ELIZABETH RICHARDS
(Mrs John )

Burlington, Colorado.

Born April 26, 1862 in Wales.
Husband born August 28, 1861 in Wales.

(Er Richards came to Colorado in February, 1886 and filed on a home-
stead in Arapahoe (now Yuma County) County, where he lived until his death
in October 1923. He was one of the very first settlers in this vicinity.)

I came to Colorado on March 4th, 1889. My husband had built a little
seed-house 12 x 14 feet, and a little "lean-to" at the back which was dug
partly in the ground. Our nearest neighbor lived two miles north of us,
and east, south and west of us were miles and miles of open prairie land,
ot even fences to break the monotony of it all.

Our mail came from Wray, Colorado, forty miles away, and was brought
to us only when some of the farmers went north to Wray to bring supplies.
Two or three of the twelve families of farmers living along the road would
make the trip together and bring supplies for all along with the mail.
Sometimes it would take over a week to deliver the mail that was brought in.
And if the weather was stormy it would take longer than that. The trip to
Wray always took two days, and the farmers felt safer when two or three
went together. Oftentimes a storm would come up after these men had gone,
and what a anxious time those at home put in until the men arrived home
safely.

(My husband saw some buffalo when he first came to the country, but
I did not see any. But I did see plenty of antelope and wild horses, or
wild "ponies", as they were then called. I remember that there was a herd
of about one hundred antelope that grazed about one-half mile from our claim.
There were plenty of coyotes that used to kill our chickens, and there
were a few gray wolves too.)

I shall always remember an experience we had with them: One night I was awakened by the shrill whinny and screaming
of our horses that were ranging about one-quarter of a mile from the house.
Waking my husband, we hurriedly dressed and went to where the horses were,
and just before we reached them we saw two big gray wolves running away from
the herd. We found that the wolves had attacked two little colts that were
with their mothers, and had hurt them terribly, as one of the colts had its
hind leg and shoulder eaten off, and the other had the hind leg torn badly.
We put them on a sled and took them to the house. The first little colt
died in about an hour, and the other lived for about six months. The poor
mothers and two working horses were white with sweat with fighting these
wolves. Later my brother-in-law saw the wolves coming back, and shot at
them. We lost many calves during the early years by this band of wolves.
Later the Bar-T Ranch outfit killed them off, or at least, they disappeared
in about four years.

We kept just a few cattle and horses for farm use. We hauled water
from the Republican river four miles away with a team of mules and a wagon
with four barrels in it. We had no drinking water, and I could not bear to
drink the water from the river when I knew that the range cattle and horses
were standing in it. So one day we set out to find some clean water, and
after wandering around for some time, to our delight we found a little
spring and a tiny stream of water running from it. It took about two hours
to fill the two buckets we had with us, and for once we had all the water
we wanted to drink, for we were so thirsty and drank so much at the little
spring. We carefully carried the water home, and the next morning when we
took a drink of it, we found it was bitter as could be, and unfit for drink-
ing.
How disappointed we were. We discovered that the water turned bitter when it was kept for any length of time, so every Sunday we would drive the three miles to the Spring and fill a bucket with water so we could have enough to drink for a few hours. When the snow came we would melt the snow and drink the snow-water. We got our water from the Republican River and from the little spring for about three years. Then later in the spring we had a well bored about 190 feet deep, and the water was brought up by a chain and a long bucket, pulled up by a mule. It was not long until the neighbors heard that we had a well, and they came from miles around to get water, hungry for a taste of good clean well-water. In another year we put up a windmill, and how happy we were, and just about the richest people in the community, for we had a "windmill" and plenty of water. It was not long after that until several of our neighbors had wells bored, and the search for good water was at an end. The first wells in this country were hand dug; these were very expensive and not always successful, for one did not know how deep they had to go for water. Later a man brought in a well-boring outfit; this was a huge auger that bored its way into the earth, and was turned by one or two horses that walked round and round as the auger went deeper into the earth. Now we have the well-drilling outfits, which are much quicker.

(Having plenty of water now for all purposes, we bought ten head of milk cows and I made butter for sale. We drove ten miles to Friend, a Quaker colony near the Nebraska line, and there I sold my butter for Six Cents a pound, and got Five Cents a dozen for eggs.) That year we had a fairly good crop of corn, wheat and rye. The next two years we raised very little, and managed along on what we could get from our butter and eggs and chickens.

For many years we would have prospects of such good crops, and then the hail and terrific wind would come and destroy our crops, oftentimes leaving us very scarce of feed for our stock. I remember one year we had a splendid crop of wheat, 150 acres that looked at first to bring from 45 to 50 bushels per acre. My husband went to town and bought a new Binder, and upon reaching home he discovered that one of the parts was missing. The following day he went to town and got the missing part, and on Saturday afternoon started in to cut the wheat. About three o'clock on Sunday afternoon a terrific hail storm came up and destroyed the wheat, ruined our corn and other crops. We lost one in one of the fields, and they gave us feed for our stock that year. Another year I remember we had a pretty good crop of oats, wheat, barley and rye, and then it turned so dry that we could not cut our corn fadder during the day, but had to wait until the night dews were on, then cut the fifty acres of corn with the knives and by moonlight. But we saved our feed for the cattle.

And I shall not soon forget the storm we had on April 10th—when we had the three day blizzard, one of the worst that has ever been experienced, and is remembered by the cattlemen especially. The snow was so fine that it would easily smother anyone or any animal that tried to face it. Thousands of cattle and horses perished that year, and hundreds drifted away and were never found by their owners. I remember we turned out fifteen head of cattle that morning, and when we realized that a blizzard was coming we tried to get the cattle headed back towards home, but the wind was so strong we could do nothing with them, and we had to leave them and get home before the storm started. We turned our right head of horses loose in the shed and in the barn. There was plenty of feed, but no water near them, but they did not suffer for that, as they ate snow. The fine snow drifted into the shed and barn, and as it kept filling up it pushed the horses up with it. Finally the snow pushed the roofs off the barn and when we looked out of the window we dis-
covered that the eight head of horses were on top of the barn, and so covered with snow that one could hardly tell what they were. The snow had drifted up even with the barn, but we had quite a time getting the horses off the roof, and down on the ground. The poor things were so cold. In trying to get to the barn during the storm my husband tied ropes from the house to the other buildings, but the snow would choke him so he could not go on, and he had to wait until the storm abated before he could venture out. We found all of our cattle excepting two about four days later. I think we were very fortunate, for some of our neighbors lost all their cattle. We found cattle that had drifted down one hundred miles from the north, and then perished in the great snowdrifts.

We have blizzards now, but nothing like that one. And too, the farmers now have better barns and sheds in which to shelter their live stock.

We had to work very hard to get ahead, we met many disappointments and discouragements, but we had good kind neighbors, friendly visits, and social gatherings that were always enjoyed.

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After her husband died, Mrs Richards moved to Burlington and purchased a modest and comfortable little home where she now lives. She enjoys her church work and is a very interesting person to listen to.

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Dated- December 18th-1933

This interview is correct-

Mrs Elizabeth Richards

Mrs Elizabeth Richards
Burlington, Colorado.
The town of "Malowe" was platted by James A. McGonigal in 1887 and was named for a railroad attorney, M. A. Lowe. Later the name was changed to Flagler in honor of Henry M. Flagler, the millionaire railroad man who was then helping to build the railroad through this new country.

The town is situated on the East Half (E1/2) of Section Two (2) and the South half of the Northwest Quarter (S1/4 of NW1/2) of Section One (1) in Township Nine (9) South of Range Fifty One (51) west of the 6th P.M. (prior to the platting of this town, and before the Railroad was built a homesteader by the name of Robinson kept a very small grocery supply store and Post Office in a small shack about one mile east of where Flagler now stands. Mr. Robinson named the Post Office "Bogwe" after a favorite dog that had died. Later, after the new town was platted, Mr. Robinson moved his store to Flagler where he was located for some years. He finally sold out and moved away.)

The first structures built in what is now Flagler were the railroad water tank and the section house. Very soon the first grocery store was opened by W. H. Lavington and John W. Augustine, partners, in a large horse tent. This was in 1888. In the fall of 1889 Mr. Lavington built a substantial frame building and moved into it, dissolving partnership with Mr. Augustine, who later became one of the early County Superintendents of Schools.

Soon other settlers came to the town site, and a lumber yard was located by George Cornel, who freighted all his supplies from Hugo, the nearest town. Then a hardware store was opened by Charles Barnard. The first hotel, the "Cottage Hotel" was built and operated by one Colby Hef- new. Later the "Ponce de Leon" hotel was built by a Mr. Keegan, who also owned and operated the Livery barn. This hotel was named for the one in Florida owned and operated by the millionaire -Henry M. Flagler.

The "town well" was soon dug by hand, and a plentiful supply of water was had for everyone and for the teams coming into the town. The water was drawn up by a windlass.

The Flagler Progress, published by Charles E. Gibson, was the first newspaper printed.

In October 1916 the town was legally incorporated, the incorporation notice being signed by E. H. Haynes, Judge of Kit Carson County. The Notice of election for incorporation was signed by the Town Commissioners- H. B. Blanken, W. H. Lavington, E. E. Epperson, B. B. Buck, Elaine Briggs.

On April 9th, 1917 the first town election was held and the following officers elected: Mayor- Leon E. Lavington (son of W.H. Lavington) Trustees were: A. J. Lockwood, J. E. Seal, H. B. Blanken, W. W. Reynolds, J. W. Roherly and J. W. White. Wm. Knies was appointed Town Clerk, the "Flagler Progress" chosen as official paper, and Attorney F. B. Godman of Burlington selected to draw up the Ordinances for the town.
BRUNO F. KAISER (Versailles, Indiana)

Born November 13th, 1858 at Olean, Indiana.

Left his home in the spring of 1884 and went to Wymore, Nebraska, then to Holdrege, Nebraska and then to Gibben, Nebraska, remaining for a period of one and one-half years. Upon hearing that there was government land in Colorado he started for the new country with Scott Reddy (now of Stratton), Wm. Vanosdall, Wm. Stout and Ed Hoskins, by the B & M R.R., landed at Wray, and settled on a tree claim, then returned to Nebraska.

Later in the fall Mr. Kaiser with Scott Reddy, Wm. Vanosdall, and Wm. (Shorty) Stout left Holdrege for Colorado, arriving about ten days later at Wray, and traveling by wagon all the way, for there were no other means of conveyance. They then drove south to a sod house store. L. A. Baker, (afterward hung by citizens of Burlington for murder) helped to locate Mr. Kaiser on his claim on the Section 10-9-44, one mile west and 1 1/2 miles south of where Burlington is now located. A sod house on the section south of him was the only thing in sight at that time. He had to drive 18 miles north to the Linnville Ranch on the Republican River for his mail. Water was obtained from Beaver Creek.

He built a sod house on the northeast corner of this claim and also built a blacksmith shop, the first in the new county. He proved up on the land in the summer of 1887, paying $1.25 per acre. After proving up, he moved the blacksmith shop 1 1/2 miles north to where Highway No. 40 is located. About this time the Rock Island Railroad was built through the first building in the new town was located 1 1/2 miles east of the present site. So Mr. Kaiser again moved his blacksmith shop to the town of Burlington, purchasing Lot 28 in Block 30 from J. S. Newell and W. T. Jilesch, the first real estate men here.

In 1888 he returned to Indiana and married Laura I. Thom, and about January 13th, 1890 returned to Burlington and to the home he had built on Lot 22 in Block 20. The house still stands in this location.

He remembers that in December 25th, 1892, Burlington had its first Christmas tree, which was quite an event in the lives of the citizens. There were very little crops at this time, herds of cattle and sheep kept on the tree range.

Mr. Kaiser served one term (1893) as County Treasurer of Kit Carson County.

Mr. and Mrs. Kaiser are now living in Versailles, Indiana with their daughter, Anna K. Smith.

Dated December 18th, 1933

This account written from a letter sent me by Mr. Kaiser.

Berrie B. Guthrie
Editor of Kit Carson County Record

Dear Sir:

Your Prosperity Edition of 1916 and 1917 has found its way to my desk, and to the Baker Abstract Company; I am surely grateful for this copy.

While I have enjoyed this edition very much, I think perhaps a few reminiscences of early history might be of interest to your readers. I assure you that a bird's-eye-view of the town of Burlington when I first saw it would not show the beautiful little city that you show on the first page of your Prosperity Edition.

It was March 1887 when the town of New Burlington was first staked out. The old town was on a homestead and could not then be deeded. A party came from Sparks, Kansas, and bought a quarter of land where the town of Burlington now stands, so when a tenderfoot came along, and had some cash, and if they could induce him to part with thirty cents, they would give him a small patch of buffalo grass and call it a lot.

The leading department store was carried on in a half dugout, and the stock consisted principally of beans, bacon, and canned goods. The first drug store came to Burlington in a spring wagon; a few pills, some patent medicine and a thirty gallon keg of moonshine whiskey together with a tent, some corn, four bales of hay, and two men made up the load. The corn and hay fed the mules that pulled the load. The tent was used for a store and residence, while the moonshine was reserved for the inhabitants to drink, as it took all the water for the stock, and for washing feet. A Mr. Bevelheimer had the only well and we took our turn drawing water. One day when the rope broke just as it came my turn to draw water, I refused twenty-five cents for a common pail of water. "Why?" do you ask. Three men and six horses had to live on that pail of water until late the next day when a new rope was brought from Haigler, Neb.

I am really glad that Burlington is a temperance town, but in those days there were times when St. Peter himself would have been glad to stick his nose into anything wet, even to lying down on the front side of his back and drinking out of a lagoon, after the range cattle and coyotes had taken their turn.

A Mr. Kaiser started the first blacksmith shop. One load of lumber was sufficient, the forge being made of sod.

There were no objections, if while stopping at the hotel, you turned your pillow so the grass side would be up. It would be a little softer, and it cost only fifty cents for half a bed, and there were only six beds in a room, so it was considered O. K.

The first ice house was a hole in the ground. I hauled a load of ice from somewhere northwest of town. It took all day to make the trip and we got caught in a blizzard; one man was frozen nearly stiff, and another lost his feet.

Eugene Wooster started the first newspaper in the town.
Located on a claim south of town, afterwards leasing a portion of this claim to be used as a brick yard. The first brick house in Burlington was built from these bricks. The gentleman that built the school house took "French" leave and never paid his help. I have always felt that I had an interest in your school although I have never had the pleasure of seeing the building. (Note: This was the old school house-4 rooms.) I am wondering if the dugout is still there on Section 7-9-45? (Now known as the "Ryan" place two miles out of Burlington.)

Daniel Kavanagh opened the first hardware store, afterwards he held the office of County Clerk and Recorder, doing the work for both offices. While Colorado has a lovely climate, I stayed in my soddy for twenty-four hours, and through the windows witnessed the worst storm I ever saw in my life. Three people were frozen to death trying to go to their homes and failed to get there. Many head of stock drifted away never to return. (Note: the above storm is described by the eminent author- Hamlin Garland in his description of the "Great Blizzard" in his book entitled, "Boy Life on the Prairie.")

Most of the freight was hauled from Cheyenne Wells, and the first road was started by a Mr. Tom Reed, who took a spring wagon and three men and traveling by the camps he made the trip, throwing up sod with a spade at short intervals, made the trail that all followed.

Haigler, Nebraska was also a trading point. At one time while bringing a 4,000 pound load from Haigler and when about twenty miles out, the rear wheel of my wagon broke and no house in sight. After going across country about five miles, I found a man, Mr. Angel, who loaned me a wagon and I then took my load to Burlington. Afterward I spent three days going back after my wagon and then three days more going to Goodland, Kansas to get it fixed.

For hauling from Cheyenne Wells the price was twentyfive cents per one hundred pounds. Four thousand pounds were usually hauled in a load and we made the trip in two days. (Range cattle were quite plentiful. At Crystal Springs, forty miles west and north of Burlington, there was a round-up of Forty Thousand head. Antelope were quite plentiful, and we had the pleasure of seeing one bunch of buffalo.)

People would drive all day to get to a neighbor's dance all night on a dirt floor, go home next day, and no prince in his palace showed his guests more of a welcome than did our prairie hosts.

This letter is getting too lengthy, but let me say, I never lived in a country where the people were better, the water purer, the climate more healthful, and the coyotes howled more sweetly than at Burlington, Colorado. The only objection that I had was that I could not raise watermelons in that fertile country. The vines grew so fast that it wore the melons out dragging them around over the ground. However, I learned that they now enclose them in woven wire fences and in that way the melon industry is proving quite profitable.

C. J. Ethinger, Orient, Iowa.
Charles Albert Versin
12/13/1933
Burlington, Colorado

Born - 1847 in Switzerland.

 Came to Missouri with parents when four years old. I lived with Uncle who allowed him to go to school when the work on the farm was done, hence, did not get much education. But by studying at home he fitted himself for a teacher.

 Came to Colorado in October - 1888 with wife and three children. Came by Union Pacific railroad to Cheyenne Wells, then the next morning hired a man with a small wagon and team of ponies to drive them the forty miles across country to their new home on the prairies. They brought with them bedding, cooking utensils, clothing and about one thousand pounds of pork for they had butchered "five or six hogs before leaving Missouri," as we always liked plenty of meat for every meal. The load was heavy, and the weather threatening, and at that time there was but two houses on the forty mile trip. At the "Six Mile House" we got our first sight of the prairie dogs and snow-birds, about the only living things we saw on that long lonesome road. No trees, fences, not even grain of any kind. It seemed a most desolate and dreary wilderness. We wished we were back in Missouri, and had we been at the depot, we would have been tempted to take the first train east.

 The weather continued threatening, and we discussed the possibility of staying overnight at the half-way house, for it seemed the ponies were becoming very tired and we did not want to be out on the prairie if they became unable to travel on. But when we reached this house, the owner informed us that he did not keep a hotel, and could not take care of us. Then he told about a settler that had taken a claim (homestead) about two miles northeast of the half-way house, and had built a long sod house and had plenty of room, and would be glad to take care of us. Though it was getting very cold and storm clouds were threatening us, we had to drive on over a rough hilly route, the hardest part of the trip. However, we made it just as a regular blizzard struck us in all its fury. The owners of the house came out and welcomed us and took us in for the night. The sod house was thirty feet long and 12 feet wide, and was divided in the middle by a canvas wagon-cover, one end of the house being used by the women and the other end by the men. We all slept comfortably and well.

 The next morning the storm had abated and although it was very cold we decided to start to our homestead on the SW 4 of Section 19 - Twp. 9, in Rge. 44 South. This was eight miles away, and by piling our boxes in the front of the wagon we made a wind-break for my wife and children and we got through without any one freezing.

 My father-in-law, who had accompanied us from Missouri, had taken a homestead just across the road from where we located, so we lived in their sod home until ours was built. We had to haul water two miles from the nearest neighbor's home. Later we tried to dig a well on this land, but found that it was an impossibility owing to the innumerable small boulders and sandy condition of the soil. All wells were dug by hand in those days, which oftentimes proved difficult and costly. The well later dug on my father-in-law's claim furnished both families with water.

 I had taught one short term of school, and never expected to teach again, but when crops failed year after year and one of our horses wandered out of the barn one stormy night and died in the cold, we wondered just how we were to live. So I got out my books and spent some time studying, and then got a permit to teach on trial.
This school was a sod building some ten miles southeast of my home, so I took a supply of "grub" and some bedding, and moved into the two roomed building, using the one room as a living room, and the other as a school room. Teaching during the day and studying half the night, I completed a four month term. A little later I got my First Grade Certificate, and after that taught two or three terms in the County. I was ordained a Christian minister of the Gospel in 1870 and have been at times the only minister in the County who could perform a marriage service. I have driven many miles over the prairie in a lumber wagon to preach, to perform a marriage ceremony, or to speak the last words over the dead.

I am proud of Kit Carson County and proud of Burlington, which I have helped to build. I have been here since I heard the first bell ring on the first engine of the first Rock Island train through Burlington.

It was while we were digging our well that we one day saw a man coming from the south in a covered wagon, and when he got to within hailing distance he stood up in the front of his wagon and called out, "Don't shoot, please don't shoot, I'm lost." We wondered what he meant, and when he came up to us he explained that he thought it was dangerous to drive across a man's claim without permission. Seeing our surprise he then told us of the lynching of L. R. Baker, at the Water Tank at Cheyenne Wells. Later, upon going to Burlington, I found out the facts of the case, which were as follows:

L. R. Baker lived about six miles north of Burlington. There was considerable travel from Haiger, Nebraska to Burlington, and Baker's claim was on the regular trail, and unknowingly, the newcomers drove over his land, not knowing that they were trespassing. It appears that Baker had a bad reputation, and was very quick-tempered. On this particular day a driver from Haiger, Nebr., was bringing two men who had taken claims two miles west of my homestead, into Burlington. It was getting dark when they reached Baker's claim, and were hurrying along the trail when Baker, standing in a gulley, called for them to stop and get off the claim. Not knowing just what it was all about, the driver kept right on, and Baker, with an oath, took the gun from his wife who was standing close by, and raising it, fired both barrels of buckshot at the men in the spring wagon. The driver escaped any injury, but one of the men was mortally wounded, dying before they reached Burlington, and the other man, although wounded, finally recovered. The driver hurried on to Burlington, and when news of the shooting became known, excitement ran high. Sheriff Barnes appointed a few deputies, and at once went to the Baker homestead. Here he met the wife at the door who told him that "if he came in the name of the law, he was welcome, but if he headed a mob, they were ready for him." ("They" meant the Baker family, as he had two or three grown boys.) Baker was then formally arrested and brought to Burlington and lodged in the jail under guard of the Sheriff. As feeling ran high, the sheriff sent out word that a trial would be held the next day, but this was just a pretense to get Baker out of the country and send him to Denver. Early the next morning Baker and the prisoner left for Cheyenne Wells, there to take the U. P. noon train into Denver. But owing to the train being two hours late, it gave the mob a chance to overtake the sheriff and prisoner and though the sheriff tried to shield the prisoner by putting him in a box car, the mob broke open the door with a railroad tie, and then took Baker out and hung him to the water tank. The man who gave me quite a bit of this information was the one who gave the alarm when he saw Baker and the sheriff leaving in the early morning.
C. A. YERSIN

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Burlington, Colorado.

Mr. Yersin is now living with his daughter, Mrs. H. G. Hoskin, wife of Henry G. Hoskin, Ex- State Representative from this District, in Burlington. He is quite active and gets much pleasure out of his small tree nursery. He reads a great deal, and writes articles for the local papers.

Mrs. Hoskin was a teacher in the Burlington Public School some years ago, and her daughter, Miss Katherine, is a grade teacher in the Burlington school at present.

Mrs. Hoskin is Librarian for the Burlington Library at this time.

Dated December 18th, 1933
Burlington, Colorado.

This interview is correct.

C. A. Yersin, Burlington, Colo.
Born near Liverpool, New York in March, 1869.

Lived in New York until he was twenty-one years of age, then came to Fremont, Nebraska, and later to Gibbon, Nebraska, and worked with a railroad outfit, building new railroads during the years 1886 and 1887.

Came to Colorado with his bride (a New York girl) in May, 1888, by overland route, Mr. and Mrs. Lavington driving in a team and buggy and the rest of the party bringing in the teams and railroad outfit. (They came through Thurman, Colorado, where they camped for a short time because a team of mules and a horse had strayed away from their outfit. After looking for these strays for a few days and being unable to find them, the party then traveled on to Crystal Springs. There they camped for a short time, and while there the stray mules and horse were returned to Mr. Lavington by settlers who claimed the reward that had been offered.) The question has always been—"were the mules and horse really lost?"

Mr. Lavington traded a team of mules and paid $25.00 for the relinquishment on a claim for four miles east of Flagler. Near here the young couple built their home and began pioneer life in earnest. Water was hauled from Crystal Springs during the entire six months they lived on the homestead. A hand dug well proved a failure, as they were unable to reach water.

(Mr. Lavington came to Colorado expecting to get a contract for grading the new railroad, but failing to get it, concluded to go into the grocery business, and he and J. W. Augustine, later a County Superintendent of Schools, opened the first grocery store in Flagler in a large horse-tent. Later he built a substantial frame building, and moved into this, dissolving partnership with Mr. Augustine. He operated this store for thirty years.)

It was in the Fall of 1888 that Mrs. Lavington and Mrs. Augustine, wives of the two partners, decided to visit a sister of Mrs. Augustine, living near Edson, Kansas. As there were no passenger trains at that time, the ladies rode in the caboose of the freight train until they reached Goodland, Kansas, and were met by a livery man who took them to their destination.

(Mr. Lavington and W. L. Price built the "Flagler Hotel" in 1909, and the same year Mr. Lavington built the first grain elevator in Flagler.)

Mr. Lavington is now acting President of The First National Bank in Flagler, Colorado, where he and his wife are living. They are very active in the affairs of the community, and held in the highest esteem by everyone.

Date: December 19th, 1933

This interview is correct.

Mr. Lavington
"I was one of the witnesses who was present at the autopsy held over the body of Henry Hatch, an old man murdered on his ranch north of Flagler in April, 1889.

As you know, in a small town a stranger always excites a bit of interest; we want to find out who he is, where he is going and just what he wants, so on this particular Saturday when we saw a well-dressed stranger in town, we at once questioned each other as to who he was and what he wanted. No one seemed to know, and altho' the man went to the Hotel he did not register, but asked for a livery man to take him into the country. The owner of the Hotel, Mr. Keegan, was also the owner of the livery barn, and he at once got a team and buggy and took the stranger out to look at land. After driving around for awhile, the stranger asked where the land was that was owned by Mr. Hatch. Upon being informed that they were but a short distance from the old man's home, the man got out of the buggy and told Mr. Keegan that he would just walk back to town, as he "needed the exercise anyway". So Mr. Keegan returned to town, leaving the stranger on the prairie a short distance from Mr. Hatch's home.

No one in town remembers of seeing the stranger that evening; he was not shown a bed at the hotel, neither did he register or ask for lodging. But the next morning when Mr. McDonald, the manager of the hotel went into the Lobby he found the stranger waiting for him, and was asked just when the next train went east. Mr McDonald gave him this information, and the stranger left on the next train. Later it was discovered that he had gone east as far as Seibert (about twelve miles east of Flagler) and there got off, stayed at the Hotel until the next train west went thro' and boarded it for Denver. On Sunday afternoon two boys named Holly and Parks were looking for cattle, and on their way home stopped at the Hatch shack. As there was no response to their knock at the door, the boys looked in the window and then discovered Mr. Hatch lying on the floor, his head in a pool of blood, and dressed only in his underwear. The boys at once came to town and gave the alarm of the murder, and a number of citizens walked out to the shack and saw the body. On Monday morning, Mr. J. W. Augustine, then Justice of Peace, summoned Dr. J. E. Godman from Seibert, and with the Sheriff, went to the Hatch home and there held an autopsy over the body. The Coroner's jury returned a verdict of murder by being struck on the top and back of the head with some blunt instrument. Two $20.00 gold pieces were found in the house, proving that robbery was not the motive. On Monday afternoon the body was buried in a corner of the claim, as was the custom then, and today we cannot even locate the spot. This stranger was later located in Omaha, and brought back for trial, but he employed the best of lawyers and thro' their best efforts the man was acquitted. The people of Colorado Springs were so sympathetic towards this "poor persecuted man" that they held a banquet at one of the Resturants in the city and a number of the "elite" of the city attended. But later, it was learned that this same stranger was a nephew of Mr. Hatch, that he had put a $20,000.00 policy for Life Insurance on Mr. Hatch, and made himself the beneficiary; that he was in the habit of writing life insurance for people who did not exist. And when he absconded with a large amount of money belonging to the Insurance Company, and fled to South America, the people of Colorado Springs, the eminent lawyers and the good Judge knew for sure that they had been sadly duped."
JAMES CALTON PEARCE
Burlington, Colorado.

Born- 1862 in Granger, Missouri.

I came to Colorado in October 1887 with my parents, Laura and L. C. Pearce, and my father settled on the homestead where I am now living with my family. We traveled in a covered wagon, and I shall always remember the night we got to Burlington. My Aunt and Uncle lived about a mile from Burlington, and altho' we inquired several places, no one seemed to know them. It was foggy and rainy, and we were cold and hungry, but we knew if we got to Aunt Cynthia's home we would be taken care of. As it was quite late, we decided to stay in Burlington all night. There were no restaurants, bakeries, or any place where we could buy bread, so we had dried crackers and tea for supper that night. It tasted good to me, but I will always remember just how hungry I was for something more appetizing, for we had no bread for three or four days.

Next morning we found my Aunt's home, and went out to visit them, then went on out to the homestead. We lived in the wagon until we had built our sod house, fourteen by sixteen feet. (The original freight trail ran by our house, this trail is now known as U. S. Highway No. 81, and was the old trail from Cheyenne Wells to Burlington. All freight and supplies brought from Cheyenne Wells passed right by our home.)

We brought our horses with us and bought enough cattle for our own use. The big cattle ranches were all up north on the Republican River, the settlers on the plains turned their energies to farming.

A school District was organized in 1888 and I went to school in this District. It is now known as District No. 43. (We went to Church in a sod building that was built near to Beaver Creek, and which was the community center for the entire neighborhood.) Here we had the usual amusements of the times, Literary programs, singing schools, etc. When we had a crowd everyone took their own chairs with them.

We could not get a well dug for about two years after we came, so we got water from the Springs along the Creek, and also hauled it from a neighbor's claim. Our first well was a bored well, dug with an old-fashioned Auger by a man by the name of Hoyt who came in here from Kansas.

We encountered many bad blizzards, but I do not believe they were any worse than what we have once in awhile now. I never saw any Indians, but there were plenty of antelope and wild horses on the plains. I do not remember anything that would be exciting enough to tell about. There was a lynching at Cheyenne Wells, a fellow by the name of Baker killed a man for trespassing, and the bunch of men who followed Baker and the Sheriff to the Wells passed along the old freight trail out there. We heard all about it later.

Mr Pearce exhibited a small rocking chair made out of hickory wood and made by an Uncle for his children older than Mr. Pearce. When the family were leaving for Colorado, the Uncle gave this small chair to the boy, and he has always kept it. The small chair, a low three legged stool, and a hickory bark basket, just big enough to carry one dozen eggs, were brought in the covered wagon in 1887.

Mr Pearce and family live on the original homestead. The sod buildings have been replaced by a substantial adobe house and frame and adobe farm buildings. He is known as one of the best farmers in the County.

Dated- December 6th-1933

Burlington, Colo.

This Interview is correct.

J.C. Pearce
Born—October 21, 1862 in Cedar County, Iowa.

Came to Colorado in a covered wagon with his wife and family in April, 1887 and filed on a homestead on the SE^4 of Sec. 17—Twp. 9—South of Range 44 West 6th P.M. His father, mother and brothers who accompanied him settled on homesteads nearby and surrounding Mr. Brammeier's. He is today living on the original homestead, situated three miles west and three miles south of Burlington.

The family kept just enough live stock for their own use, and did a little farming. Mr. Brammeier was one of the early day freighters, driving a wagon and teams from Cheyenne Wells to Burlington. The trip of forty miles took two days. He hauled a few loads of supplies from Haigler, Nebraska, but it was much handier for him to drive to and from Cheyenne Wells.

When the family first reached the site they had selected for their new home, they dug a good-sized cave, and lived in this until their sod house and out-buildings were built; then the cave was used for storage purposes. These sod buildings stood until 1926 when they were replaced with modern frame buildings.

Water was obtained from a "well" sunk about four feet in the sand in "Sandy Creek" which was a short distance from the claim. It was surprising the amount of water that flowed into the barrel sunk into the sand, and this supplied the community for some years. There was enough good clear water for everyone and for all the stock. These people considered themselves very fortunate to be so near water when others had to haul it so far.

Mr. Brammeier helped to organize the first school district in this vicinity, and it was known as District No. four. Each man in the district donated the needed wood, and the sod school house was built. The money needed for the lumber and windows and equipment was raised by popular subscription. There were thirty-three (33) pupils enrolled, with Miss Belle Kyle, (later Mrs. Cain) as the teacher. The building was also used as a church and the Sunday school, Literary society, spelling bees, singing school, and school plays were the chief source of recreation. There were no cowboys or large cattle ranches near, so there was very little if any dancing.

REMINISCENCES

"As you know, there was no cemetery, undertaker or even a ready made casket for the dead at this time; when a homesteader died a neighbor made the casket and the body was usually laid to rest in some corner of the "claim". I remember two brothers by the name of Albright settled on a claim west of mine, and shortly after one of the boys, Frank Albright, died, and he was buried in a homemade casket on the line between the two claims. His body has never been removed from the original burying-place, and the marker has long since disappeared. Another neighbor by the name of Carpenter died of pneumonia and one of the neighbors took the body to Haigler, Nebraska, a two day trip, and there placed the body on the train for its destination in Iowa.

I remember in 1894 we had a neighbor by the name of Christensen whose little boy (about nine years old) left home in the late afternoon to bring home the cows. A severe dust storm came up, and as it became dark the dust storm got worse, and the little boy had not returned. So the alarm was spread among the neighbors and a number of men went out to look for the child. We hunted all night, and next day after the storm had calmed down a bit we discovered the child's body in a "drew" or gulley where he had evidently tried to find shelter, and had been smothered by the fine dust that filled the air."
In 1890 there was little crops raised, but there was no threshing machinery in the county to do the threshing so people could have seed for the next year. In February, 1891, a man bringing a thresher came over from Kansas, and did the threshing for the few farmers who had grain.

One day I came to town on horseback to get the mail, and it happened that the threshing machine was at one of our neighbor's farms, and I decided to stop on the way back. On the trail to town I noticed a young couple in a lumber wagon, and when they got to Burlington they inquired for the Justice of Peace and was told that he lived two miles south and east of town. So they started off to the home of the Justice of Peace. On the way home from town I stopped at my neighbor's to see the threshing, and while we were standing talking the young couple in the wagon drove up, and informed us that they had been told the Justice of Peace was watching the neighbor thresh. We called Billy Boyles, the Justice of the Peace, and the young man handed him a paper. Suddenly the man on the thresher shouted: "Come on, boys, it's a wedding", and with whoops and hurrahs we all hurried over to where the young couple were sitting in the wagon. The Justice of Peace then told them to stand, and they stood up in the wagon, and were married right there, and the Separator man and I were the ones who signed up as witnesses. When the young bridegroom shook hands with the Separator man he left a dollar in his hand, and told him to "get the boys a treat, and let them depart in peace." We respected their wishes, and they drove away quite happy. I thought that was a very unique wedding, and have often wondered where the young couple went to and just who they were.

When I first came to Burlington there was no buildings where the town now stands, and a trail angled across the prairie from Haigler to Burlington and then on to Cheyenne Wells. I remember that a man by the name of Angel lived on this trail, and had a hand dug well at which the emigrants used to get water. Mr. Angel charged five cents for each team of horses and gave them all they wanted to drink. And when the water would get rather low and hard to haul up with the bucket, he would haul water from the creek and store it there for the travelers. We could always depend on getting water at this place and would direct other travelers to the place.

The Montezuma Hotel was then in what we now call Old Burlington, and on August 20th, 1888 I helped move the six room structure to the new townsite. My team was one of the eighteen that were used to do the moving, and it was done with poles and skids. This hotel still stands on the lot we moved it to that day.

I remember that I saw a well near Cheyenne Wells that was said to be a gas well and was 1500 feet deep. It was said that the gas was burning all the time, but whether or not that was true I did not know. But it caused quite a bit of excitement at the time.
In the Fall of 1890 I made a trip to the San Luis Valley, and from the
Salina Post Office (about 18 miles southwest of where Burlington now stands)
to Kit Carson (in Choyenne County) there was but one shack. A couple of cow-
boys lived there, but the day we arrived there was but one, and as his partner
had been away for some time he was a very lonesome fellow. He was so glad to
see my wife and I, and invited us to stay all night, which we gladly did. He
entertained us with some of the finest music on a violin made from a cigar box.
I have heard lots of good music since, but I shall always remember just now
that music sounded to us.

One of the greatest handicaps in our pioneer life was the scarcity of read-
ing matter. Books and papers were always so welcome, and we read everything
the neighbors had, and would exchange with everyone else in the community.

It was in the spring of 1890 that we had such a bad blizzard on May 20th.
Our milk cows drifted about twenty miles south to the Smoky river, and what a
time I had finding them. I rode thro' snow drifts that were knee-deep to my
knees. Some cattle were never found, and many others had died in the drifts.

In the fall of 1890 the crops were very short and there was no fuel for
winter, and no way to buy any. We heard of coal being strewn along the right-
of-way on the Union Pacific Railroad, about forty miles south. So my brother
and I took two wagons, our grub and horse feed, and drove to Choyenne Wells,
then to First View. It took us about four days to make the trip, but we came
back with two good wagon loads of coal picked up along the railway. That was
such a help to us when the severe winter came.

I remember that one night in the Fall of 1888 when we had gone to bed
rather early and had been asleep for some time; we were awakened by a woman
calling us, and when I went to the door I found her up in my wagon where she
had gone because she was afraid of the dog. This woman had walked the three
miles from her home to ours to tell us that her little boy had gone out after
the cows and had not returned. So I hitched up my team to the wagon and went
with her and there we found the boy; he could not find the cows and had gone
home. He had been gone since late afternoon and his Mother was frightened
for what might have happened to him. I was so glad I could help her.

We had a neighbor woman who had but one horse, and when she wanted to go
places she would just hitch the one horse to the wagon and off she went, and
she would drive places where the rest of us with teams were afraid to go.
Another neighbor woman, a widow, had three boys who always walked to Sunday
school, but she could not walk that far and could not come. One day I asked her
why she didn’t come and she replied: “Well, my boys don’t like to drive our
harvest”, which referred to an old lynch-pin wagon and an ox team.

Mr. and Mrs. Brammeier and son live on the original homestead filed on in
1887. The son does most of the farming; Mr. Brammeier is unable to get-around
an-where owing to being crippled by a broken hip.

This interview is correct

[Signature]
I lived in West Virginia until young manhood, then came to Colorado in the Spring of 1886. My mother and a brother and myself came by train from West Virginia to Benkelman, Nebraska, then went by stage coach to Bird City, Kansas, where we left mother with relatives, then my brother and I came by wagon train to Colorado, where we went to my brother's claim Northeast of Burlington; he came out to Colorado in the fall of 1885.

There were no camps, towns or roads; we angled across the prairie from Bird City. I saw no Indians, but there were plenty of buffalo, wild horses and antelope. We found my brother's claim and lived with him for about a year. In 1887 I took a pre-emption and a homestead beside my brother's claim fifteen miles northeast of Burlington. I proved up on the pre-emption, but let the homestead go back to the government. About thirty years ago I took another homestead in Twp- 6, in Range 46.

Burlington was then situated on the old townsite, and all the water used was hauled from Lostman Creek, a distance of ten miles, and the haulers charged twenty-five cents for a three gallon pail of water. Folks did not waste water then. Everything was freighted in from Haigler, Nebraska, Wray, Colorado, and Cheyenne Wells, Colo.

My brother hauled water until I got located, then we put down a "company" well in Sand Creek, hauling up the water by windlass, and we had plenty for all purposes and for everyone. The fellow who had a good well was the richest man in the community.

I worked as a blacksmith for years, in fact, that was my trade when I came west. After taking out the pre-emption and homestead, I would live on it the required time each year, and then the rest of the time I worked for companies in different places. I worked for the Colorado City Water works for some years, also for the Pueblo Street car company. During the time I was living on my homestead I helped my brother put down a few of the drilled wells around Burlington and other places in the County. He had a well-drilling outfit which he purchased after he had been here for awhile.

I remember when the County was new that so many people were starving; they had no fuel or clothes when winter came on and no way of getting anything, for money was very scarce. Word of this predicament got to Denver, and the store owners there made up a large shipment of clothes, shoes, and whatever was needed to help keep the people warm, and the Trinidad coal miners mined coal free, the Mine owners donated their royalty, and the Railroad shipped it in free. A Committee was appointed to distribute these supplies and the people were taken care of until the severe winter weather was over. I know that many people were saved by this timely help.

The County Commissioners shipped in three car-loads of wheat and loaned it to the farmers for seed wheat. This was to be paid back when the crop was raised, and was the means of starting wheat raising in this County. But even with the help given, the winter was so severe that a number of people froze to death and many cattle and horses were lost and died from exposure. It was really dangerous to get far away from home, for one never knew when a storm might arise that would turn into a blizzard, and as there were no roads to follow and no fences to use as a line-mark, it was so easy to become confused and
to become confused and wander around until exhausted and then go to sleep, the sleep that meant "another person frozen to death." So we always tried to make it to some farm house before dark or if the weather got suddenly cloudy, and it was likely to mean a storm. It is rather hard to express in writing all the hardships endured by those people who came west seeking new homes and oftentimes a better livelihood. Many a man has come here and settled down with his family and lost all he had in trying to make a go of farming, for I know that year after year no crops would be raised, the cattle died of disease or exposure, and when a man had lost everything he had no way of leaving, so just had to stay and make the best of it.

A number of the settlers, especially those coming in north of the Republican River, had quite a bit of trouble with the big cattle companies. Of course, the cattlemen resented the intrusion of farmers, fences and small herds, and they tried different ways to scare the people out. I remember that one of the foremen of the "Bar-T" Ranch tried to make a settler by the name of ______ Munsinger move off his homestead, and they tried various ways, but the settler stayed. Then the foreman and one of the cowboys went to Munsinger's home, and was going to run him out. But they did not figure that Munsinger was a fighter too, so he met these two men with a shotgun, and gave them fair warning to get off his land and stay off. However, the foreman would not heed the warning, so Munsinger shot him dead and then shot the heel off the cowboy's boot. By that time the cowboy was heading towards home and safety as fast as he could go. There was a bit of excitement at the time, but nothing was ever done to Munsinger, for most everyone felt he was justified in doing what he did, for he had already stood quite a bit of abuse from the cattlemen around him.

Mr Messenger lives with his wife and youngest son in a nice home in Stratton and operates an up-to-date blacksmith shop. He is hale and hearty, keenly alive to the affairs of the County, and held in the highest esteem by all who know him. He has served four terms as County Commissioner.

Dated- December 20th- 1933

This interview is correct.

I. D. Messenger
Stratton, Colorado
Born - 1854 in Jackson County, Ohio. Parents emigrated into Illinois when Mr. Ready was about a year old, and he was raised there.

"I came to Colorado on July 4th, 1886 with Bruno F. Kaiser, Wm. VanOsdol, Wm. Stout and Ed Hoskin (father of H. C. Hoskin, former State Representative from this District) on a "Land excursion" which was put on by the Burlington Railroad. We came from Illinois to Holdrege, Nebraska, and then overland by covered wagon and a team of mules which belonged to me. We were located on tree claims by L. R. Baker (later lynched for murder) and then took out pre-emptions, which in each case joined our tree claims. We then returned to Illinois, and came back to our claims in the fall of 1886. At that time a person could hold three quarters of land and prove up on it. I held my tree claim and then homesteaded it.

Mr. Kaiser's claim was about three miles south and west of Burlington, so we built a soddy dugout and lived with him during the winter. That was a very severe winter, and we had no fuel but "buffalo chips", but we got along pretty well and were comfortable in our little dugout.

We hauled water from the Republican River, about twenty-three miles north of us. We located a spring in one of the "draws" and got water from that for awhile. But when the weather was too stormy to go out for water, we got it from a nearby lagoon after a rain storm.

We saw some buffalo, plenty of antelope and wild horses, coyotes and rattle snakes.

I was the only one in the party that had a team, so I did the breaking and plowing for those who wanted their tree claims plowed, or crop land broken. Kaiser was a blacksmith, Stout was a carpenter; VanOsdol did not stay long, he soon sold out and went east.

There was not much excitement, we had plenty of discouragements, we went hungry and thirsty too many times, but at that everyone had a good time, and we were contented.

Mr. Ready is almost eighty years old, and lives with his wife and youngest daughter in Stratton, Colorado. He owns and operates a blacksmith shop.

This interview is correct.

Dated December 27th, 1933

W. Scott Ready
Stratton, Colo.
B.B. Euticke

Stratton, Colorado

Sarah Blakeman

born Feb 26th, 1856 in Delaware County, Indiana.

Moved to Iowa with parents, then came to Colorado with family in 1882. Husband came to Colorado and located a homestead at Claremont (now Stratton) and then wife and children came out on train, bringing their household goods with them, and also meat and lard from three hogs butchered prior to leaving. Mr. Blakeman, (now deceased) had work as section foreman with the railroad company, and had a frame house built for the family about three-quarters of a mile east of Stratton.

"I cannot tell you just how I felt when I got off the train in Claremont and looked over the great stretch of prairie. There were about one half houses in the town and all the rest was prairie. I said to my husband, 'Where have you brought us to', and he replied- 'To Colorado, woman, a wonderful land.' What was there about it that was so fascinating, for it was not long until I too liked the place. I was so afraid of the coyotes, and would not step out at night for fear of stepping on a centipede, for I had been told the grass was full of them. Later I found out there was nothing to this tale. And I remember I was afraid of cowboys until I got acquainted.

There was a town well from which we got our water, hauling it in barrels in a wagon to our farm. When the town well got out of order, we got water from the railroad well three miles west of us.

We saw plenty of antelope, and enjoyed antelope steaks quite often. There were lots of wild horses, and three of our horses were lured away by the wild horses, and we never found them again.

In about a year we had a well drilled and hauled the water up by a windlass, using a long "double deck" bucket. Then my husband sent to Kansas and bought twelve head of cattle and we had to haul water for them, and I used to wonder why they were always so thirsty and could drink so much.

We had no building that could be used as a meeting place, and could have no Sunday School, so a man who had a small grocery store allowed us to meet in the store building and have our Sunday School. Folks came from miles around to attend. Later we had a sod school house and held our meetings and church there.

When we shipped out our furniture I included the organ and my guitar and how glad I was that we had brought them along, for oftentimes we would load the organ in the wagon, and go miles to attend a dance, and I would play almost all night while the rest of the folks danced. Again I would accompany the fiddler on my guitar. We had such good times. Neighbors lived miles apart, but we had dances and parties and folks were so congenial and always so glad to see each other. I believe we were happier then than folks are today, for we didn't need so much to make us contented and happy.

I remember my husband writing me before we left for Colorado, and telling me that meat was selling at six cents a pound in Claremont, and that I should sell the pork and lard we had prepared to bring with us. I could not make up my mind to do this, and decided to bring it along. Now glad my husband was when he found I had done this, for when I got here there was no meat to be had anywhere. And I can assure you we had plenty of company as long as the meat lasted, for people were hungry for meat and visited us often to get a meal.

Mrs Blakeman lives alone in her little home in Stratton, Colorado.
Born in 1855 in Warren County, Illinois.  
Spent youth in Illinois, and came to Colorado in April-1888 with husband and two children in a covered wagon.  
*We were ordered west on account of my husband's health, so we shipped our goods to Heigler, Nebraska, and later had them freighted across to our homestead.*  

We lived in our wagon until our sod house was built, which was in June. We were located in what was known as "old Columbia" and there wasn't a thing in sight then, nothing but stretches of these great prairies.  
Old Columbia was situated about four miles east of where the town of Stratton now stands.) We dug a hole in the ground, cut a piece of stove-pipe in half, laid it over the top of the hole, and built our fire there. We slept in the wagon box on a straw mattress and used no pillows or sheets. Can you imagine how thrilled I was when we had our house built and got our furniture to use again. I remember that after I had my bed all made up, clean sheets, feather pillows and bed, and clean comforts, I felt rather queer going into it. We had slept in our clothes for so long that it seemed rather strange to undress and go to bed. And how much we did appreciate eating on a table and having our cupboard for our dishes instead of putting things away in a box. We brought corn meal and beans with us, and that is what we lived on for months. We would have fried mush for morning and evening and bean soup for dinner. When we got some flour I made biscuits and baked them in the huge oven we had, getting them done on one side, then turning them over to brown on the other side. And we sure would enjoy them too. We could get no milk, eggs, meat, butter or potatoes, so had to be contented with fried mush and bean soup.

I remember the first Sunday after we had our house all fixed up that my husband jokingly said he would invite the Camps over for dinner. (The Camps were people who lived in Iowa). But as he could not invite them, he brought home five lady school teachers and the Methodist minister, Elder Thomas, and we had bean soup and bread for dinner, and had a very happy time. When we first located on our homestead the greatest problem was to get water. There was a well about four miles east of us, and we hauled water from there, but so many others hauled it too that my husband had to get up at two o'clock in the morning, and get in line so he would get home before night. When this well got out of order, we had to haul water from a water hole about three miles west of here. Oftentimes we would find pollywogs and other things in the water, but we strained it thro' cloth two or three times, then would boil it, and in that way make it fit for use. Later we got water at the Railroad well dug in this vicinity. On September 8th our own well was finished, and we hauled water up with a windlass. My, we felt we were the richest and happiest people in the whole community. We were never sick, and my husband was gaining in health every day.

My husband built a blacksmith shop, and operated that for three years, then he sold that and went in to the general store and grocery business, and operated that for a number of years. We built a two story frame building and we lived upstairs and had the store downstairs. One evening my husband went down to the store to get some papers, and fainted, for I heard him fall, as it were, and I ran down stairs, and found the store in flames and my husband lying face down on the floor. I quickly pulled him outside, and called to a neighbor living close, and he came running over and helped me get my husband out of the way of the fire. But we lost everything, for the building was burned to the ground.
(As I told you, we came direct to old Columbia, and it was not known then where the depot for the new railroad would be built, but when the railroad was put thro' and the depot built four miles west of where we were, the name was changed to Claremont. Later the name was again changed to Stratton. When the townsite was changed, everyone then moved to the new town, and that is where we started our store business. (Over)

When we first arrived I asked at once whether or not there would be a school for the children of the community. I was assured that a school would be started just as soon as possible, so the following May a school was started in a little frame shack that had been built for a butcher shop and then vacated. Charley Dickinson was our first teacher, (later a State Representative) and I think there were seven scholars enrolled.

Our first Sunday School and church was held in a grocery store. We had no building, and wanted church services, and the grocerman kindly offered the use of his store. We would hold the services, then whenever "church" was over, the grocerman began selling his wares to whoever wanted to buy. Later we held church in the school house, and when that privilege was denied us, we met at the gate of the building and held meetings there until the weather got too cold to stay outside. The man who had the grocery store was a Mr. Dyer; Rev. Meade, our first minister was a Congregationalist. Later Elder Thomas, a Methodist minister, preached for us. Later our first little church was built.

A man by the name of Rogers started a little newspaper, and that was all the reading material we had. But everyone was so friendly, and we had literary society and school plays and parties that got the folks together and kept us from being too lonesome.

I well remember the first baby that was born in the community and how the people gathered round the mother to get a glimpse of the baby the first time it was brought to church. The family's name was Fletcher, and it was the eldest little girl in this family who invited us all to our first Thanksgiving dinner, and when folks came from miles around and came empty-handed, the mother could not help but wonder just what it was all about. Suddenly it dawned on her that this was an "invitation" affair, so she asked the little girl if she had invited the people there for dinner. "Yes", said the child, "I was lonesome"; she thought it would be nice to have a party. So the women got busy and helped the mother do up the work and prepare dinner, and we had dinner, but certainly not anything like a Thanksgiving dinner.

One day my husband and I went to the west end to get water, and while we were away the two children noticed a group of men coming across the prairie. Of course, they thought it was Indians, and they ran to a neighbor's home. The neighbor too thought the Indians were out again, and they hitched up their team and were ready to go to the nearest town and give the alarm. Later we found out it was a group of Italian workers who had been looking for work on the railroad, and were returning to Cheyenne Wells about.

This interview is correct.

Dated December 23rd, 1933

Mrs. Fuller is at present living with her daughter, Mrs. Mandy Borders in Stratton, Colorado. She is very interesting to talk to.
"In the Fall of 1888 my husband went back to Iowa to help harvest a corn crop, and when he returned to Colorado he came through on the first passenger train that went over the new railroad right into Denver. Prior to this time the trains had come as far as Goodland, Kansas, but this was the first time a passenger train had gone straight through into Denver."
I was born in Arabela, Scotland County, Missouri on March 20th, 1882, and in 1886 moved with my parents to Furnas County, Nebraska. In the fall of 1886 my father and Uncle Ed Cain (Mother's brother) came out to Colorado. Father located on a homestead, filing his papers in Denver. He then returned to Nebraska, and we shipped our household goods and live stock and a few farming implements to Haigler, Nebraska, and then came across the plains to Burlington, Colorado in two wagons, "prairie schooners" as they were then called. We brought four horses and two cows with us.

We arrived in Burlington on April 11th, 1887, and lived in our wagons until our house was built. This was a two roomed soddy, plastered with native lime and had a dirt floor.

We hauled water from Burlington for a few months, but as there were so many of the settlers getting water there, and it took so long to get a barrel filled, we decided to find a place at Beaver Creek, about seven miles west of us. We found a good spring and sunk a barrel there, and had a good supply of water which we hauled up with a bucket. Later father and my uncle dug a well on the farm; it was 125 feet deep and we used a pulley and two buckets to raise the water. But we had a good depth of water, so did not need to worry any more about that matter. Water was a very precious thing in those days, and believe me, we did not waste a drop of it.

Our food supplies, coal and lumber used in building was brought from Haigler, Nebraska, and from Cheyenne Wells.

There was no such thing as a clothes-line then, and when Mother washed she "hung" her clothes on the buffalo grass on the prairie.

Mail was brought over by the stage coach from Cheyenne Wells, or by father or any of the neighbors when they went over for supplies.

I went to school in four different places in Burlington. The first time the few pupils gathered in a little vacated house in the west part of New Burlington, then when that got too small for the number attending we moved to a two story house and held school there for a few months. Later we moved into a vacated store building, and had school there until the brick school house was built. This was a large square building, two stories, and so built that it could be divided into four rooms, if necessary. Many of the settlers thought that this was a very large school house, and doubted very much if there would ever be enough pupils to require the use of the four rooms. Now we have a beautiful large schoolhouse with fifteen teachers and an enrollment of almost five hundred.

(I attended church and Sunday school in the sod school house located on Beaver Creek, about seven miles west of us. We enjoyed debating, literary, singing classes, and once a while a party at the home of a neighbor. Our amusements were not so varied as those of today, but we had good times and happy visits among our neighbors.)

(The name of Lowel dug a good well in what is now Old Burlington, and the people moved nearer the water, but when the railroad came there and the depot was built, the location of the town was settled.)

I owned and lived on the original homestead for some years, then later disposed of it and moved to town.
Arthur J. Pearce

I was married to Miss Ella Moore, a former school teacher of this county, and we have five children, four who have enjoyed the high school privileges given here.

I have been engaged for some years in buying and selling cattle. We are living now in the house in which my wife (later) spent her first night in Burlington when she arrived here with her parents in 1904.

I came here as a small child and have grown up with the town and country; I have seen any number of people come and go, and many were glad to return, but I don't know of any place better than this, for we have always got along very well and have not suffered the hardships of many others who came west to settle on the prairies.

I might add that I don't believe any one else in the County has helped to hold down as many homesteads as I have, for being a small boy, I was taken along to "stay overnight" on the homesteads of my Aunts, Uncles, and others who wanted company.

Dated—Feb. 14th 1934

[Signature]

Arthur J. Pearce
(My Uncle, Jacob Pearce, was born in Arbela, Scotland County, Missouri about 1844 and came to this country in the fall of 1867 in a covered wagon hauled by a team of little red oxen. For some months after coming here he freighted from Cheyenne Wells, using this same team of oxen.

He took a homestead joining the one taken by his brother, Greene Pearce, (father of J. C. Pearce) and later proved up on it. He finally bought a team of horses and did quite a bit of freighting from Hager, Nebraska and Cheyenne Wells, Colorado in the early days. As the country developed, he followed farming and stock raising, and in later years moved to town where he lived until his death.)

I shall always remember him as a kind good old man, a friend and good neighbor to all who knew him. He had such a cheerful disposition and was a firm believer in this new country. He never married, and had no children of his own, but he helped many a boy and girl thru' school and if it had not been for his kindness, I know of families that would have gone without the necessities of life. I am glad that Uncle Jake lived long enough to see his prediction of a farming country and a thriving town fulfilled, and we who knew him remember his many kindnesses to the early settlers.

(When I became old enough to make my own living I chose the business of breaking wild horses, and many a one I have helped to capture and break to ride. I would have from five to six saddle horses all the time ready for riding in my work of riding the range, and looking after the cattle and horses, for father and I had a herd ranging from one hundred and fifty to two hundred head of cattle, and always a pretty good sized herd of horses.)

A rider's life is full of experiences, and of various kinds. I remember that one Easter we had a terrible storm, and as we had a hundred head of cattle in a camp about three miles from home, we got rather uneasy about them. About daylight it began to sleet and rain, and a strong wind came up. Getting up early, I hurried to the camp, and discovered that the cattle had gotten out and was drifting with the storm. I got part of them and started back towards the camp, and meeting father, persuaded him to go on back with the cattle while I went out to hunt for the others. I had gone out about daylight, and rode till two o'clock in the afternoon in a storm of sleet and rain which later had turned to a blinding blizzard. Giving up the search for the cattle, and being so terribly cold, I decided to ride to the Vititow ranch, which I knew to be near. Just before reaching the ranch, I began to feel warm, and on arriving at the barn felt as tho' I wanted to lie down, for I had felt a drowsiness come over me. But I knew too well the danger of this feeling, so I managed to get to the house and the Vititow boys, Tom and Scott, seeing my condition, put me into a cold room and gave me a hot stimulant which revived me. But I shall not forget the suffering I experienced for several hours after this ordeal. Two days later the rest of the cattle were found drifted against the Union Pacific Railroad fence about thirtyfive miles south of Burlington.

Many a night I have ridden the range all night with only the North Star to guide me home.

There were many herds of wild horses on the prairies, and I remember one bunch consisting of one big beautiful stallion, all black, with a tail dragging on the ground, and a flowing mane reaching down below his neck and to the end of his nose.
And a bunch of mares that would follow wherever the stallion led, and it was marvellous to see the way he could drive them when danger threatened. This bunch would come close to our claim and lure the domesticated horses away. One day, seeing this bunch of horses a short distance away, I rode up under a hill and against the wind so they could not scent me, then got off my horse and crept over half a mile up the hill until I was within a couple of a hundred yards of the bunch. In this way I was able to see that none of our horses were in this herd that day, so I then stood up and took about three steps towards them when the stallion, who was standing guard, noticed me, and instantly gave a snort and a squeal, and at once circled the mares and started them in the opposite direction, he following some distance behind. In just a few moments they were out of sight.

Another time a bunch of horses with a beautiful bay stallion with a long flowing tail and mane was seen near the homestead of one of our neighbors, and I was asked to get this stallion and break him to ride. After running him down, which took some good riding and a couple of ponies, we caught him and early one morning my cousin and I started in to break him to the saddle. We got him "snubbed" to the saddle horn of the saddle my cousin was riding, when all at once he broke away with my new saddle on his back. Getting another saddle horse we gave chase, and if it were not for his stopping to pitch and buck in an effort to remove the saddle on his back, we would not have even kept him in sight, for he headed right into the wild horse country. Whenever we would get a little close to him, away he would go as fleet as the wind. Finally we circled him, and when he had stopped on a small knoll to pitch again, we slipped over the hill, and reaching down from my saddle I picked up the rope and snubbed him, and I got my saddle, which was more to me than the horse. But we had to chase that horse ten miles before we could get him.

One Thanksgiving Day I discovered that my good saddle horse, which was formerly a wild mustang, had escaped the corral, and taking four other horses with him, had gone back to the original feeding grounds near Kit Carson. A deep snow of three feet on the level kept me from following them at once, but when I did go a few days later I found traveling very slow and rather tiresome for both my horse and myself. When I got to within ten miles of Kit Carson and the wild horse country, I found the snow lighter, and range horses grazing.

I rode in after dark to get as near as possible to where the horse rustlers were located, and stayed all night with rancher who was a friend of the rustlers (for his own protection), but who certainly proved himself honest and trustworthy to me. Next morning I got up at daylight and started over to the home of his son, about three miles away, and on the way over I discovered a few of my horses, so I drove them on up to boy's ranch, where I was told to put them in the pasture. At this place I found two horse rustlers, one acting as the cook, and when I arrived we got into a dispute and was told to keep out of there, and not hang around. So leaving the horses in the pasture, I started on west, planning to return that night. George (the boy) told me he was going to ride southwest, and if he found any of my horses he would bring them back and put them in the pasture. During the day I rode up to Mr. B----'s home and asked him if he had seen this bunch of horses. He said, "No, but there are some stray horses around here", which was a signal, for immediately two men stepped from the house and put their hands on the two guns that were leaning against the house. Mr. B---- thought I was an honest man, so he asked me to get off my horse and hobble it and stay all night.
If I would do this, he would help me next day to find my horses. But as I had promised George to return to his home that night, I told Mr. B— that I could not do that, and his reply was--"Many a man as good as you never got to go back to his ranch. At this I stuck my hand in my hip pocket, and turning in my saddle, thanked him for his kindness, and informed him I was going on. At this the men picked up their guns, but not seeming to notice this move, I thanked him again and rode off, and I knew better than to ever look back, for it was a law among these rustlers never to shoot a man in the back.

I rode back to George's ranch about sundown, and he met me at the gate and told me not to look down towards the pasture, but to ride on in and put my horse in the stable and then look out throug a crack in the door and see if my horses were among those that had just been brought in. This I did, and saw my horses in the bunch. Remembering my trouble with the cook that morning, I did not want to stay all night, but George told me he was the boss, and would have things ready so I could leave by daylight next morning. I did not sleep much that night, for I couldn't feel at ease with these men around me. When daylight came I was ready to go, but we could not see the horses that had been put in the corral the day before. We (George and I) got on our saddle horses, and while doing this George whispered to me to ride to the gate, and if the gate was down he would ride straight to his Father's home three miles away east, and I was to ride a mile south and one-half mile west to a lagoon, and there I would find my horses. He advised me not to look back, to start on a cantor, and keep on going until I was out of sight of the house and him. I found my horses just where he told me I would find them, so gathering them up with the ones I had in the pasture, I started for home. After riding about two hours I discovered that I was being followed by one and two riders following at a distance. At noon I stopped to feed my horses and get something to eat at a ranch nearby. They asked me to stay all night, for it would cost me nothing. But I knew too well it would cost me my horses, and as long as I had started with them, I wanted to get them all home safely. And it did not look so good, my being followed the way I was. So after getting a meal, and feeding and resting my horses, I started on. I got to the snow line just at sun down, and found two vacant claim shanties, and thought I would put up here all night, as I could put the horses in one shack and I and my riding horse stay in the other. Of course, we had no feed or water for either myself of the horses, but neither was there any fuel to help me to keep from freezing. After debating the advisability of this move, I decided to keep on going, for one of my horses was getting tired out, and the snow was getting deeper, and the next house twelve miles away across country, and nothing to guide me but the north star, and a very dim trail in the snow that I had made on my way down. But realizing that I had been followed all that day, I decided to push on, and arrived at the twelve mile house about midnight. I rested here, and the next morning I found that my best horse was dead from over driving. After getting my breakfast, I started home, and being out of the rustler's country, I could take it more leisurely. I got home two days later.

Another horse I particularly remember and which I broke to ride was a big Idaho outlaw which I had bought from a bunch of horses coming from Idaho. I turned her out for a few weeks so she would get acquainted with her new surroundings, then one day I decided it was time that she learn to carry a rider, so a couple of boys and myself tried to see corral her, but being unable to do this, we had to run her down, tiring out two of my saddle horses and using a third one before we could rope her.
She put a big fight, striking and biting. But we tied her head to a saddle horse on each side to keep her from biting, and then blindfolded her while we saddled her. Then I got on her and untied her from the saddles and pulled the blind from her eyes. She pitched and reared, and soon my hat fell off, hitting the ground just in front of her. With a wild and vicious squeal she came down on that hat with all four feet, and kept striking it viciously. Right then I realized that I must ride her and tame her if I did not want to be treated to what the hat received. It was a tough job, but I rode her, and she got to be a good saddle horse.
The following extracts are copied from a diary formerly owned by Mrs. C. Pearce, (step) mother of Arthur J. Pearce, Burlington, Colorado.

Carman A. Pearce was born Jan. 22, 1856, in Scotland Co. Mo.

Mary Cain Pearce was born Aug. 13th, 1856 at Agency, Wapello Co. Iowa.

Arthur J. Pearce was born March 20th, 1882, Arabela, Scotland Co. Mo.

Carman A. Pearce and Mary Cain were married Jan. 20th, 1886, at her home at Arabela, Scotland Co. Mo.

We started from Mr. Boyles place on March 28th, 1887, at Long Island, Nebraska, and arrived at Haigler at noon, April 4th, 1887; started from there Thursday morning, April 7th, 1887; and arrived at Burlington, Colo., Monday noon, April 11th, 1887.

Landed on our place about two o'clock, April 11th.

Rained all day April 12th. Plowed the afternoon of April 13th.

Ed started to Haigler April 14th. Commenced on our house Thursday, April 14th. Ed returned from Haigler April 18th. Finished our house on April 30th. Moved in that afternoon.

Commenced plowing for corn Monday May 2nd, 1887.

C.A. Pearce,
Burlington, Elbert Co. Colorado.

Rev. F. F. Thomas organized the Methodist Episcopal Church at Burlington on Feb. 25th, 1888; the class consisting of twenty two members. We were there and enrolled our names, Burlington being only eleven months old.

C.A. & Mary Pearce.

Grace Priscilla Pearce was born August 7th, 1887 at Burlington, Elbert Co, Colo. and died Jan. 10th, 1892.

Tina Pearce was born Feb. 27th, 1892 at Burlington, Kit Carson Co., Colo., and died Mar. 10th, 1892.

Snow storm commenced March 30th, lasted 24 hours, 1891.

April 29th, 1891, received seed grain from Kit Carson Co. Colo.

Raised the windmill March 9th, 1891

The school house at Burlington was divided into two rooms Sep. 1893. Into three rooms 1900; into four rooms 1905.

June 4th, 1898, the first quarterly meeting of the church at Burlington was conducted by Elder Merritt of Denver, Colo.

The M. E. Parsonage was commenced Sep. 1st, 1899 at Burlington, Colo. The supper on March 16th, 1900, brought $36.00, all of which was given to help on the parsonage. Built new parsonage fall of 1905.

I had the first quilting party in this neighborhood. Eighteen ladies in the old sod shanty on the claim (Moll) April 15th, 1893.

Arthur was taken in the church as a member on Feb. 23, 1894.

The year 1894 the grain did not sprout until after the big rain on June 4th.

Jake Pearce went to Ellsworth, Kansas on Aug. 5th, 1891, and returned Jan. 6th, 1892.
A big snow storm came Wednesday night, Jan. 7th, and continued up to Sunday night, Jan. 11th, 1891.

C. A. Pearce was elected Road overseer, Nov. 1890.
Commenced storming Monday, 23rd, and continued to the 25th, March, 1891.
Carman threshed for the first time in Colorado, Feb. 17, 1892.
A big snow storm on May 21, 1891. We had a hog staked on the grass, and she was chilled to death."

"Reull Cain was born in Adams County, Ohio on July 25th, 1819 and died January 15th, 1912 in Burlington, Colorado.

Sarah Power Cain was born in Indianapolis, Indiana on September 29th, 1828, and died March 22, 1909 in Burlington, Colorado."

(Mrs Mary Pearce' father and mother)

"Pap, Ma and Walt (brother) came to Colorado March 2nd, 1892."

"Carl W. Pearce was born May 5th, 1896 at Burlington, Colorado
Kit Carson County.

Carl was baptised Sept. 5th, 1910 by a Christian minister, and united with the M. E. Church on Sept. 18th, 1910.

Carl started to Ft. Riley on April 28th, 1918, stayed there two days, then went to Camp Funston, and stayed there one month, and was sent to Campt Mills, N. J. and sailed for France on June 2nd, 1918. He was 13 ½ days on the waters.

We had a cablegram from him on Nov. 30th, 1918.

Carl sailed for the U. S. on May 8th, 1919, and was on the water six days.
We had a telegram from him on May 23rd, 1919, A. M. from N. Y.

Carl was discharged on June 10th, 1919 and came home from Ft. Russell, Wyo. on June 12th, 1919."
I was born in Coal Valley, Illinois, on May 28th, 1862, and when a small child my parents moved to Columbus City, Iowa, and took a farm on which we lived for twenty-four years.

About this time we heard of the great western country that was being opened to homesteaders, so a number of us decided to come west to see what the new country was like, and if satisfactory, we would stay. Henry Daniels, Henry Jones, Wm. Dyessert, Frank Lighbody, Smith McKnight, Emmet Wade and myself came out together, and were met at Wray by Jim Dugan, a locator, and we drove across the plains in two covered wagons to where we decided to locate our claims.

On September 16th, 1886 I filed on a pre-emption and timber claim in Section 8 - Twp. 6 - Rge- 45 - S, then we returned to Wray and I went on to Denver and filed my papers.

I then returned to Iowa, and on February 14th, 1887 I returned to Colorado, shipping my furnishings and goods to Wray and then driving to the location on the "Divide". I brought a span of mules, a mare, two cows and a few household goods. I slept on the prairie until I got my dugout built; this was plastered with native lime and had a good wooden floor. I lived in this for three years, then built a two room sod house, which was much more comfortable to live in. My dugout was 11 x 15, we had four beds (one a trundle bed) and our table, cupboard and chairs and stove, you can see there was not much room. I remember that one evening we had a visitor, and he brought his bed along, but wanted to sleep in the house, so we moved out the table and chairs so he could bring his bed in.

All of the men named who came out with me in 1886 returned and filed on locations in 1887, and most of them lived here for three or more years, then moved away. Henry Daniels, whose daughter I married, and Henry Jones were two of the first to file on their claims here. The Daniels family moved away in 1895, and all are deceased now except one boy living near Ramah, Colorado.

I remember that when we were shipping out in the emigrant cars, my Brother-in-law, John J. Fugh and I were shipping in two cars hooked together. At that time it was quite common for people wanting to come west to smuggle themselves into some one's car and come out with the live stock and furniture. Mr. Fugh and I both knew that there were men in both our cars, but I was not asked anything about it. The conductor asked Mr. Fugh if we had any people in our car, and he replied: "Yes, four mules, one mare, a dog and myself." The conductor took his word for it, and turned away without making an examination of the car.

Mr. Fugh came to Colorado in the fall of 1886 and filed on a homestead on the "Divide" in section 19 - 7 - 45.

My father and mother came from Iowa to visit us in the fall of 1888, about August, I believe, and they came to Goodland, Kansas on the passenger train, then had to come the rest of the way (to Bethune) in a box car. The railroad was built thru' to the Springs, but the Contractor had not turned the railroad over to the Company, so they could not run passenger trains on it legally.

Our first election was held in the fall of 1888 in Voting Precinct No. 28. I was one of the Clerks and I took the election returns toKiowa, then the county seat of Elbert County. I went to Bethune and took the train to Kiowa; as all the election Clerks had to do the same thing, there was a bunch of us on the train at that time.)
Our school district was organized in 1890, the district was about fifteen miles long. The first school was held in an old vacated house of sod with but one window, and we had home made desks. I taught school the first term—a three months term at $25.00 per month. And I thought that a good salary. I taught about six terms in Kit Carson County, and taught two of these in Vona. The first school house was built of sod in 1892. We held Sunday school in the home of Mr. E.G. Davis, one of our pioneer families and neighbors. There were no ministers, so we did not have church services until a few years later. I remember Rev. Peter Rasmussen and Mrs. Mary Bevier as two of our earliest preachers. We got our supplies at Wray, two or three of the neighbors going over together. The trip usually took four days, and we felt safer traveling when two or three of us went together. We always brought back enough to last for some months.

Mail was gotten at Tuttle Post office, and brought from St. Francis first, then later from Stratton and Bethune.

I never saw any buffalo in this country, but my wife saw two near our place. I ate buffalo meat at a place where I stopped one night; the hunter who gave it to us had killed five buffalo out of a herd that he had seen. There were plenty of antelope on the prairies, and we used to kill them for meat. There were lots of gray wolves; I remember that Smith McKnight, who was a pretty good roper and rider, lassoed two of these wolves and then dragged them to death. The wolves did not bother my live stock any, but they were thick down on the river, and Dr. Tuttle lost a number of colts by being killed by wolves. There was an old three-legged female wolf who seemed to be the most vicious of the bunch. She was very cunning and it seemed impossible to trap her or shoot her, so one of the cowboys decided she had lived long enough and done enough damage, and he traced her to her den down near the bluffs, then he put in three traps and built an alley-way of rocks so she would have to come out over the traps. She did, and was caught in two traps by two feet, so the cowboy killed her. After this trapping, it seemed as tho' the wolves left of their own accord, for we did not hear of any more depredations by wolves.

We did not have many amusements; visiting seemed to occupy most of spare time we had. Neighbors were not very close, and going visiting meant going somewhere in those days, and enjoying a real visit all day, and sometimes two or three days—it depended on the length of the trip.

One of our good neighbors and friends whom I like to remember was John P. Evans, who died some years ago. He was born in Wales, and moved to Missouri when just a child. He lived there for a few years, then moved to Iowa about 1879. Here Mr. Evans worked for one man for three years—a Mr. David Hughes. He came to Colorado with me in 1886 and filed on a pre-emption near Idalia, then returned to Iowa, and stayed a month, then came out to Colorado in an emigrant car. He lived in this community for a number of years, and after his marriage moved to a location twelve miles North and East of Stratton where he resided until his death. He was always such a good faithful church worker.

Dated—Feb. 15th, 1934
I was born in Perranporth, Cornwall, England, not far from Lands' End and in the historic setting for the adventures of King Arthur. My father was blacksmith in the tin mines.

When I was about five, my father and mother crossed the ocean in the Steamship "Circassian" and we finally arrived at certain mines in Nova Scotia, located just across the "Basin of Mines" from the early home of Evangeline. After spending a very short time here we entered the United States in the year 1876 and located at New Diggings, Wisconsin.

Two of my father's brothers had preceded him to the United States and one was located in Wisconsin at a small town near New Diggings. The other was at Central City, Colorado, and had been doing very well for himself. The lead mines on which New Diggings depended playing out my father decided to go out to Colorado and find a job. My mother, brother, sister and myself were left in Wisconsin until he could locate a place to work and live. He found this at the Freeland mine, several miles above Idaho Springs and very shortly thereafter my mother and her children took the Union Pacific train for Colorado. One particular item that stands out in my mind from this trip is our arrival at the Windsor Hotel in Denver and the negro porter who carried our luggage up the broad stairway breaking off the handle of a parasol that stuck out from a shawl wrap.

It was soon found that the altitude was too great for my mother and the Doctor ordered us out of the mountains. Stopping for a week or two at the city of Golden, we came on the Denver. Here my father found work at his trade, first with Colorado Iron works and later with the Rio Grande and the Burlington shops.

When the Burlington short cut was built into Denver many of the railroad men became highly interested in the cheap farms along the route and we finally moved to Holdrege, Nebr. in 1883. However, it took money to buy even a cheap farm and so my father went back to his old trade of blacksmith.

When the Rock Island road was built in 1887 and 1888 it attracted a great deal of interest because it was opening up a new tract of land that was open to homesteading. In 1888 a rough character in Holdrege, who claimed to have been a buffalo hunter and to have travelled over all of what is now Eastern Colorado, made up a party to go out to the new country and take up tree claims. They took the train to Wray, Colo and there this buffalo hunter named Baker, had a light covered wagon. They drove south from Wray for about 70 miles and each person in the party filed on a tree claim of 160 acres. After leaving Wray, the party passed through a country that was occupied only along the three streams that were crossed. This man Baker had already tried for assault with intent to kill and was later to be lynched at Cheyenne Wells for shooting a man who drove across the corner of his homestead. As this will probably be completely covered by other parties who are better posted than I am I will not tell this story.

(In 1888 father moved his blacksmith equipment to Beloit Colorado, eight miles south and two west of Bethune, Colo. This town had been largely boomed on the strength of a survey that had been made which would take the Rock Island through Beloit. However the Rock Island went through eight miles to the north and Beloit soon passed from the picture.) Our pre-emption had been taken near by, however and as my father wanted to have holdings close at hand so he purchased a homestead and ...
he filed on a homestead in an adjoining section. In 1892 I filed on my homestead so that we had 800 acres in a fairly compact body.

By this time the original settlers began to leave and by 1894 we had no neighbors closer than seven miles. This was fine for a ranch and we exerted every effort to increase our holdings of horses and cattle. In 1895 we took 600 head of steers to hold for the Bar Tee ranch and I got my first experience of what life in the saddle really meant. These were all big southern steers and could be at the ranch house in the evening and in another county in the morning. However, with some breaks and some assistance from the Bar Tee people we accounted for every head.

We lived on the ranch until the early 1900's when the younger children began to need schooling and the folks moved to Burlington, leaving me on the ranch. In 1904 I was candidate for the office of County Treasurer, running against Fred Flexer and was defeated.

In the same year I moved to Burlington, selling the stock and equipment. In Burlington, I was at first Clerk of the County Court for Walker Claister, who had been elected County Judge and did not care to leave the school he was teaching to stay in the office. This lasted four months.

(In the middle of the summer of 1905, Mr. W. D. Selder offered me a place in the Stock Growers Bank at $1.25 a day. Later this was raised to $35.00 and I felt rich enough to marry. I married Nannie R. Yersin, whose people had homesteaded near us and at about the same time we did. This has been the outstanding good fortune of my life.)

(Since joining the Stock Growers Bank I have been continuously connected with the banking or abstract business until the present moment. In 1916 I purchased from Geo C Gates the abstract business held by him and incorporated the Kit Carson County Abstract Company of which myself and family hold all the stock.)

(My education was begun in a small one room school shool at Freelund, Colo., continued at the Twenty-Fourth street and Gilpin Schools in Denver and ended in the early part of the high school at Holdrege, Nebr.) I received a teacher's certificate from the County Superintendent of Elbert County, Colo. in 1896 and held a certificate for many years thereafter under both Elbert and Kit Carson Counties. I have taught in seven different country schools covering a period of 10 years. I now hold an honorary life certificate from the State of Colorado. Also I have been both Secretary and Treasurer of the old Beloit district - No. 29 - and was for ten years Secretary of the Burlington Consolidated District.)

I have never since coming of age, taken an active part in politics and have voted at every election, at which I was eligible, to vote, with two exceptions, in that entire period. (I have been precinct committeeman for many years in different precincts and for four years, County Chair an for the Republican party and served in the State Legislature in 1927 and again in 1929. For ten consecutive years I managed the Kit Carson County Fair.)

And so this is the story - "the short and simple annals of the poor" and I find myself at sixty-two, with my fortune consisting of my wife and two children - Katherine and Henry --, having enjoyed immensely the years as they have gone and hoping to enjoy many more as they come.

Dolores Feb 15, 1934

N. L. Rocklin
I was born in Ulysses, Nebraska in July, 1872. My father, Sidney L. Jones and my mother and eldest brother went from Illinois to Nebraska, settling in Seward County in 1871. Father and my grandfather came out first, taking adjoining homesteads and building a frame house on the line between the two homesteads. They drove forty miles to Lincoln, Nebraska, for their lumber and supplies for the buildings. They built a soddy dugout on the side of a hill and covered it with lumber and sod, and used it for a barn. One night a terrible blizzard came up, and covered this little dugout, and when they got it uncovered they discovered that their only team of horses had been smothered to death.

In the early spring of 1892 father came out to Colorado and located on a homestead thirteen miles straight north of Burlington. He stayed at the home of my Uncle, J. T. Jones, who had come out at an earlier date, and who helped father build the frame house and get the various dwellings in readiness for the family. Then in the summer of 1892 mother and my three brothers came to Colorado. They came out on the Rock Island, and shipped their household goods and live stock out on the railroad. I stayed for two years longer in Vanango, Nebraska, then came out to Burlington to live.

Father hauled water for a few months after the family came out from my Uncle's place; then he got a well drilled on his own farm. Uncle's place was just two miles away, so we never had to go far for water.

(The lumber and building supplies were purchased at Burlington from David Carnahan, who then owned the lumber yard)

We had no school house near us; there were no children in the neighborhood or in the District of school age, so the school houses were a few miles east and west of our home. There was no church or Sunday School; the neighbors lived so far apart that no Sunday school was organized, and when we wanted to attend preaching services we drove to Burlington. This was not done often, for thirteen miles was quite a distance with a team and wagon.

There were very few amusements for the young people; once in awhile we would have a party at some neighbor's home; maybe once in a while a dance, but not often. Sometimes we would drive to Burlington to attend a dance.

Our mail was delivered at Burlington, then brought out on the route to Hale Post Office. My brother was a mail carrier for some years, and when he was unable to go I drove the route for him with his horse and buggy.

We did not suffer the hardships of many other pioneers who came out earlier than we did; the railroad was built and Burlington established, so we were near a trading center, and could enjoy the privileges of church, meetings, and amusements which could not be had by those further away from town.

I am now living in Denver. We sold the homestead after my father's death, and all moved to homes of our own. I like to visit Burlington, I still have an interest in it, for I saw it grow from a few poor little houses to the attractive town it is today.

Lated Feb 14th 1934
I was born in Macon County, Missouri on January 27th, 1876, and went with my parents to Alma Nebraska in 1885, and lived there for one year. My father, Elias G. Davis, and a cousin came out in the late Fall of 1886, and liking the looks of the country, filed on a pre-emption and a tree claim on land lying right along the Republican River bottom. Here they built a sod house, and made ready a home for the family. Later my cousin returned to Nebraska with the teams and wagons, and in late March, 1887, my Mother, Leah Davis, and my Grandfather, (Mother's father) and we five boys came out to our new home. We traveled in covered wagons, and drove ten head of cattle and five pigs. We went to Haigler, Nebraska, then across to old Jacqua, Kansas, then followed the Republican River into Colorado and to the location Father had chosen as our home. We brought a few household furnishings and our bedding, and some food supplies, and a small cook store.

As we had settled near the river, we always had plenty of good spring water for ourselves and our stock. Grazing for the cattle was not so good at first as it was in later years, for the grass had been pastured very close by the large herds of cattle that roamed the country at that time, but after we had our pasture fences built and the grass allowed to grow for a season or two, we soon had plenty of good grass and hay, and later had hay for sale to the folks south of the river and those farming on the dry prairies. We tried farming, but were not so successful at it until a few years later when we used irrigation.

After father had proved up on the pre-emption, he took a homestead right across the road east of the old location, and we lived there for a number of years; one of my brothers now owns and is living on this homestead.

There was no railroad thro' here then, and therefore, our nearest trading place was either Haigler, Nebraska, or Wray, Colorado. We usually drove to Haigler, as the road to Wray was not so good. It would take us three days to make the trip to Haigler and return, but we always brought supplies enough to last for some weeks.

I never saw any buffalo; I guess they had been pretty well hunted out of this country before we arrived. But there were buffalo bones on the prairies, and we used to gather these and take them to Haigler and sell them for $3.00 per ton. It took a lot of bones to make a ton, and we have driven many a mile over the prairies looking for them. Usually they would be found in a bunch or group, showing that the hunters had circled the herd of buffalo and shot them down, or that the carcasses had been dragged to one spot where the skinners worked. The buffalo were not killed so much for meat as they were killed for their hides and horns by ruthless hunters.

There were plenty of antelope on the prairies, and lots of wild horses that used to coax away our domestic horses. I have chased many a herd of these wild horses, and once in awhile would capture a pretty good one, but as a rule they were too light for most work on a farm.

(We used to trap gray wolves, and sometimes we sold the pelts and again we would tant them and make them into rugs)

(Our mail was brought from St. Francis, Kansas once a week by a carrier with a horse and buggy, and was taken to the Post office established on the old Tuttle ranch. (Dr. Tuttle's ranch) About a year later the Post
office was changed to our home, and my father made postmaster. This position he held for a number of years. The mail was then brought from Wray, Colorado.

(When the County was first organized, my father was appointed one of the members of the first Board of County Commissioners. There was no court house at that time, so the County offices were located in the west rooms of what is now known as the N. R. Brown building, and the first two-story building in Burlington.) I remember that when father got ready to go to Burlington he asked me to go along and bring back the team. I had no shoes presentable for town wear, so did not know just how we were going to manage it, as it would not look proper for the son of a County Commissioner to go to town barefooted. So mother solved the problem by letting me wear a pair of her shoes for the grand occasion. And I remember how proud I was when I got to Burlington and displayed my buttoned shoes to the admiring natives. Can you imagine a boy of today wearing his mother's shoes?

(I went to school in a vacated house about six miles from our home. We had home made desks and benches, and used the books we had brought with us from Missouri and Nebraska. Our first teacher was Miss Celina Miller and the next was J. F. Gilmore. We had but a three months term of school at that time. Later a sod school house was built and the regular desks installed.)

Sunday school was held at the homes of the different neighbors in the community until after the schoolhouse was built, then we held our meetings there. We did not have church very often, maybe about once or twice a year. We always were glad when a traveling minister or missionary would come along and preach for us. Later the Rev. Peter Rasmussen and the Rev. Mary Bevier both preached in our community, driving long distances to fill their engagements at the different places they preached. I remember that a young girl in the community died, and the funeral sermon was not preached for several months later, as there was no minister near us, and not until one happened in to preach could the services be held.

We moved to Burlington some years ago, and have lived here ever since. I was married to Zelma Ackelson, and we have four children, all grown now, and three of them married. Two of my daughters are teaching in schools in this County.

(I served three terms as County Sheriff of Kit Carson County. I was engaged in the garage business for some years, then sold out to the Reed Brothers, and have busied myself at various kinds of work since. I have watched with much interest the growth of our town and County, and do not know of any other place where I would rather live.

Dated- Feb. 13th 1934

Elias G. Davis
These letters were written by Mrs Leila Shaw Walters of Burlington, Colorado, and sent to her grandparents, Cyrus and Lydia Shaw of Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania.

Mrs Walters was born in 1875, and came with her parents, Dana and Eva Shaw, to Bird City, Kansas in July, 1886, then came on to Colorado in 1887, and Dana Shaw located a homestead on the SE 1/4 of 35-9-43, which is now owned by his granddaughter, Mrs Mabel Walters Hudson.

Albert Walters came to Colorado in the fall of 1887 from Illinois, driving overland all the way. He settled near Lansing, or Kingston Flats Post office (now Armel, Colorado) and there took a pre-emption claim. He freighted from Haigler to Lansing the first winter he was in Colorado. He took a tree claim near where Stratton, Colorado is now located, and sold it when settlers began coming to Stratton. Later he took a homestead near the Dana Shaw location, and freighted supplies for some months for the community from Haigler, Nebr.

The water used by these people was hauled from the Smoky River.

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Mr Walters is at present in a hospital in Iowa. I am hoping that I will be able to get his interview in the near future. His daughter, Mrs Hudson, is trying to locate a dairy kept by he and his partner, Sam Penn, on their way from Illinois to Colorado and the early days in this country.

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Burlington, Colorado
August 11- 1894

Dear Grandma & Grandpa:

It seems that Ma has written all that there is to write but perhaps I may think of something more. Pa is going to town tomorrow with a tub of butter and we'll get the mail, we always try to go to town Saturdays so as to get the mail to read Sunday, but since the strike the mail has been very uncertain.

We were very fortunate in getting our groceries from Kansas City before the strike. We only have a local freight once a week anyway, and then we did not have any. The little towns got out of provisions and it was rather hard on the people for owing to the drought they have to buy everything that they live on.

Burlington did not have any coal, sugar, salt, soap, and a good many other necessaries, but the freights are running now.

A great many people have left the country, in fact, nearly all that could get away, for there are so many mortgages that compel people to stay; a few families left in the night. One man who did our plastering, went by moonlight, but he left his cattle and farm machinery that were mortgaged on the prairie. His horses were so poor that they had to be helped up, and one died the next morning, but one of our neighbors had a "burro" strayed in that direction, and they must have taken it and gone on, for they went on and the burro has never been heard of since. A neighbor woman near here stole another woman's rocking chair, but I haven't time to tell the particulars. We are glad to have such people go.

There are twenty-five families on the County for support now and if they keep on increasing the County will be bankrupt by spring. The commissioners have reduced the rations to four articles of food, viz: flour, meat, potatoes & beans.

By the way, there are an abundance of potatoes near Colorado Springs and we talk of taking a trip in a wagon, and bring back a supply, for there wasn't a sign of a vegetable raised here. I think it would be nice to see the scenery.

We don't want to give you the "blues" so I'll close.

Lovingly Yours-
Leila Walters.
Dear Grandma and Grandpa:

We received your letter yesterday. We all went to town to attend Republican League meeting, but there had been so many speeches this week that the League was postponed, so we gossiped with our neighbors. It's astonishing the amount of interest the ladies take in politics.

Albert is on the Election Board and has gone out this afternoon to call on the ladies and get their names in order to register them. I intended going with him, but Mr. Holihan came over, and so he went. Yes! We enjoyed our trip very much, we were gone five weeks, started Monday, Sept. 3rd, and arrived at Colo. Springs the following Mon. We had a covered wagon or Prairie Schooner, as they call them here, and a gasoline stove to cook on, which is very convenient. Most people build a camp fire and have their cooking utensils tied on behind their wagons. Just imagine how comical that must look. One wagon I noticed had two large kettles, frying pans & big black coffee pots, all tied to the wagon, and some nearly touching the ground. But we kept our in the gasoline oven.

There were so many people going West. Sometimes we would get in with a train of five or ten moving wagons, they were so thick. Peyton is the potato country, just this side of Colo. Springs. Some farmers have over a hundred acres. They sell them by the hundred instead of bushel; they are 75 cts. per hundred, and they were ripe while we were there. They dig them with potato diggers, a machine drawn by four horses, and the most amusing part is that they call them "spuds" (not the machines, but the potatoes.) and nearly every one we met asked is we were going West to "pick spuds". We always told them "no", but we hadn't the slightest idea what they meant till we decided to expose our ignorance and inquired.

The people that come from the drouth country are called "Rain-belters". Colo. Springs is a lovely city though not large. It is certainly a city for invalids. It is so quiet. There are no saloons. The deed to the land was given on the condition that no liquor was to be sold on it, or they forfeit all right to it.

We camped on some vacant lots in the West part of town near the street car line connecting the Springs with Colo. City & Manitou. We visited the Garden of the Gods, saw the Famous gate-way which is composed of rocks 330 ft. high, and the Balanced Rock, and many others which were very pretty. A great many resembled mushrooms. From there we went through Colorado City which is an old town and is full of saloons. It is four miles from the Springs. Manitou is small but very picturesque. It is at the foot of Pikes Peak. The cog Rail road was in operation but we did not go up, the fare being too enormous for hard times.

It is something strange about the different springs at Manitou. There are Iron, Sulphur & Soda Springs, all within a short distance of each other, and all very much patronized by invalids--though I much prefer clear water.
We left our wagon at Manitou and went horse-back up the Ute Pass to Cascade; saw the Rainbow Falls on the way, though I failed to distinguish the colors. But the Ute Pass is a treacherous looking place, nothing but rocks as high as one can see that are washed and weather-beaten and look as though they might come tumbling down on one's head at any moment.

From Cascade we went up the old Pikes Peak wagon road three or four miles, but it seemed ten, it was so fearfully steep and washed out, and our horses were not used to mountain climbing and the light air affected us all, so that we could not go only a short distance without resting. I wanted to see the grave of Helm Hunt, or rather, where it used to be, but it was too late to go farther, so we ate our lunch on a large rock under the trees and watched the chipmunks play. Albert didn't know what they were, but I did, though I couldn't think for a long time what to call them. We even had wintergreen berries to eat, which was the "biggest treat" while we were gone. In all we rode about 25 miles that day. (I had forgotten to bring my side-saddle and so I rode on a pillow, put between the blankets and it made a very comfortable seat. But I often thought how funny it would be if the straps came off and I should lose it.)

We went back to Colo. Springs & then to Denver, four days drive over very hilly roads, which reminded me of Penn. We staid at Denver three days. It is a very nice city but one gets tired, especially their eyes. I remember we camped on 31st & Stout St. Did some trading. (I got me a new serge dress, the first nice dress I've had since I was married.) And attended the theater one evening, and Albert found an Illinois friend who is a clerk in the P.O. there. He took us all through. It is a fine building. There are five hundred clerks and mail carriers.

From Denver we went north to Greeley, two days' drive through an irrigated country. So many fine gardens, sometimes ten & fifteen acres of tomatoes and melons.

Greeley is noted for its large potatoes, but they are not as good as those that are not irrigated. At Orr we called on Mr. Devvis, an acquaintance who seemed very pleased to see us. He is working for some English people who live on the Platte River, and he presented us with a case of alfalfa honey when we came home.

We followed the Mo. Pacific Ry to Fort Morgan, a desolate country. Saw a great many range cattle, saw over a thousand in one herd. There was a round-up at Hardin. The cowboys are not the rough bloodthirsty characters which the newspapers report them, but all that I saw and have met are genteel and appear very nice in society.

From Fort Morgan we followed the B & M Ry. to Haigler, Neb. over sand hills and almost a depopulated country. We met from fifteen to thirty wagons every day going West, some from Colo., Kan., Neb., and even farther east, all going to Greeley. What they expect to do there I don't know. "Spud picking" only lasts two weeks, but some said they might as well starve there as here. And all looked at us with such disgust for coming back to this place.

One day's drive we found nothing but sand hills from Brush to Pineo, a distance of ten miles, they told us in the morning, and we drove until afternoon and camped where we met some people and asked them how far it was to Pineo. I though we must be most there. They said "it must be about nine miles" and we drove till nine o'clock at night before we reached the place, an uninhabited depot.

(traveling was monotonous that day.)
From Haigler we came across the corner of Cheyenne Co. Kan. to Lansing, or Kingston, Colo. forty miles north of here, where Albert had some land. Lansing used to be a town, but its nothing but a postoffice now. I liked the country there, they raise better crops (when they raise any) than they do here. But it is twenty seven miles to any store and I should hate to have to spend two days to go after a spool of thread or a paper of pins. So I guess we will not move up there at present.

We were very glad to get home and the five weeks seemed very long, & very short in some respects. Well, I intended to write several letters this P.M. but I find this is so long that I fear you will tire reading it. It is for Aunt Carrie too

Write often, for we always enjoy your letters.

Lovingly Yours-

Leila I. Walters.
I was born in Anderson, Indiana in May, 1854, and lived there until I had grown up to young manhood, and in October, 1866 I arrived in Colorado, walking in from Independence, Kansas.

I took a pre-emption and a tree claim, and stayed about thirty days, filling on the pre-emption, and establishing my residence. Then I returned to Missouri where I bought a team of horses and a double-box wagon with a cover. Driving on to McCook, Nebraska, I bought a plow and some provisions, and returned to my claim, and settled down to be a pioneer homesteader. I followed the B and M Railroad to Akron, then across plains to my claim. McCook was the closest place where I could buy a plow at that time.

When I got to my location, I took the top box and cover off the wagon, and put it on the ground; thus I used for my bed. Then I used a small trench in the ground for my fireplace. In a short time I had my sod house built and furnished it with a cot, a small home made table, and a box or two. I had the first shanty of any one living in between Hugo and Akron. Then I started in to plow the finest country in the world; I did not have to pick rock, pull stumps or grub trees, - - nothing but plow. I plowed the first furrow that was ever turned in this part of the country.

I got water out of the water holes on the prairie; many a time dipping the water out after the cattle had just left. I would strain it, boil it and strain it again, then cool it, and it was pretty good to drink. Sometimes I had to drink it without boiling it, but it did me no harm. I had no timepiece, almanac, or anything by which I could tell the time. I had just the one old team to work with, and had to use them rather easy, for there was not much feed for them. I stepped off ten acres of ground--20 x 50 rods--then I would plow one furrow across, count five hundred, plow another furrow, and then when I had plowed sixteen furrows I would quit for the day.

(Akron, the nearest place at which I could get my mail and supplies, was forty miles north and west of me, and every month or six weeks I would walk over and bring back my mail and a few provisions, consisting of a little flour, some cornmeal, dried salt pork, blackstrap molasses and tea. I never had butter; eggs, coffee, or any such "luxuries").

I had a pretty good corn crop on the ten acres I had plowed, and was delighted to think I would have horse feed for the winter, and in September a terrific hail storm came, and destroyed the entire crop. I don't believe I have seen such a violent hail storm since in all the years I have lived here. It was rather disheartening, but I got along all right without the corn.

In the years 1887 and 1888 we had the most severe winters that we have ever had in this country. Hundreds of head of cattle and horses were lost and frozen, and I remember that two people lost their lives in the Blizzard; they started home and got confused and wandered around over the prairie until they perished. In those days there were no trails, paths, fences or roads. Just a few government corners marked with a wooden stake with numbers on them. My nearest neighborhood was Akron, if there was any one living closer to me on the south I did not know it. So you see it was not wise to get very far away from home when the weather was liable to make a change.

I never had any visitors at my homestead, and saw nothing but some prairie snakes, coyotes, antelops, and a few gray wolves. There was nothing on the prairie but the buffalo grass and one Canada thistle. At that time we could plow a field and leave it for two years, and not a weed would grow on it; there were no weeds here then. They got started later when the wheat had to be shipped in from other states and countries.
In the spring of 1888 a lady and two small children drove over to my place, and she was my first visitor. I guess she saw the little black spot on the prairie and wandered over to see what it was. She did not stay but a short time, talked with me a little and then drove away.

In February, 1888 I dug my well; it was 125 feet deep to water, and I used a short handled axe, a little fire shovel, and a three gallon syrup jug; and it took me just four weeks of hard digging to get to water. I had some help from a man who had settled northeast of me; he gave me three days work for one acre of plowing with my team.

I remember when I first saw Akron, it was a very small place then, just a few houses, but it was a railroad division and was growing. While I was walking down one of the streets, a man asked me if I was looking for a place to stay and to get something to eat. I said yes. So he informed me that the meal was just ready, and that they were serving buffalo tongue. Of course, that appealed to an easterner, so I went in and had my meal, but I did not know whether or not I was eating buffalo tongue, or just plain beef tongue. I could not tell any difference. But I always liked to think that I had tasted buffalo meat anyway.

In 1888 a family by the name of Greenwood moved to a homestead about four and one-half miles northeast of me. I got acquainted with the family and helping feed to them for their cattle and horses. Later I married their eldest daughter, Elsie Jane.

I went to Denver and proved up on my first homestead, or rather, the exception, then after I was married I lived near Thurman for a short time, then moved to my present location. When building my house here, I drove a stake into the ground, then went back about thirty rods, and sighted the stake by the north star; thus getting the correct location for the house. We have lived thirty-four years on this place, and would not feel contented anywhere else. We have seven living children; all but the youngest boy being in homes of their own. The boy lives with mother and helps us on the farm. We live twelve miles north and east of Flagler.
I was born in July, 1870 in Howard County, Iowa, and went with my parents to Kansas when eight years old, traveling overland in a covered wagon. We lived there for ten years, and then, my two older brothers and I went work with the railroad outfit that was building the railroad through Kansas and eastern Colorado, which country was then a part of Kansas and eastern Colorado, we decided to follow them into this new country, and in 1888 we arrived in Colorado with two wagons loaded with household goods and supplies; father drove one team and I drove the other. We went to Limon, and stayed there for about a month, living in our tent and on the wagons. Father (Charles S. Greenwood) did not like the Limon country as much as we did, and decided to return to Thurman, a small settlement and post office located north of Limon, and decided to settle there. Father took a pre-emption claim, and built a sod house, plastering it with native lime, and putting in a raised floor. The lumber we used for the house was some that was left over from the railroad workings, my brother getting it for us.

Water was hauled from a well on another claim about five miles away; and also from the water holes and from the Arickaree River about ten miles away. But in a few months we had dug a well of our own, and the water hauling was ended.

We brought a good supply of provisions with us, and we would take the wagon to a little country store north of Thurman and exchange them for groceries. The stock for this little store came from Akron, forty miles away. The storekeeper's name was Mitchell.

Our fuel was gathered from the prairie, and once in awhile we got a wagon load of wood from a timber claim west of us.

There was no school near us when we settled here, and father at once got interested in getting a school started, so he wrote a number of times to the County Superintendent at Denver before we could get any action. Finally he sent a map showing the location of the farms and the Superintendent then decided where the schoolhouse was to be built. It was rather amusing, however, when we came to the site he had selected, which was the edge of a lagoon, but however, it was a very good site. We decided to build there. It was made of sod, and we used handmade bricks. The schoolhouse was built right there. It was completed in the fall, and we were very pleased with the new schoolhouse. The next year we had better desks to use for our term of school. That year we had no Sunday school, but we did have preaching services whenever we could. We had a minister who would come to the schoolhouse five miles west of us, and we would all go and enjoy the preaching.

Our main recreation was reading; father was a good student who had read all the books which we had brought with us, and we never ran out of good reading material. We always had plenty of books to read in my own library, and we read many books in this new land.

I never saw any buffalo or gray wolves, but there were lots of antelope and hundreds of long-horn cattle on the prairie. We always had some very severe blizzards, but were fortunate in not having any great losses on account of them. We always were comfortably situated and had enough to eat, and therefore, were a great deal more fortunate than many others in this new land.

B. B. Guthrie

Jane Huntzinger

Flagler, Colorado

Wed., Jan. 30th, 1934
I was born on September 30th, 1881 at Winterset, Iowa, and moved with my parents to Nebraska where we lived for two years.

In the spring of 1893 my Father, William Ackelson, came to Colorado, and filed on a relinquishment situated on the "Divide" between the Republican and Arickaree Rivers. He had to drive to Akron to file his papers in this land. He bought the buildings, mostly of frame, from the former homesteader, and fixed up the place a bit before he returned to Arapahoe, Nebraska, where we were then living, and we all came out to our new home.

We went to Haigler, Nebraska, then across country in covered wagons, and I remember that we were not bothered a bit by traffic or crowds of people. We brought our milk cows, horses, chickens and household goods, as well as a supply of food. We had a good well on the farm, so did not need to haul water like so many of the new homesteaders did.

We were fortunate in having two school houses close to us, each about one and one-half miles away, so we could go to whichever school we wished. We had the regular desks and bought our own books; some of the pupils used the books they had brought with them. Both of these little school houses were of sod, and no doubt they have both been replaced by modern frame buildings.

(We had Sunday School at the school house; that was about the first place we went to after we arrived in Colorado. We very rarely, if ever had preaching services; we were so far away from a town where a preacher might be.)

Amusements were very limited--once in awhile we would have dances at home, and Dave Mauley, a Fiddler living near Kirk, Colorado, used to be our stand-by for music. But we always had a good time when we did go anywhere.

We tried farming, but father did not raise anything, so the next year, my two older brothers left for the Arkansas Valley and there found work, then wrote home advising that we had better bring our stock to the Valley and rent there. So we loaded our wagons with supplies for camping and with barrels of water, and started south. We traveled for days and would not see a building or a human being. There were plenty of antelope on the prairie and lots of coyotes. I remember when we got to the place called Big Springs thought we would find plenty of water, but imagine our surprise when some of the cowboys who were then working in a round-up outfit came to us and asked for water. We gave them as much drinking water as we dared to, for we did not know where we would be able to get good water again. We kept water in a barrel for our own use and for the horses that were pulling the wagons; the other stock had to do without until we got to the water holes or some such place where we were allowed to water them.

In the Spring following we trekked back across the prairie to our own since, and as a number of families had left in this caravan, there was a number of wagons and families, all eager to get back to their own homesteads. On our last night out we camped down south of old Claremont, near Stratton) and had one big meal together. My mother made biscuits for the crowd, and they were nicely baked on our little sheet iron camp stoves. Our surprise on returning to our ranch to find the cattle we had what was our surprise in much better shape than those we had "wintered" in the Arkansas Valley. But we enjoyed the experience of camping and traveling, following the old trail across the prairies to our destination.
I was born in South Bend, Indiana on May 13th, 1865, and when twenty years of age went to Cheyenne County, Kansas, taking up a pre-emption on the SE\(\frac{1}{4}\) of 10- 9- 42, in what was then Arapahoe County. I arrived in Colorado just as the Contractors were unloading the railroad outfit, so I got a job with the grading crew, driving a team for a Contractor named McIntyre.

I built a sod house, plastering it with native lime that I dug out of a bluff on the hillside. There used to be quite a number of these lime pits around in different places on the prairie. Many a sod home would have been unplastered if it hadn't been that we could use this native lime.

I came across country from Bird City, Kansas to Colorado in a two-wheeled cart, bringing a few furnishings and provisions with me. Later I returned to Bird City and got my team and wagon, etc. I used homemade furniture in my soddy and had a good floor, so was very comfortable. I was very fortunate to be close to good water, for I could get it at a well about one and one-half miles from me.

My mail was sent to "Lamborn" Kansas, now Kanorado. This little post-office was named for the man who operated a small store and the postoffice, but when the railroad was built thro' the Company would not recognize the name; and about 1901 or 1902 the name was changed to Kanorado.

Our reading matter was very limited; once in awhile we would get an old newspaper and would read everything in it. But I never had time to get very lonesome, as my nearest neighbor was about eighty rods from me, and we could have a pitch game every night if we wanted to.

I got a few cows, just enough for my own use, and tried to farm a little. But it was very discouraging at times, for maybe we would raise a fair crop in two or three years. I remember during 1894 and 1895 we did not have a bit of moisture for sixteen months. Yet the cattle seemed to get thro' the winter in pretty good shape, almost as well as they do now with plenty of feed. The buffalo grass did not even get green during this time, and one would think it was completely dried out. But whenever we got a little moisture the grass would come up as green and pretty as ever.

Until the sod school house was built we would have Sunday school and church in the depot, and folks would come from miles around to enjoy these services. That was about all we had to go to at that time, and it was a time to enjoy a short visit with neighbors that we did not see so often.

We had no regular preacher, sometimes a wandering preacher or a missionary would come and preach for us. We would have dances every three or four months at the home of a neighbor, and Jake Harmon, the fiddler, would sit and play all night for us.

I lived on this homestead for eight years, then sold out and came to Kanorado, Kansas, where I engaged in the hardware business for a number of years. I was married to Elizabeth Thompson of Chillicothe, Ohio, in 1904.

We have one daughter, Mrs. Dr. G.S.Flatt of Burlington, Colorado. I am now retired and we are living in our own home in Kanorado, Kansas.

I enjoy recounting my experiences of the early days in Kansas and Colorado; we were contented with so little and enjoyed so thoroughly the few amusements we did have.
I was born in February, 1858 at Keokuk, Iowa, and lived there until 1864 when I came to Kansas with my wife and baby, and settled near Oberlin, where I took a homestead, living here for five years. In the fall of 1869 we came to Colorado via the overland trail in a covered wagon, and took a pre-emption and a timber claim, my pre-emption being the NE 4 of 33-5-42 in what was then Arapahoe County. I went to Denver to file my papers, traveling on the Rock Island railroad, which had been built just about a year.

I brought a man out with me to help build my sod house, which was plastered with native lime, and had a good wood floor in it. We made several trips across country getting our supplies and furnishings for our home, and building material for the other farm buildings.

We got the place all prepared, and in February of 1870 my wife and children moved out and we began our pioneer home life in Colorado. At first we had to go to Jacqua, Kansas for all our supplies, then a little later we were able to get a few supplies, coal and lumber at Kanorado, Kansas. We hauled water for about six months from Sand Creek, and a few months later we had our well dug, and the neighbors for miles around would come to our place to get water. Each man had his own barrel, and would leave it there until it was filled, then would come and get it.

We brought out five head of cattle with us, some horses and our farming implements. We tried farming, but it was a tough proposition, for we got one good crop out of five years of trying to raise something. Money was scarce, and we could not buy anything, so had to be contented with what we had. Coffee and canned goods were luxuries, to be used only when we had "company". We used parched rye and wheat for our coffee, and always planned to have plenty of potatoes, flour and corn meal, and these with salt pork constituted our daily living.

I remember that one time we had a can of tomatoes which we had kept on the shelf for awhile, and my little boy said to his mother--"Mother, I wish some company would come so we could open that can of tomatoes, I'm hungry for them." I wonder how some of the people would live today if it wasn't for the canned foods that we used to consider such a luxury.

We used to have some very severe storms, both in summer and winter. I remember one winter we had a twenty-two inch snow; there was no wind and the snow fell so softly and piled up so level that it was hard to get through it. It had not been a severe winter, and my wife and children and I had put in our spare time (and we had plenty) gathering buffalo chips from the prairies; these we took home and put in long ricks in our yard. When the snow came and it was impossible for them to get fuel, the neighbors came to our house and hauled away wagon load after wagon load of the chips. I don't know what they would have done if they could not have gotten this fuel, for it was impossible to get to town and there was nothing else to burn.

When the weather got a little better one of my neighbors took two spans of oxen, (his and mine) and went to town and it took him three days to go and return the nineteen miles with 1100 lbs. of coal. He had to break a trail and it was slow work in such deep snow.

There was no school when we first came to live on this homestead, but later we got the large district divided, and we built a sod school house; the man in the community donating his time and labor. We had home made books and the pupils, I think there were eight of them, used the books they bought or brought out with them. Mr. Elmer C. Baker was our first teacher; later he taught in the Burlington school.
(We had preaching services in the little sod school house. A Rev. Thompson and Rev. Geo. Macleod were very good ministers who used to preach for us. Church and Sunday School meant something to us in those days, we would go miles to hear a sermon and enjoy Sunday school.)

Our amusements were few; we had parties and once in awhile a dance at some neighbor's home where there was a fiddler and an organ for music. Then we would enjoy literary and debating society at the school house.

We did not suffer any more than others who came to this new country, and I know we were a great deal better off than many who were not so well prepared to meet the hardships of the early days.

I must tell you of a Fourth of July celebration that we attended while living in Oberlin, Kansas, and the comical sight we witnessed. Of course, everyone came to town to enjoy the celebration, and among the folks who attended was a mother and her two daughters. They were the only family having an organ, and it was necessary to bring the organ to town so we could have music at the celebration. These folk's put on a good deal of style, and were just a bit "upish" in the community. One of their horses had died a few weeks previous, and they had no money to buy another and could not buy another in the vicinity even if they had had the money. So on the Fourth of July here they came to town in the wagon driving their only horse hitched up with the milk cow, and the organ in the back of the wagon and the three ladies up in front all dressed up in their best with their little sunshades up to protect their faces from the scorching sun. I have thought of that picture several times and get a good laugh out of it yet, for it was surely a comical sight.

Mr. Cody is a second cousin of Buffalo Bill Cody. He was married in 1880 to Hannah Melissa Sutton, who was born in Wisconsin and went to live in Iowa when five years old, traveling with her parents in a covered wagon. Mrs. Cody remembers of her father, the Reverend Sampson Sutton, being drafted for service in the Civil War, and as there happened to be one too many men in the company, he was discharged and allowed to return home to his family.
I was born in Coshockin, Ohio, on January 1st, 1859, and when six years of age moved with my parents to Indiana, living there until 1883, when I moved to Saunders County, Nebraska. I lived there for three years, then decided to go further west, so shipped my goods from Meade, Nebraska, to Lodge Pole, Nebraska, and then drove across the plains to Sherman County, Kansas, where in 1886 I filed on a pre-emption, living here for one year. It was the Easter of 1886 that we had such a terrible blizzard; I was then living in a tent, and taking care of the claim, as my partner had gone west for supplies, and during the blizzard a couple of boys that were running wild horses on the range came to my tent for shelter, and stayed for dinner with me. I was sure glad to see them, and we had quite a nice visit despite of the cold and snow.

The first well water we got here was from a well dug by a man living eight miles east of me, and that was on July 4th, 1886. Up to this time we had been using water from the creeks and water holes. A few weeks later we dug a well of our own.

My pre-emption was located ten miles east of the Colorado line, so in 1887 I took a homestead in Colorado, just one mile west of the Kansas line. This was on March 20th, 1887, and I went to Denver, then the County seat ofng County, to file my papers.

I built a sod house, plastering it with native lime, and putting in a good wooden floor. Many a shanty in those days had just the dirt floor, as it was difficult to get lumber. I had brought a few furnishings for my house, steam and wagon and a few farming implements with me, so settled down to be an eastern Colorado pioneer farmer. I did not need much then, as I was living alone.

I taught school for several years in Kit Carson County; I taught three terms in the Wallet school, (Dist. #33) and two terms in the Beaver Valley school. (Dist #17) Both of these little school houses were built of sod; we had the regulation desks, and the pupils furnished their own books. Later the districts furnished books.

I got water from the well I had helped to dig on my pre-emption in Kansas. Later I got a well dug.

My mail came to a small store and postoffice named Day, after the man who operated the store. A few years later we got our mail at the Wallet Post office.

A bunch of six buffalo came through my place one day, and all were killed excepting one that got away. When the bunch was sighted everyone got on horseback and went out on the hunt, for most of the new settlers wanted to know the taste of buffalo meat. There were plenty of antelope on the prairie which we used to hunt for our meat supply.

There were hundreds of range cattle on the prairies then, and the new homesteader used to be tormented by these cattle trampling over his fields and wall garden, destroying everything growing. Some of the settlers that were able to get fences the first few years had to keep a constant watch over their fields to keep the cattle from trampling them, and destroying the little crop they had.

There were very few amusements until after the school-houses were built, when we would have literary and debating society, especially in the winter. Folks would drive miles to enjoy an hour of literary or debating; can you imagine folks doing that now-a-days? It isn't exciting enough! We always had such splendid times together, and as we had these meetings about once a week, it was the incentive for a visit among neighbors who lived miles away.
(We had church and Sunday School in the Wallet schoolhouse; I think our first preacher was a man named Willis, then we enjoyed services by Rev. Thompson, and the Rev. George MacLeod.)

I was married in 1900, and we lived on the original homestead for almost twenty years. Then we sold out and bought another farm three miles north of Kanorado, Kansas, but just over the state line in Colorado. We lived here for some time, and then sold this farm, and moved to Kanorado, Kansas, where we bought a home, and where we are still living. I am now engaged in the garage business, and find plenty to do to keep me busy and make life interesting.

Dated - 1934 Feb- 6th - 1934

A. McElfresh
Kanorado, Kansas.