben, at Fort Garland, and entertains very flattering hopes of the old hero's recovery. The doctor says Toben is gaining strength and will no doubt pull through.

The Independent-Journal, January 24th, 1889.

Shot By His Horse.

Last Friday William Carson met with a peculiar and fatal accident at Fort Garland. While putting up his team one of his horses kicked at him, striking his revolver which he carried at his belt and discharged the weapon. The bullet struck Carson at the thick part of the thigh, ranging downward and lodging back of the knee joint. The wound although painful was not considered dangerous, Dr. Gale was summoned from Alamosa to dress the wound, but although everything in the power

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of man was done he died late Saturday afternoon from lock-jaw.

Billy Carson, as he was ~~known~~ known, was ex-sheriff of Costilla county and a son of the famous Kit Carson, the old scout and famous Indian killer. He leaves a wife and several children besides a host of friends to mourn his untimely death.

Independent-Journal, Alamosa, Colo. Thursday April 4th, 1889.

(Fort Garland Republican.)

T. T. Toben came up to Garland the first of the week and remained several hours. He was feeling first rate and will soon be able to get about any place without any danger of a relapse. We are glad to see the old scout looking so well, and about again.

Chas. E. Gibson Jr.

Pam. 349
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C. E. Gibson, Jr.,
Interviewer

Pam. 349, No. 13, missing from Box.

Shows on Index as blank, probably never sent in.

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Bits of History from the Guadalupe-Conejos Country.

C. E. Gibson, Jr.

The first church in Conejos, built in 1854 was built as "El Jacal". Four large cedar posts were set for the corners. Between these were set upright posts, close together, of an even height and pointed on top. A large log with a groove to fit over these points, was placed from corner to corner and the whole was plastered over with adobe on the outside.

This actual construction is attested to by Epimanio Garcia, whose father Juan-Maria Garcia kept some of the original cedar logs for years when the original Jacal was torn down, following the building of the new church around it.

Juan Maria Garcia settled in 1852 near the present site of Mannasa, where there were large natural hay meadows. He brought his wife and child from San Jose, N. M. that year, but moved to La Servilleta, on the Conejos, where a number of families lived, because of the Indians. In 1854, new settlers built Guadalupe, constructing a large enclosed plaza. Because of the better protection against the Indians, the Servilleta population moved there, but their town was rehhabited the following year.

Epimania Garcia's grandfather bought all the claims against the Tierra Amarilla Grant, which contained over a million acres in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. He died before the deal was entirely consummated and the papers were destroyed before their value was realized.

Juan Maria Garcia owned Indian slaves as was customary with the early Mexican settlers. One of his neighbors had a small Indian boy who was sick with small-pox. The neighbor was going to kill the boy, just as he would of a sick sheep or a sick calf, but Juan gave him a burro, took the boy home, cured him and raised him. Another time he traded two goats for a small Indian girl.

Epimanio's cousin was stolen by the Indians when a small girl, grew up with them and married the son of the man who stole her.

From Epimanio Garcia, Mogote, Colo.

Juan Jose Gallegos, father of Sam Gallegos, took up the first homestead in the San Luis Valley under the new Homestead Law of Mayth, 1862. Sam's brother-in-law William Sabine filed on a homestead at about the same time.

There were several families living on the present site of Conejos when the church was built there in 1854. One of these families was named Baros and another was Martinez.

Sam's oldest brother, Juan Manuel Gallegos and several others assisted the priest in singing mass in the old Jacal. Sam sang in the church when Roled, the third priest was there.

From Sam Gallegos, Conejos, Colo.

Epifanio Valdez, son of Cresencio Valdez, and grandson of Seledonio Valdez, also agrees that the first church was built as 'El Jacal', and there was no wall surrounding the building.

There is still living with Epifanio, and old Indian called Luis, who was acquired by Seledonio as a slave in his youth. There were also Ute and Navajo women slaves in the household.

The present Valdez house is on the site of the original home of Major Lafayette Head, in Guadalupe.

From Epifanio Valdez, Guadalupe.

Juan M. Salazar, Postmaster at Conejos, also agrees as to the method used in building the first church, at Conejos.

Juan says there is a tree on the east side of Mt. Blanca, not far from his Uncles ranch where Major Head carved his name and the date when he went through there as a soldier in 1846.

Mr. Salazar also says that Jose Trujillo, at Old Costilla, has records of the first farming, and the first wheat grown in the San Luis Valley.

From Juan M. Salazar, Conejos.

Though the present town of Alamosa is supposed to be the first by that name in the valley, old records show there was a previous one. A number of settlers lived on Alamosa Creek and their community was known as Alamosa. Desiderio Martinez who traded at the Shiffer stores in Conejos and Del Norte in 1874, is listed from Alamosa.

In the license and Marriage Certificate issued to Jose Hilario Gallegos and Maria Vicenta Chacon on Nov. 29th, 1874, the residence of both parties is given as Alamosa.

From old Conejos County Records.

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The First Years of Alamosa.

By Charles E. Gibson, Jr.

In the spring of 1878 the Denver and Rio Grande Railway began to lay steel westward from Garland City, and the Big Bend country, as this section was then known, began to show immediate signs of activity. Ex Governor Hunt, in charge of the work, had decided on the location for the new town of Alamosa sometime before, and General Palmer's associates had quietly been obtaining possession of the land in and around the town site.

It was probably in April that the first actual building was done with the erection of large warehouses, by the Field and Hill, and the Strubey Forwarding Companies. Their buildings were dismantled at Garland City and rebuilt in Alamosa. During the time this was taking place, the goods that had been in the warehouses lay in huge canvas covered piles awaiting removal. These firms received the freight from the railroad and arranged for its transportation beyond the end of the line by wagon.

D. R. Smith, who had been operating a store close to the Maddux ranch since 1874, moved his building to Seventh Street near the new warehouses. A short time later he decided that Sixth Street was a better location and moved his building to the north side of the railroad right-of-way.

In May, The Alamosa Town Co. who had put a large force of Mexicans to work clearing the Town site, filed a plat of the new town and immediately started the sale of lots.

The growth from here on was so rapid, that it is hard to keep track of the actual building.

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Garland City, about seven miles east of Fort Garland, where the siding called Mortimer is now located, had been the terminus of the rails for nearly a year, but now began to bodily uproot itself and move to the new Alamosa.

There was a steady stream of wagons on the road between Garland City and the river, as the moving of houses and building material augmented the heavy freighting traffic bound for the San Juan.

A good deal of trouble was encountered crossing the ford on the Rio Grande with the heavy loads and it was necessary, quite often, for the teamsters of several outfits to hitch all their oxen or mules together and bring the wagons across one at a time.

This difficulty was largely done away with when the railroad bridge was built. It was planked over and used by the freighters before the rails were laid, and for some years afterwards.

The way in which the town built up in the first few months was miraculous, as nearly the whole town of Garland City was moved over and set up. The freighters who moved a building would, the next day, help set it up, the second day the stock was moved in and it was ready for business.

Many buildings were brought over on flat cars attached to the work train which was laying the steel. The town also drew from Del Norte, several of the early merchants having been in business there.

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July 4th, 1878 was the big day for Alamosa. It was then that the first passenger train arrived and a combination Fourth of July and Railroad celebration was held. General Palmer and other officials of the D. & R. G. Railway Co. came in on the train and former Gov. A. C. Hunt was one of the speakers of the day.

So far as can be accurately ascertained the following people were in business here when the railroad reached the town, or shortly afterward.

Smith and Wilson had a general store, D. R. Smith having taken his clerk, Johnny Wilson, in as a partner. A furniture department was added a few years later.

Field and Hill operated a store carrying supplies of all kinds, with Mr. S. W. Hill in charge.

John Gertisen, who had been working for the Schiffer Bros. in Del Norte, opened a general store in partnership with his former employers, buying out their interest a short time later.

Ike Kruske had a stock of general merchandise.

Dr. B. F. Haskins kept a drug store and two years later Dr. C. M. Ball bought an interest in the business.

Dr. Pascal Craig, had lived on a ranch northwest of town.

Neale and Brown bought their general blacksmith and wagon repair business over from Garland City.

Adams and Posey, who had a hardware store in Del Norte, opened a branch in Alamosa with Alva Adams in charge assisted by W. H. Adams.

Gault and Brickenstein owned a stationery and book store.

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Joe Perry was proprietor of the Perry House. Mr. Perry had followed the railroad with his hotel, building it first at Cucharas Junction when that place was the end of the line. He dismantled it and rebuilt successively at La Veta, Garland City and finally Alamosa.

The Broadwell House was operated by Mr. and Mrs. Broadwell, and Mrs. Tontine was proprietress of the Delmonico Hotel.

John A. McDonald moved down from Del Norte and opened a saddle and harness shop.

Myron Wilkins, who had operated a livery and feed stables at Garland City, put in a large Feed Yard at Alamosa, which was used by many freighters, and a short while later bought the livery business of William Greenstreet.

George Blackmore, formerly of San Luis, had a feed and livery business known as the Great Western Stables.

Theodore Imperius, who owned meat markets in Del Norte and Lake City, opened another one here.

George Easterday, son of the well known early miller at San Luis, operated a bakery.

John Summer operated a restaurant.

Martin Wetzel, formerly of Garland City, was Justice of Peace.

B. Frank, an old timer in the valley, had a Hide and Wool business.

The press was represented by two weekly papers. #The News, published by M. Custers and the Independent, edited by Ham and Finley.

#Page 30. History of the Arkansas valley. Pub. 1881.

Charles D. Hayt was an energetic young lawyer who began his practice in La Veta, and was Alamosa's first Postmaster.

Daniels, Brown and Co. did a banking business #

The Presbyterian Church was founded by that well known missionary, Alec M. Darley, on April 24th, 1878. The church building was brought from Garland City on a flat car, the latter part of July that same year and was located first on Ninth Street, being moved a little later to Fifth Street.

The first town school was held in a room over Occidental Hall with Mr. Wilson and a lady assistant as teachers.

The town was plentifully supplied with saloons, dance halls and Honky-tonks, and was considered by many, in it's early stages as a very tough place.

the first missionary

For information contained in this sketch, thanks is

- due to: Mr. & Mrs. W. D. Carroll
- Mr. & Mrs. Fritz Emperius
- Mrs. Jennie Burrell
- Mr. Alva Maddux
- Mrs. Geo. Blackmore
- Mrs. Henry Bachus
- and others
- To Mr. Charles Van Fleet, Alamosa county Clerk for making available the photostatic copies of Conejos County records in his office.