

*J. I. Kearns*

YUMA

BY HELEN SLATER *Doe* <sup>352</sup>  
Source material from John G. Abbott

Too often the praises of the deserving are left unsung; not because of any ignoble purpose, but more often because those who praise are unaware of the worthiness of the unpraised.

And so for this reason I want to depict the struggle that has been waged on the plains of Northeastern Colorado by the pioneers for the establishment of a civilization. Inasmuch that all of this plains country has been developed in very much the same way, I will also be relating a development that is general on the Colorado plains.

Should you be visiting this country now you would find Yuma a sturdy little city in the county of Yuma, having about 2000 inhabitants, and linked to the outside world by the Burlington railroad. It lies 145 miles east of Denver and is 40 miles from the state line. It is neighbored on the west by Akron, the county seat of Washington county, on the east by Wray, the county seat of Yuma county, and on the north by Haxtun in Phillips county. The town, itself, is like most any other town of its size, altho people in Yuma jokingly maintain that "Yuma does it different." The country surrounding Yuma is now dotted with flourishing farms where the land is productive and cattle ranches where that industry is best adapted. Yuma is a trading center for these people and is steadily growing.

Now, revert your line of thought, and let us see what Yuma and her surroundings were like not so many years ago.

The Yuma country was originally a part of the Louisiana purchase and later became a part of the Kansas territory. When Colorado gained her statehood in 1876, the Yuma territory helped



to bound the state on the east. It was then a great trackless waste of prairie sweeping from horizon to horizon.

The Kiowas, the Comanches, the Ogalellas, the Sious, all fierce red men, fought for supremacy on these plains. How fierce their battles were was never witnessed by white man, but we know they must have been terrible because even now it is possible to find arrowheads almost anywhere on these plains. Where the land has been cultivated for years, by overturning the earth deeper, perhaps, where it has been blown and piled; you will be rewarded with the arrowhead, that little yet mighty missile of chert, and sometimes even other interesting relics.

The red man came to the end of his trail. The white man marched steadily onward toward the setting sun. Rails of steel, following on his heels, linked him with those behind. Along these rails there were water tanks for the thirsty engines, and where ever these water tanks were, a tiny settlement sprang up. Humble? Yes, but Yuma was born. Humble? Yes, but only a few meager shacks and shanties she had a school in one of them.

George F. Weed, one of those early settlers, had a homestead on the quarter north of the Burlington railroad. Miss Ida P. Albert, owned and homesteaded the south quarter. In the year 1886, these two pioneers joined hands in matrimony and in land interests, and established the first town site. Why the town was named "Yuma," a name of Indian origin, is unknown. Many of the towns on the Colorado plains were named for noted Nebraska statesmen. Laird, Colorado, was named for Congressman James Laird of Nebraska, and Roggen for Edward P. Roggen, the Nebraska secretary of State. "Yuma" is a name that is loved by all who fought and



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lived that she might live.

2 When the first settlers came here, Yuma was in Weld county, in fact, all of northeastern Colorado was in Weld county. At this time there was still a great deal of government land, some times stretching for a hundred miles. During the summer months fine buffalo grass grew on this land. Cattle kings from Texas were quick to take advantage of this fine grazing land, and they brought their herds of cattle by thousands and by tens of thousands to turn them loose to get fat and sleek. But the cattle found that crops were much more to their taste and liking than buffalo grass and proceeded to invade the poor homesteaders' fields. Naturally, bitter animosities arose between these farmers and the cattle kings. The farmers, having no other come-back, killed and ate the meat of the Texas cattle when they found them on their land. This, of course, gave rise to many disputes. One time a farmer was arrested when found eating Texas beef. He had his trial upstairs in one of the frame buildings in Yuma where now stands one of the finest brick structures in the town's business section. The first thing the jury did in secret session was to find out how many of the jurymen had ever eaten the forbidden meat. Everyone of them admitted he had and one said he had just finished butchering one of the cattle that morning before coming to serve on the jury. You can decide for yourself the verdict.

There was a general agitation for the formation of new counties at this time. Of course, the cattle barons were opposed to new counties, and therefore, tried to collect a large fund to prevent the passage of the bill in the state legislature, which would create new counties. But the homesteaders caught on to their



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game, turned the tables on them and succeeded in getting the bill passed. Thus, it was in 1887 that Washington and Logan counties were formed. Yuma was a part of Washinton county.

From the beginning of 1885 until March of 1887, a period of only one year and three months, Yuma grew from a few shanties clustered around a water tank to a town. Up to this time the school was conducted in the upstairs of the old Weld Hotel, to where it had been moved from the little shack by the water tank. During this growth period a two-story school house of four rooms was built. There was one teacher, a Miss Mary E. Elmore. She taught all the grades and her pupils ranged in age from 6 years to 25 years.

Akron and Yuma, then evenly matched, had a bitter fight over the county seat. Akron, however, succdeeding in outvoting Yuma by bringing in all her horses, cattle and other farm assets.

In August, folling the big boom, a fire broke out. There had been no rain for weeks and weeks and everyhting was parched. The light frame buildings burned like tinder. There were only three wells in the town, one a dug well. Of course, the fire was uncontrollable.

The need then and the need now in Yuma and her territory is water. Then many of the homesteaders had to go eight or ten miles in order to get water. Drilling wells was an expensive operation and very few of them had money for anything but barest necessities of life. They hauled the water in barrels. The people put their empty barrels out and the hauler came along and exchanged them for full barrels. Of course, this meant only one thing. A typhoid fever epidemic broke out and many families were saddened and discouraged, but the most of them carried on.



The next year after the fire there was a severe drought. This same year marked the formation of the new county of Yuma. Yuma and Wray then fought for the county seat. Yuma, however, had learned by experience from Akron, and by bringing in all her horses and cattle, outvoted Wray, Thus Yuma became the county seat.

During the next two years, 1891 and 1892, crops were very abundant and the country prospered. But their prosperity wasn't long. For the next two years, 1893 and 1894, there were heavy windstorms and no rain. People left the country as rapidly as they could. Those who were able to stay thru this misfortune were almost completely wiped out by the grasshoppers. Many stories have been told about those grasshoppers. There fond of salt and swarmed on the wooden handles and levers on farm machinery, breaking and eating them to pieces. They would line up for miles on the railroad track and when the train came slipping and grinding over them, a terrible burning permeated the air for miles around horse after. Those were terrible years. Only the very fittest survived. Those who did remain went into the cattle business and for ten years Yuma was nothing but a cattle country.

It was in 1902, when Yuma was practically deserted, that Wray wrested the county seat from her and has held it ever since. Wray had grown considerably wealthier, her settlers south of her had learned how to really farm the good soil they had, and they had prospered.

Then came Yuma's awakening in 1905 when a new immigration began. Since 1905 Yuma has made a steady growth with a boom from 1915 to 1920. It was during those years that Yuma became instead of just a town, a little city.

And here we are in 1928. Shall we ask ourselves if all this



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bitter struggling and fighting for a sustenance from the soil and for the establishment of a community has been worthwhile? Isn't it self-evident? There must always be pioneers, some who have the initiative, the courage and the faith to tackle the unknown. Our pioneers tackled, met seemingly endless obstacles and ultimately conquered. They were like "Giants in the Earth," so says Rolvaag. How we admire them. But we must carry on what they have begun. We must love the pioneer, the farmer and not look at him with disgust, contempt and a sneer. The farms and the farmers are the keystone of our bridge over which will pass posterity. They are to be respected to be helped, advised and encouraged, not ridiculed and criticized.

Will not the efforts and accomplishments of our pioneer farmers and homebuilders have been all in vain if we fail to carry on and keep building up our rural Colorado?

We have our plains, our soil, and someday we'll have more water; we have our ideas, and best of all--our workers.

Colorado is a wonderful state. Her potentialities are limitless and her northeastern plains and her towns of the plains are going to carry on for her the work which her undying pioneers, those Giants in the Earth, began.---Helen Slater.



This article was written as a school theme in a contest, by Miss Helen Slater, and it won first place.

It was published in the Yuma Pioneer for Thursday, May 17, 1928. Mr. John G. Abbott is responsible for most of the material as many of the things he told me are in it, and he said that most of the material he had given to her.



*J. J. Kearns**Doe*

## REMOVAL OF THE OLD SHEREDY BUILDING CAUSES OLD TIMERS TO THINK OF HAPPENINGS IN THE EIGHTIES

WRITTEN BY JOHN G. ABBOTT

The wrecking and removal of the frame store building that has stood on Valley street at the intersection of Weld Avenue during the summer, pending the erection and completion of the modern two-story structure of brick on its former site, while proving a relief to the traveling public no doubt and while the temporary discomforts occasioned by its unwieldy bulk in the thoroughfares will be forgotten in gratification and pride that its substantial and imposing successor brings to our citizens, indicating the development of the town that is keeping pace with the expansion and settlement of the surrounding territory; yet to the few remaining early settlers and pioneers who dared the hazards of the primitive days of experimental immigration in the flux of the tide of the early eighties that swept over the plains west of the Mississippi in the years of great industrial and agricultural growth following the war, and who have experienced all the phases of the kaleidoscopic life of a frontier community since that time, the removal of this old landmark brings to mind vivid pictures of the past and of a life that is no more, can be over again ever.

The Burlington and Colorado Railroad was extended thru this territory in 1882, with the purpose of linking the market of Omaha and the east with the rapidly developing mining community of Denver and the Rocky Mountains to the west; little thought being given to the possibilities of the vast stretches of prairie



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with its enduring mantle of luxuriant buffalo grass, interspersed with stretches of sage brush, cacti and yucca; and the first homesteaders were looked upon by the cattle barons who used these plains for a grazing ground and pasture for thousands of wild untamed cattle, as a lot of fool-hardy adventurers, who would be starved out when their small pittences and meagre wordly goods, eked by the beef surreptitiously and without leave slaughtered and eaten from the herds of these same cattle kings, had been exhausted, and subsequent events proved how nearly these predictions of failure and disaster came to an eventful fulfillment.

The land north of the railroad track upon which part of the town of Yuma is in the course of building was homesteaded by a young lady named Ida B. Albert, and the land south of the track containing the main business section of the town was taken by George F. Weed, a conductor on the railroad, who with the aid of the Lincoln Land C. was enabled to plot and place part of the same upon the market as a townsite. Later these two argonauts of the plains pooled their land interests as a consequence of their marriage. Their home was a part of the dwelling occupied for so long a time by our esteemed and venerable townsman "Daddy Shopp" where they lived happily, and where two sons were born to them, both of them have since grown to manhood in other localities, and who occupy positions and carry on professions of trust and respect. George F. Weed has long since passed to the great beyond, and his widow is now the esteemed wife of former Governor Bailey of Kansas.

In December, 1885, the village of Yuma comprised a few flimsy shacks on the south side of the railroad right of way



opposite where the water tower of the railroad company is now located, consisting of two or three small stores, a livery barn, a small school house and the inevitable saloon. This was pending the platting of the townsite which was then in progress and the next year during the spring and summer of 1886 the town was built like one of the magic mushroom cities of that period, extending three blocks and more along the present main street of Weld Avenue. The Territory surrounding was a part of Weld County and the present city of Greeley, about one hundred and forty miles to the west, was the county seat. It was a time of tremendous energy, bustle, excitement and fevered dreams of future conquest and plenty; hope ran high and the winds of the prairies were the magic wines intoxicating the spirits of the hardy adventurers until the imagination winged with rosy dreams of the future prosperity inspired these indomitable souls with an exaltation and zeal that knew no bounds or limits, and nothing seemed too big or impossible of achievement.

That year the school house was moved to the upstairs of the old Weld Hotel and was presided over by Mary E. Elmore a diminutive brunette maiden with dynamic personality and who at the same time homesteaded the land now occupied by A. E. Dawdy. The lower story of the building was occupied by the State Bank of W Yuma, with J. E. Yerkes, now of Denver, at its head. W. A. Sheedy, now president of the First National Bank of Yuma then a young man holding down a claim about four miles south and a little east of town, disposed of his land interests and in a partnership with his brother-in-law, W. A. Flynn now of Hastings, Nebraska, erected a frame structure and therein was conducted a mercantile emporium under the firm name of Flynn and Sheedy, General Mer-



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chandise, where the public was supplied with the necessities of life in exchange for the usual quid pro quo in the form of butter, eggs, poultry, farm produce and money. Along the street to the south was the store of Joseph Morton, next a hotel, the drug store of M. A. Spaulding, the saloon of Philip Schuck, a new store building to be occupied by G. W. Dobl'er, the saloon of John Kuhne, a vacant lot and then a store building on the present site of Cole's mercantile establishment which was owned and occupied by Dr. Wilms, while to the north across Valley Street on the site of the present First National Bank was a small frame building, next to this a vacant lot, and then a drug store occupied by Ashmore Brothers. There were other business firms in the town, notably a store owned by W. H. Rosencrans, Foster's store, the Firm of Ammstrong and Bee Brothers, W. H. Borley's store, Fitzgerald's restaurant, Autland's Bakery, Haldan and Pate, hardware merchants, and Alex F. Meyer, hardware and implements two lumber yards, one under the management of E. H. Hamoton, now of Omaha; the other conducted by T. B. Babcock, now of Scotts, Bluff, Nebr.

On the site of where the present Star Barn and lots are located there was a large two story frame hotel facing the east owned by William Harlocker. At that time and during succeeding years there were from two to five saloons running in full blast, so that the winds of the prairies heretofore mentioned were not the only sources of joyousness and exhilaration of spirit. To paraphrase one of our western poets. "I was day all day in the day-time, and there was no night in Yuma." During those years the town gained the distinction of having the best base ball team and the best brass band in the state of Colorado. The ball team ran thru a series of successive and unvarying victories.



until they went to the city of Leadville, Colorado, to play a match game, but the altitude there, or something, went to the boys heads, and they met a most effective Waterloo. (They really got too drunk to play baseball;--Mr. Abbott) Imagine a ball team from this locality attempting to obtain the championship of the state in the banner mining camp of the west! Some boosters! May their memory remain forever green.

On the 9th day of August, 1887, about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, a fire broke out in the hotel first mentioned in the preceding paragraph and all buildings from the present location of the Cole's store to the and including the present site of the First National Bank being burned to the ground. The water supply was from a dug well in the street on the north side of the lot now occupied by the hardware store of Jas. Gardiner & Son, from another well in the street just south of the old Weld Hotel, and a third well back of the Harlocker Hotel. All of these wells had windmills, but such a source was inadequate to combat the hot blaze engendered by the dry and tinery frame buildings that had been baked in the warping blaze of the midsummer sun for weeks without rain and they burned like candles. There was not much wind, otherwise the town would have been wiped out entirely. In mentioning the water supply it would be well to remark incidentially that the water was hauled to the different residences and the result was an epidemic of typhoid fever that took from the community many of its brightest and best.

The dauntless spirit of the times was manifest in the immediate and successful attempt to rebuild the burned area and on the first day of the following September, or in three weeks, Mr.



W. A. Sheedy, in the face of disaster and total loss of his resources, set the carpenters at work to erect the building that has just undergone a process of demolition under the skillful energy of the Mekelburg brothers who have the distinction of being the champion wrecking crew of this locality.

Then followed two years of rapid development, a short setback in the dry year of 1890, the two golden years of harvest of 1891, and 1892, the lucious memories of which were the mainstay and the bait that led a few persistent and dauntless souls to plow, during the disastrous drouths of 1893 and 1894, the abundant spring of 1895, hopes raised high again and the countless billions of grasshoppers were tiny specks at first, but so thick that hatched from the pregnant soil that year tk devour everything in sight. These grasshoppers were tiny specks at first, but sothick that when one walked over the sod, they made a cloud-like mist of dust about the person, and later, when they started crawling alojg the paths or roads it looked like the ground was moving. A grayish, devouring host that respected no green growing thing, that ate not only vegetation, but gnawed the wooden parts of farm implements, ate the canvas from the binders and what little paint the sandstorms had left on the houses and buildings. They traveled along the railroad track, the sold center crawling sometimes in one direction and the ranks on the outside of the rails going in another. The trains came slipping and sliding into port, and then followed the grinding and smoking of wheels as the engines could find no purchase for their drivers upon the slippery sodden rails when starting again. The stench was something terrible. The only things that profited were the birds



and farmyard fowls, but their product of eggs was wholly unpalatable and unmarketable. That was the year that G. H. Hatcher, it is said, planted some tobacco. He said that the grasshoppers devoured ~~the~~ hit field of tobacco and then crawled upon, his house and barns and proceeded to show their utter contempt for him by expectorating tobacco juice over the farm buildings, so that his neighbors thought that he had given them a coat of glossy brown paint. The hoppers were so methodical and accurate in their work that they didn't streak the job a bit, but when they had finished it looked like the work of a master painter.) There is no doubt a modicum of truth in this narrative, for even unto this day the descendants of that self same brood of grass hoppers upon being captured, are able to eject from their mouths a brown fluid that resembles ~~to~~ tobacco juice, so that the evil fastened upon their ancestors over twenty years ago has been transmitted thru the generations. With these difficulties was experienced the financial panic of those trying years of 1896, 1897, 1898, there was an exodus of the settlers, and those who were able took every means to evacuate the country, leaving in ~~the~~ prairie schooners, by horseback, on foot even, and the more fortunated by rail. Those who remained stayed principally because they could not make a get-away. They have been amply rewarded not only in a worldly sense, but by living to see this wonderful country state a come-back that far exceeded their wildest dreams, and that is permanent.

For ten years thereafter this was a cattle country. The remaining settlers striving to raise forage for their stock only, in the few fields that were cultivated, the only exceptions being the Cochran Brothers south of town, and a few others who demonstrated their ability and reliability of the soil by raising



successive crops of grain and gorn, but in the main farming was a joke and as was commonly expressed by F. H. Hammon, the only expectation of a planted crop was to "get back the seed and a little roughness," Curing these ten years from 1896 to 1906 the mercantile business of W. A. Sheedy conducted in the building that has just been removed was the main trading point for the few families scattered over a radius of from twenty to forty miles, and that corner was the metropolis of an empire. Picture the little town, deserted, disheartened, dormant, with ~~its~~ its empty buildings throughg which the night winds moaned the requiem of days of departed glory. The main street grown into grass and weeds with a single wagon track down center bravely striving to maintain its trail blazed through the encroaching vegetation, the monotony of the dragging days of the week, with scarcely any living thing in motion. But when Saturday came, from north of the railroad arrived the farm wagons with the families of Ben Raedler, Henry Gummer, Henry Schmale, Gottfried Itten, Leopold, Henry and Fred Korf, Wm. Petrie, Frank Hammon, Conley and Hatcher, O. H. Johnson, W. A. McMichols, the Trunses, the Landauers, the Deerings, Wenzel Blach, George Yost, Ezra Stoner, John Y. Eckman, Joe Benish, Henry Holder, M. M. Dickson, Henry Meier, Bert Striker, the Stansfields, Franze Kissling, John Pagel, Fayette Lamphere, the Slagel Brothers, George Droge, Wm. Johnson, Albert Hollingshead, M. W. Haver and a few others. From the south territory came the Cochrans, James Berry, Fred Scott, Dr. Gardner, the Houstons, James Jacobsen, the Lises, J. C. Hale, Lafayette Wagem, Martin Deyo, the boys from the Marley ranch, Moore and Dodd ranches, Henry James ranch, Ezra Hull, Levi Coblense, Wm. Ogle, I. Jay Owen, the men from the "Robbers Roost" and the Gerds



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ranch; cowboys with their quirts, spurs and chaparajos, high heeled boots and wide rimmed hats, all centered toward this point to get their supplies of provisions, clothing and necessaries honestly weighed and measured to them by the genial, smiling and accommodating proprietor and his busy clerks, hired for that one day only. The interior with its cigars and candy near the front on the south side of the entrance kept mainly for the purpose of treating those who paid a bill that had been months, perhaps years in accumulating, or generously and gratuitously bestowing upon some tired mother to assist in soothing the fretful plaint of some progeny. Next the counter over which the sugar, canned goods, coffee and other eatables were tied and delivered, with the strings of bologna sausage hanging temptingly just above the heads of the purchasers and out of reach of the youthful urchins who sometimes impelled by the ever present pangs of juvenile hunger, did not scruple to help themselves to the same or to the contents of the boxes of dried raisins, prunes and other delectables scattered about in off corners and easier of access; the auger holes bored through the floor through which there ropes of various sizes from the small clothesline to the four-strand, best lazzo, knotted at the end to keep from slipping thru into the cellar where their bulk was coiled awaiting the purchaser; the shoe department, in the southwest corner of the main building; across the aisle the men's clothing, overalls, jumpers, etc., then back along the north side, the calicoes, percales gingham, muslins, and the other thousand and one articles of attire and adornment to catch the eager and expectant eye of the buxom lassies and elderly matrons who thronged these counters the live-long day, chattering, laughing joking, and nagging with the harried and oft-times clumsy



and inexperienced clerks; the noon hour when lunch baskets brought out, or perhaps a few of the more opulent made a purchase of a dime's worth of cheese, crackers and bologna, upon which as many as four or five would make their mid-day repast. Think what a dime would buy in the cheese, cracker and bologna line now. The ribbon counter in the northeast corner which proved the trysting place of many a fair maiden and stalwart tanned cowboy or earnest son of toil. Who knows how many romances that had their culmination in substantial homes that have stood the test of time, had their beginning in innocent flirtations slyly carried on among the young people, while their elders bartered and exchanged bits of gossip. The prices those days in that wonderful store were scandalous. Sugar twenty-two pounds for one dollar, coffee ten pounds for one dollar, flour from seventy-five cents to a dollar per fifty pound sack, the best bacon sold from seven to twelve cents a pound and other things in the same ratio. These were the palmy days, alright, alright. And on the other hand you were paid from two to four cents per pound for your cattle, from one to three dollars per head for your hogs, forty cents per bushel for wheat twenty-five cents per bushel for corn, four to six and twelve cents for eggs, six to fifteen cents for butter, etc. Yes they were palmy days--not. When a man paid twelve to fifteen dollars for a suit of clothes, he was ready for the best society. Here was the forum where on wintry evenings, gathered the wisecracks of the community, toasting their shins in the warmth that was exhaled from the glowing, mighty heater, smoking their pipes, which were replenished from the never-failing source of free at hand tobacco, in a supply furnished unstintingly by the proprietor in a receptacle on the counter, commonly dubbed the



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the "poor box". This loquacious group seated around on the counters, on boxes, and barrels with their legs dangling, gravely settling all the questions of the day, social economic and political; local national or world wide, as the case might be.

The other principal places of enterprise were the drug store, conducted by E. S. Dakan, the little post office presided over by W. H. Conover, the feed store of R. H. Boyd, the elevator and little lumber business in connection therewith, of H. C. Hoch and the little bank presided over by B. F. Durham, now of Denver, Colorado, the store known as the Farmers Exchange under the management of O. L. Hamsher, the hardware store conducted by E. J. Stoner, who was later succeeded by J. F. Heiserman, the Cottage Hotel run by W. E. Buel and one newspaper, The Yuma Pioneer, and managed by E. J. Picard, and E. Loring the real estate man who once sold a man a quarter section of land for a second hand bicycle, and deeded the purchaser an extra half section when he wasn't looking.

Gone, all gone. Swallowed up in the course of exchange and barter, or merged into larger institutions. Most of that small and steadfast group of pioneers have either departed for other locations or have passed to the great beyond. Gone is the little post-office where they got their scanty mail. Gone the fine old postmaster, gone the happy, genial druggist who dispensed the cosmetics, lotions, herbs and elixirs to beautify and preserve life and health, gone the little feed store, and gone the little bank with its honest and courageous owner, gone the little hotel, the hardworking, hospitable boniface and his cherry wife, all have passed and the new and quickened life that has taken its place is not expected to give much heed or thought to their passing.



Still we have with us the former proprietor of that store which was the rock upon which this later development was founded, for it was thru him and a few others who ungrudgingly and unselfishly gave the best years of their manhood in a worthy cause, who by extending credit to the needy and deserving settlers, even when they were compelled to do the same on borrowed capital, made it possible for the few to remain and by their efforts, <sup>their COURAGE</sup> ~~their~~ ~~efforts~~ and fortitude paved the way for the vaster, modern and permanent improvements that in all the localities of the great west mark the march of progress, the inevitable passing of the old for the new which perhaps inspired in the poet the words: "So fleet the works of men, back to the earth again, ancient and holy things fade like a dream".



## DENVER MARKET QUOTATIONS

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CATTLE

|                                       |           |       |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Fat steers, grassers, choice to prime | \$13.00 @ | 14.50 |
| Fat steers, grassers, good to choice  | 11.50 @   | 12.50 |
| Fat steers, grassers, fair to good    | 10.00 @   | 11.50 |
| Heifers, prime                        | 8.75 @    | 9.50  |
| Cows, fat, good to choice             | 8.50 @    | 9.25  |
| " fair to good                        | 7.25 @    | 8.25  |
| " medium to fair                      | 6.50 @    | 7.25  |
| " canners                             | 5.00 @    | 6.25  |
| Bulls                                 | 6.00 @    | 7.00  |
| Veal calves                           | 8.00 @    | 12.00 |
| Feeders, good to choice               | 10.50 @   | 12.00 |
| " fair to good                        | 9.50 @    | 10.50 |
| Stockers, good to choice              | 9.00 @    | 10.00 |
| " Fair to good                        | 8.00 @    | 8.75  |
| " medium to fair                      | 7.25 @    | 8.00  |

HOGS

|           |           |       |
|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Good hogs | \$16.50 @ | 17.25 |
|-----------|-----------|-------|

SHEEP

|            |           |       |
|------------|-----------|-------|
| Lambs, fat | \$14.50 @ | 15.00 |
|------------|-----------|-------|

GRAIN

|      |        |
|------|--------|
| Oats | \$2.30 |
| Corn | 2.88   |

FLOUR

|                         |        |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Hungarian Patent 98lbs. | \$5.14 |
|-------------------------|--------|

LIVE POULTRY

|                                     |         |       |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-------|
| Turkeys, fancy d. p 10 lbs. or over | \$.27 @ | \$.30 |
| Roosters, lb.                       | .10 @   | .12   |
| Hens                                | .16 @   | .20   |
| Ducks, young                        |         | .22   |
| Ducklings, lb.                      |         | .25   |
| Springs                             | .19 @   | .24   |
| Broilers, 1½ to 2 lbs.              | .30 @   | .32   |
| Geese                               |         | .20   |

EGGS

|                                 |           |         |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Eggs strictly fresh, case count | \$17.00 @ | \$17.50 |
|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|

BUTTER

|                                |         |       |
|--------------------------------|---------|-------|
| Creameries, Ex. 1st grade, lb. |         | \$.60 |
| Creameries, 2d grade, lb.      | \$.49 @ | .50   |
| Process                        |         | .50   |
| Packing stock                  | .39 @   | .40   |

FRUIT

|                       |          |        |
|-----------------------|----------|--------|
| Apples, Colorado, box | \$1.50 @ | \$3.50 |
| Pears, cooking        | 2.50 @   | 3.00   |



Mr. John C. Abbott who wrote this article, which was published in the "Yuma Pioneer" Volumn 32, No. 47, on November 22, 1918, gave me this paper when I interviewed him. It is very interesting and Mr. Abbott, who is a lawyer and a graduate of Denver University, is a very good writer.

In reading the paper I found the stock market report of the time, just after the war. The prices Mr. Abbott quoted and the prices quoted in the paper certainly show a great difference.



Kearns Doe

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Mr. J. Oliver Graham was born on a farm near Mattoon, Illinois on July, 11, 1872. With his parents he migrated to central Iowa when he was three years old. They lived there for ten years, but his father disliked the country because it was becoming too densely populated. He then moved into eastern Nebraska, but likewise became discontented there. Finally the family moved into eastern Colorado, where Mr. Graham's father purchased a relinquished homestead about eight miles southwest of Wray. Oliver as everybody knows him said that when they first came to Yuma county they had to kill about seventy-five rattle snakes in order to plow up about eighty acres of sod land. His first home in Colorado consisted of an old adobe house located in the middle of a seemingly unlimited stretch of prairie. They had a small barn and a few minor improvements, but little else to start with. Mr. Graham is one of the few real pioneers of this part of Colorado still living.

Until he had reached the age of 29, Mr. Graham lived on his father's farm and helped him and his brothers break the soil, then he moved to Wray and established a jewelry store--Pioneer Jeweler Co. He started the business on June 17, 1901, and it has flourished since that time. At the present time his son Earl is managing the 'jewelery' business. Mr. Graham, however, is one of the best optometrists in eastern Colorado and still takes care of the optometry of the store. When he went into business he purchased a small stock from a local general store for \$69.00. In order to make this purchase Mr. Graham had to borrow \$35.00.



Mr. Graham therefore started in business without any capital whatever and has built up a very prospering trade.

One incident that happened soon after he opened his store was a robbery. Two men robbed his little store which was in the same building as the Wray Drug Store. They didn't get very much but they did get the whole stock of the store. The culprits were caught walking west toward Denver on the railroad tracks. They had part of the loot with them but the rest they had buried along the tracks. All of the merchandise was recovered and the two men sent to the state penitentiary for three years.

Prices of foodstuffs were about the same as they are now, that is the foods they purchased in town. Flour, and dried vegetables like beans were about all the people had to buy at stores then. As for clothing in the early days, overalls made by their wives or mothers were more in common than any thing else. Of course when Mr. Graham moved to <sup>Town</sup> town he changed his habilement to mail order suits from the Sisson Clothing Co. Whiskey at that time could be bought for \$.50 a pint, now the cheapest is \$1.75 and not nearly as good as that forty years or more ago. Of course at that time and up until 1914 there was always one saloon and sometimes three in the town of Wray.

The mode of transportation for a long time was just any old wagon the people had if they had one. Many farmer's were without wagons and if they wanted to use one borrowed their nearest neighbors'. The wagons as a rule were the old heavy type lumber wagons similiar to those used in 1849 in going to California. Very few people had buggies



cereals raised at all. That was the time that people had just started moving into this part of the country. This of course made many people leave Yuma county. They left in any way that they possibly could. Many left by train, others packed and walked out. Horses, cattle and hogs were turned loose to roam the plains at their own will. The river was almost dried up and all the lakes and ponds in the county were about dried away. Many who couldn't leave lived on charity from all over the country. People from the east sent them clothing, oats and other kinds of food to eat. A number of carloads of potatoes were received from Greeley and a store was built to store the merchandise and Albert Bullard then a county commissioner appointed to dole the food out. In 1890 there were about 2600 people in Yuma county and in 1900 there were only a few over 1700. This famine if it may be called was a boon to the dry country of the west because it helped to develop new methods in tilling the soil. New tools were made and different ways developed so that the farmer could make money out of the dry soil. Before 1894 Yuma county was considered the railbelt of Colorado. Corn according to Mr. Graham, could be equaled even in Nebraska as many crops would give 50 bushells to the acre.

The land office for eastern Colorado was located at Akron, as in the early days there was no Yuma county. Weld county was divided and this formed Washington County. In 1889 Washington county was divided and Yuma county formed. Yuma county was still small so when Arapahoe county was bisected Yuma county received more land. Before this last extension Yuma county only extended four miles south of the Burlington



railroad tracks. They didn't want to divide Araphoe county until they were sure that they weren't going to have a railroad running through there. At the present time Yuma county extends over forty miles south of the railroad tracks.

(Barney Condon who founded the Wray Rattler newspaper also had a homestead and a little store out by Vernon which he called Condon's Corners. This took the place of the town that is Vernon now. There wasn't a town by the name of Idalia then, but there was a little store west of the present sight of Idalia called Friend.

Of the improved brick buildings that are still standing there are three which were built in the early history of Wray. W. Zepp, George Vaughn, and Charley Picket built them respectively in 1901, 1902, 1903. The present Simpson's Drug Store is really the first brick building in Wray still standing after the fire of 1908, but Mr. Graham doesn't remember who built it.

(The first school house was a small frame building which has since been torn down. For many years it was the only school building and served as a community dance floor and on Sunday the church. At the present time there are two modern brick school buildings, comparatively new and in excellent condition.) They had a community baseball team and also played some football. The football that they played must have been rough because all the equipment they had was one football. The football field then is the present location of the Methodist Church.

Mr. Graham was married in 1895 to Miss Rosa B. Byers of Wray. Mrs. Graham came from Ohio.



Mr. Graham came to Wray on the railroad in what was commonly called an emigrant car, All it really was was a box car. Their household goods, cattle, horses and other livestock, and themselves all came in the same car.

In 1908 there was a fire which burnt down most of the business district of Wray. It burnt down ten buildings which made up one block on the west side of Chief Street. Mr. Graham lost \$20.00 in moving his stock out of his building.

For years there was no undertaker in Wray so when a person died they just buried his body in an old rough box in the cemetery on the hill. When Mr. Graham first came here there were only four graves in this cemetery, now there are so many that it had to be enlarged a few years ago.

SIGNED J. A. Graham

by John Keas



*J. J. Kearns*  
 Mr. W. C. Grigsby was born in New Castle, Penn., on Oct. 26, 1860. He graduated from the first high school there at the age of twenty, when he was twenty-one he started west and went to Kirksville, Mo. He went to the teachers College there for a year, after which he taught school for about a year in that vicinity. He then moved to Brazil, Iowa, where he became associated with the railroad. In 1883 he moved to Haigler, Nebraska where he was the operator at the Burlington depot. He remained there three years and moved to Wray. During the time he was in Haigler he filed a homestead, a timber claim, and a pre-emption on some other land. When he moved to Wray he sold these ~~claims~~ <sup>claims</sup> and with the money ~~derived~~ <sup>derived</sup> from this he was able to start up in business. He sold his timber claim to Bill Brown whose son still owns it. The homestead he sold to Tome Ashton, who has the largest ranch in eastern Nebraska yet to day. The American Cattle Co. purchased his pre-emption on the Arickaree River. The total amount of the sale was \$2050.00.

In 1886 Mr. Grigsby came to Wray. He purchased the Porter Store which was located north of the tracks. The building is still standing. His Uncle, Jesse Grigsby, and ~~W. C. Grigsby~~ he were partners.

The main part of town in 1886 was north of the railroad tracks and was built around the depot. Mr. Grigsby could see farther into the future in Wray so when he built his home he built it on the south side of the river where the main part of Wray is now located. The Same year that he built his house Mr. Grigsby married Miss Emma Miller of Medinah, Mo.



Miss Miller came out to Wray to visit some relatives and met Mr. Grigsby in 1891. Early in 1892 Mr. Grigsby went back to Edinah and married her. She was a sister-in-law of Judge Jesse Grigsby's wife.

(When he first came here there was a Sod Hotel, a sod section house, George and Fishers general store, and the Farmer's Hotel. Wood Kennedy and Judge Jennings built the Farmer's hotel. This hotel has never been torn down and is still running. A man by the name of Davenport built the Wray Hotel, which was built around his saloon, the first saloon in Wray.)

The first railroad operator in the depot at Wray was Griffith, then Nelson followed him. Soon after Mr. C. Hudgel, the present agent, came. This was at the same time that the brick depot was built. The old depot was moved across the tracks to the south side and now serves as a freight depot.

(Mr. Grigsby claims that the name Wray was founded by a railroad contractor who contracted to build this railroad through here. Although I know that some man by the name of Wray named this town, I have heard that he was also a rancher through this valley and when the railroad made its way here he started a post office and called it Wray.)

In 1893, 1894, and 1895 there were no drops at all and the people of Yuma county nearly starved. <sup>Loads</sup> ~~loads~~ of clothing and food furnished by eastern charity were shipped into Yuma county. <sup>E. Hitchings</sup> ~~Walter~~ Albert Bullard one of the county commissioners was appointed to handle the doling out of this food and clothing. In 1890 there were about 2700 people in Yuma county and in 1900 there were only a few over 1700

START



people in the county. Nearly a thousand people left Yuma county never to come back. A few came back in later years and established homes here after they had made money in other parts of the country. One of the ~~people~~<sup>men</sup> who left in those trying years and came back said that he made more money during the year 1894 than any other year up until 1890. There was less than one inch of rainfall in the two years 1893 and 1894, but this was not only in Yuma county but also in the other plains of Colorado, and Kansas, and Nebraska. The population of Yuma county in 1910 was over 8,000 so after 1900 Yuma county grew rapidly.

In the year 1888 the most severe blizzard that ever struck northeastern Colorado caused a great deal of damage. There were over 5,000 cattle alone killed in the blizzard. In one blowout in the sand hills there were 500 cattle found dead and covered over with snow. The settlers skinned these cattle and shipped the skins out to packers and shoe companies they left the meat to be eaten by the coyotes and wolves. Ed Bowles lost most of the cattle as he was the largest rancher in this part of the country. Most all the cattle had been driven up from Texas so when the cattlemen wanted to start over they had to go back into Texas to get their cattle. The name of bowles ranch was the Bar 11, and yet today is known by that name although it is owned by a man by the name of Cunningham. This ranch at one time extended from Wray to Eckley, 16 miles long the railroad and south of the railroad 10 miles, in other words there were 160 square miles in the ranches domain.

END



(Sisson and Newell were the men who located the settlers when they came to Wray. They had a land office on the north side of the tracks. This land office was private because the county or Federal land office was located at Akron.)

In 1901 the county seat was moved from Yuma to Wray. This caused quite a bit of controversy, and yet today the people of Yuma, Colorado, hold this grudge against Wray. In order to get the county seat moved it required a number of gallons of whiskey from Grant's saloon which was given to some men from the precincts north of Eckley. These precincts held the election in their hands, therefore Wray won the election. Wray won the election by 9 votes. Today Wray and Yuma are natural rivals and everything that one does the other thinks it has to do. In Football, Basketball, and Baseball in the past years have almost ended in fights. Wray raised \$4600.00 to help build a court house, and \$1500.00 more for incidental expenses, such as whiskey. ~~1/11/01~~

Mr. O. L. Mitten of Wray has these checks in his possession yet. He was the head of the financial committee and is the only person who was on that committee that is alive today.

The Yuma County Fair Association was first located in Wray and later moved to Yuma. The main reason it was moved to Yuma was that it always showed a deficit after the fair was over in the Fall. The first fairgrounds was located in what is now west Wray, and the present site of Warren Bowen's residence. Some years later it was moved to the flats south of Wray, as the town was rapidly becoming built up to the west. After the fair was moved to Yuma the state legislature



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put a bill through whereby the county had to help and give money to the fair and therefore make it county wide.

The Rattler was the first newspaper in Wray and was located for years on the north side of the railroad tracks. They had a little one room frame building which is still standing. Barney Condon, who was the owner of Condon's corners near the present site of Vernon, was the owner and publisher. Jim Counter purchased the paper from him in the early '90s' and published it for a good many years. Mr. Counter moved to Brighton where he owned a lumber yard and a Ford automobile agency. He has since died. (Jack Cloyd founded the Wray Gazette in 1903, the Rattler in 1886. The files of the Wray Rattler were burned up in 1908 and as a result we have no Newspaper record of the early days here.

(The Bank of Wray was founded by Edwards of the Bank of Nebraska in 1887, but it closed its doors in 1889. Smith was President, and L. Gilmore was the cashier. Mr. Smith built one of the first homes on the south side of the river. Later it was owned by Jessie Grigsby, an uncle of W. C. Grigsby. The method in which Jesse Grigsby got this building is quite interesting. The general store of Grigsby and Grigsby had \$800.00 deposited in the bank. They heard that the bank was defunct and went to Smith demanding their money. Mr. Smith said that the money was so safe that he would trade his house for their bank account. They immediately signed the papers required to change the ownership and the house belonged to Jesse Grigsby. The house is still standing and is the parsonage of the Nazarene church.



The Bank of W. C. Grigsby was started in 1896, in a little frame building that is now the offices of the Groves Lumber Yard. Later in 1900 Mr. Grigsby purchased the Bank of Wray building and moved his business into that. He purchased the building for \$800.00 and sold his building to T. B. Groves ~~for~~ for \$800.00. After purchasing the Bank of Wray Mr. Grigsby called his bank The Bank of Wray. In 1908 Mr. Grigsby built the present National Bank of Wray building and moved his bank into it.) This was just after the fire in 1908 which burnt down most of Chief Street. The Commercial Hotel had previously been located on that corner and Mr. Grigsby purchased the lot from them. In 1910 the present National Bank of Wray was founded and incorporated. It was and is yet located in the Bank of Wray building. W. C. Grigsby was the president for the first year, then Jack Cloyd was president for three years, followed by W. D. Mc Ginnis, who was state auditor and state treasurer for a period of years in the 1920s. Mr. T. B. Groves then was president until he died then Mr. Grigsby was appointed president again and is still president.

In about 1900 the First National Bank of Wray was founded with Mr. M. B. Holland as president. Thos. Ashton, ~~cashier~~ was vice-president; P. J. Sullivan, cashier; and M. Finch, ass't. cashier. This bank was located in <sup>near</sup> what is now Dr. Larson's office.

Most all of the people who came to Wray came by the railroad in Emigrant cars, which were merely box cars. They would pack their household goods, in one end of the car and in the other



and they put their cattle, horses, and other stock. They placed their beds in the middle so that they could sleep. Their lunches consisted of whatever they could buy along the route into Wray.

In the early days there was an abundance of buffalo, antelope, and other wild animals. A great many of the buffalo were killed and used for food for the construction gangs of the railroad. There was and still is a great many coyotes, although there were few wolves through this county. There are two streams in the county along the railroad which have always had an abundance of trout. Many times in the 1890s these fish were almost a godsend to some of the people as that was all they had to eat.

In 1911 Mr. Grigsby took a trip around the world spending most of the time in Europe. He went from Wray to New York and thence across the Atlantic. The places he liked and remembers best are: Gibraltar, Naples, Rome, Germany, Holland, Paris, London, and Liverpool. On the way back home from New York he stopped off to see the world fair at Cleveland. There he shook hands with John D. Rockefeller. The trip to Gibraltar took 7 days and now it only takes 5.

In 1910 Mr. Grigsby bought his first car which was a Ford. He still has the bill of sale which he showed to me. The car cost \$1025.00. Today that would buy a Ford and have money left to take a trip to Europe. Mr. Grigsby didn't like the doors on the car so he took them off. The reason for this was the he had to open and shut them every time, he got in or out of the car. The first car in the town of Wray

According to Mr. Grigsby was a Ford...



International two cylinder. The engine was set in the automobile just opposite to what they are now.

Mr. Grigsby is in perfect health today ~~day~~ except for his eyes which bother him considerably. His wife has been dead a number of years. Also two of his children are dead and he has two children living today one David lives with him and is happily married. Mr. Grigsby is Granpa now and has been for a number of years.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

*W. H. Grigsby*

*John T. Kears*



*J. Kearns*

*Doe*  $\frac{352}{5}$

Henry Wells came to Yuma county in the fall of 1885, in fact he arrived here on Thanksgiving Day. He came from Republic County, Kansas. His home was originally in Wisconsin, later his father moved to Nebraska, thence to Kansas. Mr. Wells came out to this country with his uncle. They homesteaded about eight miles south of Wray, and batched for some time. When he and his uncle first arrived in Wray, they climbed the large sandhill to the north of the depot to look over the flats to the south. Everybody, when they first came out, did this.

From Republic County Kansas they first came out in an old spring wagon with a team. They brought with them the few necessities that they needed. They filed on their land in the fall of 1885, then went back to Kansas for the winter. Then in the spring of 1886 they came out, built their little frame house which was 12 X 14 in dimensions. They broke some sod that spring and harvested a good, but small crop of corn and wheat that summer and fall. Again that fall they returned to Kansas to be with their families <sup>in the</sup> ~~that~~ winter and the early part of 1888. In the spring of 1888 they brought their families out to Colorado and have lived in Yuma County ever since.

In 1879, Mr. Wells, at the age of twenty was married. In this marriage there were four children: Arthur, Ernest, Ray, and Mrs. Ed Ellis. These sons and the daughter live in or close to Wray.

When Mr. Wells brought his family out they lived in the little 12 X 14 frame house on the homestead and lived comfortably. They had a small barn, chicken coop, and such



other improvements that were necessary.

The first water well, that he had, was a dug well. They had to go 130 feet to get good water. Mr. Heindle dug the well. Henry and his Uncle pulled the dirt from the bottom of the well by means of a hoist, while Mr. Heindle did the digging. It took them less than ten days to do it, but it was back breaking work. This hard work was little in the pioneers' life because if he ever expected to get any place he had to work hard. They didn't have a pump well until 1892, until then they had the old dugwell which they had to drop a bucket down into for their water, and for their horses, cattle and other livestock.

Mr. Wells brought his household goods, livestock, and other things out, ~~here~~ in the well known emigrant car. His family however rode in a regular chair car.

When he first arrived in Wray there wasn't a house on the south side of the river, nor a business building. The main body of the town was on the north side of the tracks and consisted of a partially finished "Grand Sod Hotel", Porter's Store which was in the process of being constructed, a section house, and a depot. There wasn't a tree in sight now you cannot see the town for the trees. The south side of this valley in the summer time was covered with flowers which grew around the many springs which flowed incessantly from the sides into the North Fork of the Republican River. This river was the most beautiful river that he had ever seen. The business houses didn't start to move over to the south side of the river until 1886, when George and Fisher built and operated a general store on the site of what is now Simpsons'



Drug Store. Shortly after they all started moving their business houses to the south side, and before long the town was built well into the south side of the valley.

This section of Colorado was called the rainbelt of the west and the nesters--as the cowman called ~~them~~<sup>the homesteaders</sup>--had excellent crops of corn and wheat. Mr. Wells the first year he farmed, although he didn't plant a large acreage, had an excellent yield. The first few years of farming were very successful as he had plenty of rain but later on when they had a few dry seasons it looked pretty glum to him.

In 1888 the most severe blizzard that ever struck this part of Colorado covered the country over with snow and resulted in an extreme cold spell. The wind blew, the snow flew and it kept getting colder for about three days, then the storm stopped. People couldn't move out of their houses and if they didn't <sup>have</sup> ~~see~~ enough to eat in the house they had to go without until the storm had abated. In Mr. Wells' barn the horses and cattle which were in there, were almost completely covered with snow that had blown through the cracks in the roof and walls. They couldn't be bothered with horses and cattle when maybe their own lives depended on staying inside. Approximately 5000 cattle were killed in the vicinity around Wray. They never ~~knew~~<sup>knew</sup> how many cattle really did die because many were covered up by the snow and were never found until after the thaws in the spring.

(In 1889 Mr. Wells bought a new horsepower threshing machine, which was one of the first in Yuma county. As there were few of them in the county when threshing time came he threshed



his own wheat then started out touring the county threshing the other farmers' crops. Many times he has threshed up until Christmas, whether it rained or snowed. All the wheat then was stacked instead of bundled and piled in twos and threes. In stacking their wheat the wind wouldn't blow it down and if they were late in getting to thresh it, the snow and rain hadn't ruined it. Mr. Wells has received as high as \$50.00 per day for threshing, that didn't include the other harvest hands, just himself, his machine, and one driver.)

(During the dry years 1894 and 1895 Glen Bolander and Henry Wells invested their money in a new big Steam Threshing Machine. With this machine and a full crew of men they started for Greeley, where the crops were huge and the pay good. They worked there until late in October, receiving as much as \$75.00 a day for their own services, and the use of the threshing machine. Their helpers were paid also, but not out of the money mentioned above.) Some of the men that went with them are: Oliver Graham, Ed Ellis, Milt Briggs, Funk, Adam Wales, H. Penton, and Gus Hizer. Some of these men are still alive, <sup>but</sup> ~~and~~ some of them have moved away.

During these years Mr. Wells made more money than he had ever made before, and has ever made since. When he came back from Greeley he brought two wagon loads of potatoes, onions, and cabbages, which he had purchased for his own use at home because there were no vegetables at all raised in Yuma County. With another man he purchased a Train car load of potatoes which he sold off the car in Wray for just a little above cost. Potatoes then could be purchased in Greeley for a little over \$.30 a hundred weight, Onions for



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~~15~~ a hundred weight, and cabbages were just as cheap. At the present time cabbages, onions and potatoes are much higher, potatoes of the best grade alone have been \$1.50 and down to \$1.00 this last fall. People from the east sent in huge quantities of food and clothing for charity, but in Mr. Wells' mind it was not as bad then as it is at the present time. The amount of charity that the government has supplied to the surrounding country is very large. The bankers and people with money then, made ~~lot of money~~ by lending there money at 3% a month, or 36% a year. There are many notes yet in existence that money was borrowed on to pay their taxes, some of them as low as \$2.50.

Taxes were much lower then than at the present time. For the first few years, Mr. Wells paid a tax of only \$7.00 or \$8.00 on his homestead of 160 acres. Now the taxes amount to much more. In the year 1932 he paid \$125.00, and in the last decade he has paid as high as \$380.00 for the same 160 acres of land on his homestead.

Neighbors in the early days didn't see each other very often, which resulted in the time worn phrase "Western Hospitality". "Western Hospitality" meant that if you happened by a persons home at mealtime or in the evening you could water, feed, and bed your horse in the neighbors stable, then go in and have dinner. If there was nobody home it was just the same because nobody locked their doors and many of the people didn't even have locks on their doors. Everybody trusted everybody else. Many times has Mr. Wells stayed with other people overnight, when he would be caught by night.



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fall. As an example one time there were some cowboys from down by the Arikaree branding some steers near Mr. Wells home. It was in early winter and it was getting cold out-of-doors. Mr. Wells asked them to come in and eat their dinner before they went home. These men~~x~~ declined so he took them out a pot of hot coffee, and told them that when they came back tomorrow they were expected to eat with him and his family. The next day when they came back they brought him a quarter of fresh beef, and in return ate their two meals with Mr. Wells.

(Rustling was very common during the cattle running days and each cattleman stole the other cattleman's cattle. It never caused any hard feelings because whoever had the most cattle when shipping time came won out. It might have been the Bar 11 one year the next the See Bar See.)

During the passing years Mr. Wells has noticed that <sup>out of</sup> the people who came out to Colorado to homestead and pre-empt land, the poorer ones were usually the most successful. The people with a little money were inclined to be more careless with it, their poorer neighbors had to be more careful and in this way they learned, that regardless of the money they had, a person had to be economical~~x~~ in every way to live here.

Most all of the clothing worn then was handmade and most of the clothes, that the men wore, were overalls. The women made their own clothes also, and a gingham dress then, was the Sunday or dress-up dress for the ladies. The men of the age when they dressed up might have a pair of cheap woolen pants, and an old coat, but as a rule a new pair of overalls sufficed. A farmer if he was economical could get along and never have any money, as his chickens, eggs, and other produce could keep



him and his family in food and clothing. The only thing the average farmer had to buy he would trade his produce for, such as dress and overal material, sugar, salt, pepper, fuel, and other supplies. As a rule for fuel in the winter time, the farmers would pick up cow chips and grub out the old parts of cactuses. Many times a farmer would come out here without a cent and very little farm equipment ~~outside~~ <sup>except</sup> of a couple of horses and a wagon. As a rule these men would buy the necessities they needed by picking up sunbaked buffalo and cattle bones. These bones they would bring in and trade to the merchants for their provisions and equipment. These merchants in turn would sell them to the sugar companies to use in purifying their sugar. That process is now unused. At one time there was a pile of these bones down by the railroad yards about forty feet high.

(The town was named for the Wray brothers, Thomas, John, and Samuel. These men were cattlemen from Culbertson, Nebraska, and settled just east of the present site of the town. John Wray was the cattle forman for I. P. Olive whose ranch was located where Olive Lake is today. One of the men, Wyncliff Newell, who shot buffalo for the men building the railroad, named his little girl, Wray, after the town. Many people yet today think that the town was named after her, but this belief is incorrect.)

In 1908 when the fire burnt the west block of Chief Street ~~down~~, Mr. Wells was staying at the Commercial Hotel. This hotel was burnt down along with the rest of the block. The townspeople formed a bucket line from the Republican river to the place of the fire. Mr. Wells helped in trying



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to put out the fire, but finally they just tried to save the other buildings in town. Some of the stocks of the different business house were saved but a majority of it was lost.

Mr. Wells has had many good houses, and at the present time owns a modern home here in Wray, but the best house that he ever had was a two story sod house. This house had good wood floors, the walls were plastered and papered, and had two large bay windows on the first floor. Once you were inside of this house you would never have thought that the outside was made of dirt. This house was the warmest house in winter and the coolest house in summer that he has ever lived in. A number of different people helped him in constructing this home so after it was finished he had a huge housewarming. He furnished an oyster supper, and the people danced to music furnished by a fiddle and a banjo. Most of the town of Wray, and people from all over the country were there as they had few good times then, ~~and~~ when a chance came to dance, ~~eat~~ <sup>they all</sup> and be with other people came their way, ~~everybody~~ went. To show that the house was considered valuable Mr. Wells insured it for \$500.00, and when it burnt down he collected the full amount from the insurance Co. The sod that they built the house from was taken from the bottom land of the Republican River. This sod was better because of its alkali content. The sod was about 2½ to 3 inches thick, about 14 inches wide, and from 18 to 24 inches long. The roof was shingled, as was <sup>the roof of the</sup> the barn. All of the improvements around the farm were sod including a corral, a barn, a chicken house, and other necessary buildings.

(There were always from one to three saloons in Wray, and



these saloons were also gambling halls. They had roulette wheels, faro tables, and poker games. (Idalia the inland town south of Wray at one time had only a hotel, postoffice, a general store, and three saloons. There were no houses as everybody lived in their business houses.)

Mr. Wells lives in a very modern home in Wray now and is quite comfortable. He hasn't farmed for some years, but rents his land out to various farmers. During his lifetime in and around Wray he has seen many changes all of them for the good of the country. Of course in the last few years the depression hasn't been for the good of the country, but that is one of things that has to be, and cannot be helped, ~~is~~.

Signed Henry Wells  
Henry Wells



*J. J. Kearns -*

Fred D. Johnson was born in New Hampshire in 1860. He attended school there until he was sixteen. Then he worked in a hardware store until he was twenty years old. When he was twenty he had a chance to go west to overlook a farm near Aurora, Nebraska. He and the owner of the farm traveled in an emigrant coach from there to Aurora. It was near Aurora that he cast his first vote in a little frame school-house in the year 1881. He had to take care of a homestead, but ~~had~~ <sup>had</sup> no crops to bother ~~about~~ <sup>about</sup> for the first year. He built a house, a barn, and made some other minor improvements around the farm.

On June 1886 he decided to move farther west and take up some land of his own. He got on the train and rode to Wray, Colorado, and pre-empted some land near the present site of Vernon, Colorado. There he built himself a sod dugout in the side of a hill. With much hard work he paid up on the pre-emption in fourteen months and moved to town. (In Wray he got a job working for A. W. Horn in the latter's hardware store and lumber yard. After two years of clerking for Horn Mr. Johnson bought the hardware store and lumber yard, which he ran until 1915 when he sold out to Amos Carl and O. L. Mitten.)

In those days when the farmers and ranchers came to town they would stay overnight. They would sleep on the floors in the various business houses. If a cowboy happened along in the late evening and couldn't get home he would just walk into one of the business houses and lay down his bedding and go to sleep. Early in the morning they would leave with their



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wagons full of the provisions and equipment and go home. The moving of the business houses to the south side of the river was a decided help to them as they wouldn't have to ford the river, with their wagons. The business men never locked their stores because of these men coming and going during the night. At that time everybody trusted everybody else and they didn't watch each other all of the time.

For a number of years Mr. Johnson acted as a locator for settlers coming and has located a great many people all over the country. Especially around Burlington, which Mr. Johnson said was the poorest land of all, but still people insisted in settling there. He drove to Friend, Colorado, in one day once, but he said that was driving the horse pretty fast and he had started early in the morning <sup>N</sup> ~~to~~ <sup>so</sup> that he would be there before night fall.

In 1895 he purchased the plot of ground which was the basis of the Halfway Ranch. This ranch is now the location of the inland town of Juanita, Colorado. It is approximately halfway between Wray and Holyoke, thus the name. He had this ranch for seven years then sold it. At one time he had as many as 1500 cattle running on it. Of course they might not have been running in the exact location of the ranch, but they were on the range. All of the cattlemen ran their cattle on the free range as it was called. That was all the land which wasn't homesteaded and unfenced. Every year some of the different ranches would get together and have a huge round-up, and each ranchman had his men brand the calves which belonged to him. The northern Yuma country ~~country~~ was good for cattle as there were a number of natural water



holes which never dried up thus the cattle always had plenty of fresh water. Lynn Smith ran this ranch for Mr. Johnson and when he sold it Mr. Smith came to town and was the foreman of his ranch here. He worked for Mr. Johnson for over twenty years.

In 1889 Mr. Johnson purchased from Ed O'Donnel the ranch which he still owns. It was then just a homestead with the usual 160 acres of land, but the land was especially desirable because it included a large part of the Republican river. Today that ranch consists of 600 acres and includes over a mile and a half of the river in its domain. Mr. Johnson still has the ranch but doesn't run as many cattle on it as he did for some years back. The ranch house burnt down once, but has since been built over with a good modern, large substantial building. The ranch house itself is just in the edge of the City limits and is in a very good location.

Mr. Johnson has lived in town for years and has a very modern home in a good location. He owns a half block of property just one ~~1/2~~ and a half blocks from the Main Street. This property is some of the most desirable in town. He has, besides his home, two barns and a large corral on it.

Ed O'Donnel from whom he bought the ranch he still owns was the section foreman on the B and M Railroad. The section house in those days was the boarding house for most of the bachelors of the town. Mr. Johnson boarded there for a number of years and says they had just as good food as he has ever had. From the business section it was less than a block away



so it was handy for the men to get to.

(Charley (Pigfoot) Grant was one of the pioneer characters which Mr. Johnson remembers best. Some people always misunderstood Grant, but Mr. Johnson knew him well and did a lot of business with him all the time that Grant lived in Wray. Due to the fact that he ran a saloon with all the gambling devices known in that day Mr. Grant became known as one of the biggest crooks in the country. Mr. Johnson says that if you were fair and honest with Charley he would be likewise with you. The people of Wray have a lot of things to thank Charley Grant, or Pigfoot as everybody knew him. By use of his own money and time he won the election for Wray. Just before election time he took some money and went up into the country north of Eckley and invited them all down to Wray to be his guests at a big dinner. A few of them he had to give money to to get them to vote for Wray to get the county seat instead of Yuma, the rest voted for Wray at the invitation to be his guests. When they came to Wray to vote he had a big dinner of pickled pigs feet and all the beef and whiskey they could drink. The results were that Wray won the election by nine votes. Thereafter everybody in the country called Charley, Pigfoot.)

After prohibition in Colorado, Charley was out of a job for a while, but not for long. He opened up a General store, but his largest business was bootlegging. They could however never prove anything on him as he was smart. At one time he had over a thousand pairs of shoes in the store but there wasn't a shoe box any place. He had sold all the shoe boxes



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with a quart or a pint of whiskey in them. Charley always ran a saloon in the <sup>back</sup> ~~back~~ of his store under the ~~name~~ of a confectionary, but few soft drinks were sold from the fountain. All of the preachers in the town preached against him, but if they needed some money to help the poor~~k~~ or to send to missions, Charley Grant was the first one they would get to subscribe to the fund. He always gave more money to the churches than anybody else in town and was one of the most religious men in the county. Nevertheless the preachers were the ones that finally got him out of the county. Charley was one of the biggest heartedmen that Mr. Johnson has ever known and one of the real pioneer characters. He was a smart man, and always thought ahead of his opponents.)

(Mr. Johnson saw the last big cattle drive from Texas into Yuma county. 1500 cattle were driven up here for Bowles ranch, the Bar 11. He said that he was just at the top of the valley on the north side of the Arikaree river wh<sup>e</sup>n they started over the hill and down into the valley on the other side. They came single file, one after the other and when they had passed, there was a ditch a foot deep behind them which you could have followed all the way to Texas. All of these cattle were two yearold Texas longhorns, which are a tall rangy type of cow.)

In November, 1888, there raged throughout this section of Northeastern Colorado a blizzard which lasted for three days. This blizzard killed thousands of cattle, the county of them they could never get because many of the cattle were covered with snow until spring. One boy they thought was lost in the blizzard, but they later found him in a small cabin with



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with some other men, 18 miles from where he had started to bring the cattle in at home. Cowmen all over the country were out in the midst of that blizzard looking for him, finally some of them ran onto the little house, and stopped. They asked if the boy had been seen and were surprised and glad to find that he was in the house. After seeing if he was all right they left and told the other searchers. After the worst of the blizzard was over and was slowly abating nearly everybody in the county went out and help skinning the dead cattle. These skins were brought into town and sold by the car loads to some large leather and shoe companies. The flesh, while a small part of it was used, the majority was left for the coyotes to eat. Wolves, as a rule, wouldn't eat any of such meat as they were smart enough to know that man was liable to leave traps or poison laying around a dead carcass.)

I. P. Olive was one of the very first ranchers in this country, and had the ranch where the present Olive Lake Resort is located. He was one of the biggest cattle rustlers ever in this part of the county. He used this little cattle ranch as a sort of a blind, and hideout, while over in central Nebraska he had his home and largest ranch. He was later hanged for cattle rustling by a party of vigilantes in Nebraska.

During the famine in the years 1893 and 1894 Mr. Johnson did some business and made a small amount of money, but as there was little money in the country he had a hard time making ends meet.

In the '90s Mr. Johnson bought practically all of the corn, wheat, and hogs that were brought into Wray. He had always been in the feed business along with his lumber yard,



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but not until later did he start buying hogs. The way he started buying hogs is interesting. One night a fellow came in and wanted to trade four hogs to Mr. Johnson for some lumber. In order to get the business he gave him the market price on the hogs in exchange for some lumber. He then had four hogs which wouldn't make a car load, so in order to get the carload he purchased some more, in this transaction he made enough money that he decided to start buying and selling hogs, thereafter he was in the livestock business.

Mr. Johnson shipped the red <sup>wheat</sup> wheat he purchased to Chicago, and all of the white wheat to St. Louis, his corn he shipped to Omaha. Later on he started shipping his hogs to Omaha, but in a few years quit Omaha, because he could ship them to Denver, at a lower freight cost and at the same market price,

One time a fellow came through Wray and wanted to buy some cattle, so Mr. Johnson took him up to Eckley, or rather where Eckley is now. They met a number of ranchers and agreed to buy their stock, but the ranchers wanted cash, so when they came back they brought \$10,00.00 in cash with them. They didn't have a guard and a lot of people knew they had the money with them, but it didn't matter then, as there were few robberies. The town of Eckley consisted then of a windmill and a set of scales. After purchasing the cattle, Mr. Johnson climbed upon the windmill tower, and said that he could purchase all the land he could see for the \$10,000.00 they had spent buying cattle. Today they couldn't even purchase the town of Eckley.

A man by the name of Reed who was a Civil War veteran



died in the sod hotel. He was the first person that was buried in the cemetary. Mr. Johnson helped to bury him and later dug the grave for the second man to be put to rest there.

The taxes of the county have steadily increased from two or three dollars until now for the same land they are in the hundreds of dollars. Of cours, Mr. Johnson say, we have to look around and see what we are gettin for those taxes before we say anything. They didn't have the system of education, nor the schools then that we have now, and too our standard of living has raised along with every thing else.

Signed F. D. Johnson



*J. J. Kearns*  
Mr. Harry Boyes was born in Iowa, but when he was just

*Doc*  $\frac{352}{7}$  53  
a small boy, his father moved to Seward county, Nebraska. It was there that Mr. Boyes spent his childhood and grew up to manhood. His father was a miller by trade and his fathers ahead of him, also had been millers. Mr. Boyes father was the man that sawed the first wood for the first frame house built in the county.

Harry and his twin brother, Harris, however, didn't aspire to the milling trade <sup>so</sup> when the time came for them to start out in life they chose the harness making trade for their own. Together in Seward they bought out a small harness shop and opened up under the name of Boyes and Boyes, Harness Makers. After three years of working on harness they sold out and Harry decided to try milling for a while, but after trying for three years to get interested in milling quit.

When he had quit the milling business he decided to take a short vacation and visit his uncle who lived in the west. His Uncle lived in Wray, Colorado. When he had arrived here he was amazed to find there was no harness shop, that is one where they made harness to order. After visiting for two months he went back to Seward, but he found that he liked the climate in Wray, so he moved west. The chances for making money seemed grand to him as he could go into the harness business with practically no competition. On March 3, 1893, after purchasing a small stock of harness goods, he opened his shop. This shop was located in the rear of Alec Grant's Hardware



store. This store was located on the west side of Chief Street, 54  
now called Main Street. The building was a frame structure  
and was burnt down later in the fire of 1908, however it was  
a good location because harness went hand in hand with hardware  
every where. When Alec Grant went out of business, Mr. Boyes  
rented a small frame building by Borlands General Store and  
kept up his business, which was growing fast after the hard  
years in 1894, 1895. When Amos Carl built his hardware store  
Mr. Boyes moved in with him and ran his harness shop in the rear  
of that store. Mr. Carl later bought Mr. Boyes out.

Before the advent of Mr. Boyes the people in this section  
of the country were handicapped because they either had to  
order harness from some mail order house, or get a cheap grade  
of harness from one of the General Stores. Harness at that  
time was an absolute necessity as everybody traveled with horse  
and buggy, all of the plowing was done with horses, and the  
country was settling up fast and many people had to buy harness  
as they had brought none with them.

After Mr. Boyes sold his harness stock and the equipment  
that he had to Mr. Carl, he moved to a farm he had purchased  
west of Wray. He lived there for a number of years, but sold  
the farm and moved to a house he built in town. The farm is  
now the home of the Riverside Dairy, which is owned and operated  
by Muller.

The race track and the county fair grounds were located  
when Mr. Boyes first came here, where his house is now. The  
grounds however weren't there very long because the town was  
growing and the needed the room to build out that way. The



Fair Grounds were located four blocks west of Chief Street, and now all of that section is housed and quite a bit more west of there is also covered with nice homes.

In 1894, and 1895, the two bad years in the '90s' he and four other fellows decided to form a sort of bachelors club to cut down their living expenses. They were, Phil Edmonds, John, Bill, and Prock Doling, and himself. They rented a small frame building near the present location of the Wray Creamery, and moved their belongings in. They purchased all of the necessary equipment to cook and eat with and thus started their economizing. All of the equipment that they purchased, their agreement stated, would be lost completely to them, upon their marriage. Mr. Boyes was married first, then John Doling, then Phil Edmonds, and las Prock Doling. Bill Doling who was never married therefore inherited all their pots, pans and other equipment.

The main part of the town was located on the south side of the river when Mr. Boyes arrived, however the sod hotel was still standing, but was not used as a hotel anymore as two more, modern hotels had been erected. For a few months when he first lived here he boarded at the Commercial hotel, and at the same table sat Dr. E. J. Bayles the pioneer doctor. Dr. Bayles was one of the leading and most loyal citizens Wray ever had. They both had a great deal to do with raising the money, and getting the peoples spirit aroused to get the county seat moved to Wray. Charlie Grant was the leading instigator in the deal however, and deserves most of the credit in finally getting the county seat for Wray.



When he first came to Wray, business was just on the decline prior to the depression in 1893, 1894, and 1895, however business was still good for the first year, and many times Mr. Boyes has got up before breakfast to sell someone some harness goods. Many times these pre-breakfast sales would amount to \$150.00. A good leather saddle then cost less than a good one today. All the saddles that Mr. Boyes carried in stock retailed from \$50.00 to \$70.00. Of course more expensive saddles could be purchased, but they were all ways tooled leather or silver mounted. Those kind of saddles were not used for hard every day work on a cattle ranch, so the less higher priced one prevailed. Many times he has sold 450.00 to a \$100.00 worth of saddle goods to men just coming into the country, and with ambitions for becoming a wild and wolly cowboy. One young fellow in particular does he remember. It seems that this boy came in on an early morning train. He didn't even have a horse, or a job, but he wanted to buy some harness and saddle equipment. Mr. Boyes sold him \$60.00 worth of equipment and got the boy a job with the Bar 11, ranch. The boy however couldn't even ride so he soon was out of a job, and had to go back east.



Ed Bowles was the orn<sup>y</sup>est man in the county in the early days. He would do any mean trick that came into his head. One of his favorite tricks was to cut the buttons off someone's clothes if he caught someone sleeping in a public place. Bowles stole cattle, and picked up anything else, but still before ~~still before~~ that he was one of the richest cattle men in the state. Bowles would come into the harness shop to buy



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something, pay a bill or order some harness. When he would go out he would pick up anything that struck his fancy. Finally Mr. Boyes put a mirror above his work bench in the rear so he could watch him as he went out, in this way he could watch him and mark the stuff down on Bowles' bill, then collect for it at the end of the month. It didn't make any difference to Bowles whether it was on there or not, he just paid the bills and forgot about it, and the next time he came in would just do it over again. One time Bowles and Ernest Fletcher, now living in Yuma stopped in and as they were leaving both took a buggy whip out of the rack; Mr. Boyes just put the whips on Bowles' bill and nothing was ever said. Fletcher and Bowles were together most of the time, as Fletcher worked for Bowles. When they came to town they would both get drunk, Fletcher never got as drunk as Bowles. They would get on their horses and ride up and down the board walk which extended the length of Chief Street to the Depot. The horses hoofs on this walk could be heard for a half a mile. This was one of their pet diversions. Bowles would many times ride his horse right into a business house, whether it would be a saloon, pool room, or a general store and raise the devil. He always paid his bills however so there wasn't much complaint. Ernest Fletcher was Bowles right hand man, and really was the better cattleman of the two. They were both expert riders but Ernest was the best in that he treated a horse more humanely than did Bowles. Bowles was a headstrong type of person, but one of the frontier characters that helped make the west a place to live in.



J. J. Kearns

INTERVIEW # 6

Doe

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Mrs. Hans Christensen was born in Friend, Nebraska, in the year 1876. Friend was her home until 1886 when she moved to Yuma County with her father, mother, and the rest of the family. Her father's name was Daniel Jackson. When they came to Yuma County they got off the train at Wray, and stayed here all night before going out to their homestead which Mr. Jackson had already filed upon. They had previously made two other trips in a covered wagon to ascertain if Mrs. Jackson liked the place and was willing to live out here. She was and when they got ready to move here, they put all of their household stuff in an emigrant car, and started for Wray. The first night Mrs. Christensen was in Wray she had to sleep in a corn bin on a freight car because there were no rooms left in the hotel, nor was there any other place to sleep in the town.

The valley of the Republican River was the prettiest thing she had ever seen. Wildflowers covered the sloping south bank of the river, and around the small springs spotting the valley side great clumps of flowers could be seen. However there wasn't a tree in sight, today you are not able to see the numerous houses for the huge spreading cottonwood, elms, and willow trees.

Mrs. Jackson could ride and break horses almost as good as many men. She worked around the farm nearly as hard as her husband and was almost as capable. In those days one of the favorite diversions was hunting wolves and coyotes with hounds and riding on the horses after them. Mrs. Jackson went



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on most all of these hunts.

Mr. Jackson used to call Mrs. Christensen and her brother on hadn, or one worker, as together they could run a cultivator as well as any man in the country. Harry would drive the mules and Mrs. Christense would sit on the cultivator, and manipulate the levers to raise and lower the plows. In this way they would cultivate the corn and save Mr. Jackson from hiring ~~it~~ someone to do it for him. Anyway everybody then had to do their part or noone had any success.

Hans Christense was born in Minden, Nebraska, in 1868, and moved to Yuma County in 1887 so that he could be a cowboy. He started out from Minden knowing that he had a job with some people by the name of Youngson, who owned a ranch on the south divide. When he arrived in Haigler, Nebraska, he discovered that he only had \$.50. Mr. Youngson was supposed to meet him at the station, but he wasn't there. In order to buy a ticket on the stage Hans had to pawn his watch, which he did with the promise that the first time he was back in town he could have it back for the same amount of money. Hiwever when he did come backk the saloon keeper wouldn't give it to him. When he finally got out to the ranch he immediately started to work, and soon became a valuable hand on the ranch. He worked on various ranches on the south divide during the early years, and before he was married. One of the ranches he worked on was the old Bar T, which boasted a sodehouse, a sod corral, and a sod barn, as there were no other improvements of course there was no more sod used.

At one time Hans has been in the valley of the Arickaree



River, when there were over 20,000 cattle laying around, drinking the water, or feeding on the abundant green grass. You could hardly see the ground for the cattle. During the blizzard of 1888 there were many thousand cattle killed, but nobody knows how many. Ed Bowles claimed that he lost over 5,000 head.

Mr. and Mrs. Hans Christensen were married in 1892 and they lived in a little 11 X 13 frame house which Mr. Jackson had given to them. They moved it over to Hans' pre-emption. The frame house was on a foundation of four rocks, one under each corner. When a good wind struck the country often times they would have to go out and put the house back on its foundation. This house was too small so a few years later Hans built a larger house, which was 22 X 24 in size, this was much better. For a long time there was not well near their house and they had to haul their water, both for themselves and their stock from the south fork of the Republican River, seven miles distant. Finally they decided to have a well, but there was no well digging apparatus in the country so they had to have a dug well. In order to get good drinking water they had to dig the well over a hundred feet into the grounds. As a rule all of the early day wells in Yuma County were dug wells, as it wasn't until late in the nineties that someone procured a well digging machine.

Mr. Jackson's homestead was near to Friend, Colorado, which has since disappeared. Hans pre-emption was also near Friend. This little town took its name from Friend, Nebraska.



Practically all of the people in the vicinity of Friend, Colorado, came from Friend, Nebraska, so when they moved to Yuma County they decided to call the post office, general store, and school-house in their neighborhood Friend. At that time if people wanted to go Wray, it took them two days by team and wagon to make the trip, and two days to go back home again.

At one time there was a horse stealing ring which was quite active around Wray. One time when Mr. and Mrs. Christensen were in Wray, they brought two horses which they were going to sell. That night they had the horse tied to their wagon, and were sleeping near the wagon. Sometime during the night the thieves took the horses. When Mr. Christensen offered a reward the next day for them they returned with the story that they had been found out in the sandhills north of Wray.

The Jackson family, when they lived in Nebraska, used a cradle to harvest their wheat, and oxen to till the fields with. After they moved to Colorado, they started to use the more modern system of farming. Such as a binder, threshing machine, and horses.

(The little school house which was built at Friend, Colorado, and which Mrs. Christensen attended is still standing, although it has been moved over five miles from its original location. Not only did Mrs. Christensen attend this school, but her first three children, all girls, also attended it. This school although small was a good little country school, and except for four years, schooling in Nebraska, all of the education she received was got there.)



The type of clothing worn by the settler were very coarse and as a rule homemade. The cloth used then for work clothes then is about the same as the material used to make the pockets in a pair of men's pants today. This material was tough and would wear good, even though it didn't look very well. For clothes in which to dress up in, calicoe and overalls were used. By dress up wearing apparel, she means to go to church, dances, and other such events that were important to them in the early days.

*Colonies  
Russians Yuma County P-5*

(A colony of Russians from South Dakota moved into the south end of the county in the late ninties. With them came the first weeds in the country, namely Russian thistles. There were very few weeds of any kind for a number of years, until all of the seed for corn and wheat had to be shipped in, these Russians bringing in the first of all. They lived over by Kingston, Colorado. This town has since disappeared and was changed to Lansing, and the small bank, general, store, and postoffice is now called Arnel.)

Mrs and Mrs. Christensen moved to Wray in 1905 and have lived here since that time. Mr. Christensen for a number of years was in the livery stable business. The first livery stable He purchased, later he sold out, only to build a new and better one. This last one burnt down, but was soon built over agin. The County now owns the building and stores its road equipment in it. When Hans built his home there were only two houses between his and town. There were the T. B. Groves residence and the Grigsby residence. He built it in the west part of town.



Mr. Christensen is now engaged by the county in supervising some parts of road work. Their sons and daughters have all left home to make their way in the world, but they have a nice home in East Wray and are contented.

Signed Mrs. Hans Christensen



*J. J. Kearns*  
Miss Elva Sisson--Mrs. T. B. Groves--daughter of Mr. Nathaniel Sisson moved to Wray, Colorado, to join her father in 1889. Yuma county hadn't been formed then but within a few months after the May she arrived here it was formed. Her father had been here a number of years then, in fact since late in 1886 or early in 1887. Mrs. Groves was born in Earlham, Madison County, Iowa, and moved from there to Meigs County, Ohio. Her family lived in Ohio for just three years and migrated to Colorado to join Mr. Sisson.

Mr. Sisson was in partnership with Arthur Newell in a small land office and acted as locater<sup>o</sup> for the settlers coming into this part of Colorado. This at that time was a very profitable business. ~~///~~

(Arthur Newell was one of the first men out here, but is now dead. He helped, or rather supervised the contract for furnishing the railroad men who built the road with buffalo meat. They killed thousands of buffalo for their main food.)

Nat Sisson, as he was called, was responsible for naming one of our local newspapers--The Wray Rattler. Barney Condon and Nat were great friends--Condon's Corners, a little store west of the present site of Vernon, was his. Barney had decided to open a newspaper at Wray, but lacked a name for. One day before he had started publishing the paper he was talking to Nat about. About that time a good sized rattle snake crawled upon the step in front of the office to sun itself. Nat, therefore, got the inspiration to call the



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paper the Rattler. It would be a good name for a paper and very typical of the country surrounding Wray as at that time there were thousands of these reptiles throughout the sanhills and the flat country to the south. The name "WRAY RATTLER" has been with the paper ever since. Even yet today there are numerous snakes of this type in the county. Last summer out of one nest there were over 75 killed.

Mr. T. Byron Groves (deceased) came out to Colorado in 1886, and pre-empted 160 acres of land west of Wray. (This land is still owned and operated by his sons, and is known as the Groves Ranch.) While he was working to pay off the money due in two years he had to plow the fields and sow some crops. In order to be economical in every way, he always when he started to plow some ground took off his shoes and save the shoe leather. In many other ways he had to be economical but Mrs. Groves doesn't remember any quiteso radical. Mr. Groves paid off on his pre-emption in about 16 months, which was exceptional in that to get that money he had make it all out of the crops he had planted in little over a year.

When he had paid for his land he moved to town and started to work for W. C. Grigsby in his general store. When he had saved enough money he purchased a lumber yard, which is today operated by two sons, and a son-in-law. This lumber yard under the leadership of T. B. Groves became one of the best institutions of its kind in northeastern Colorado.

During the time he lived on a farm in order to go to church he had to walk approximately 10 miles. From his house the church was about south east, and was six miles south of Wray. He very seldom missed a Sunday attending church



(One of the leading citizens of Wray, then and today, in order to get song books for this church played poker for two nights and won enough money to buy them. This man then was the Secretary of the Sunday School, the first Secretary of a Sunday school in Yuma County.)

Mr. And Mrs. Groves were married in 1890, just one year after Mrs. Groves arrival in Wray. They lived in a small house just one block west of Chief Street. Soon after, however, Mr. Groves built a new house in west Wray, which Mrs. Groves lives in today. Of course it has been remodeled a number of times and now is a completely modern home although it is forty years old.

There were no trees in the valley, but there were thousands of wild flowers when Mrs. Groves arrived. The south side of the valley was spotted with numerous springs which have since dried up. The valley was a very pretty place in the summertime. Especially before the various weeds came into the country in carloads of seeds for corn and wheat.

Glen Bolander, who is still living, was the first person to ever winter as a nester on the flats south of Wray. That was the winter of 1885. Of course there were a number of cattlemen in the country but as a rule they had their homes in the vales of one of the rivers of the county.

Mr. Groves came to Colorado from Missouri with three other young men. In order to get out here it took all their money to ship their farming equipment and other things, and they only had enough money left to buy one ticket. So they bought the one ticket, and all four of them road in the



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emigrant car, but only one of them could be seen. They came  
all the way from Missouri that way, not daring to let the  
conductor see but one in fear of getting kicked off the train.

(Mr. Groves died a few years ago, but everybody remembers  
him, and he was one of the upstanding men in the county. I  
knew him as well as a boy could know a man many years his  
senior, as I lived next door to him for about eight years.  
He was one of the outstanding pioneers of the county and  
deserves a lot of credit for making the county as rich as it  
is.) J. T. Kearns,

SIGNED Mrs. E. B. Groves

Mrs. E. B. Groves.



Kearns, J. T.  
Interviewer

Reference  
Burns, Timothy

Mr. Timothy Burns was born in Carlos, Ireland, on August 10, 1848. Until 1866, he helped his father and brothers on his father's farm. Just after his father died, he received news that his brother was seriously injured by two robbers in Louisiana in the United States. He, therefore, in 1866, embarked for the United States in a vessel with 1100 other people. He took his brother back to Ireland, but his brother had been in ill health previous to the mauling he took from the hands of the two brigands, and died soon after they arrived in Ireland.

In Ireland when the father dies, the oldest son inherits all of his property unless there has been a will left to the effect that it is to be divided. When Mr. Burns' father died, the ranch was left to his oldest brother. Mr. Burns stayed on the farm until 1874 helping his brother on the ranch, then due to an argument with his brother, left the country for the United States. From the States, he went into eastern Canada, but only stayed there until 1880, when he moved to Chicago, Illinois. He had a very good position in Chicago and made quite a bit of money, but he was young and carefree and spent his money for anything and everything he wanted. The results were that after two years of living in Chicago, he hadn't saved any money.

In 1882, he received an offer from some Chicago people to manage a 2,000 acre farm in eastern Nebraska, for the salary of \$900.00 per annum. He immediately left for Syracuse, Nebraska. He had only \$13.00 when he arrived in Syracuse. At the end of the first year he received his check for \$900.00 and when he put



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that in the bank he had \$913.00. He started to save when he reached Nebraska. He didn't go any place, nor did he even go to church that first year. He possessed plenty of clothing when he arrived there, and the company gave him his board and room, so there was no necessity of spending any money.

He managed this farm until January 16, 1887, when he moved to Yuma County, Colorado. During this time he had married Miss Frances Nester on January 13, 1884. Upon arriving in Yuma County, he took a pre-emption and a timber claim near Condon's Corners, which was west <sup>north east</sup> of the present site of Vernon, Colorado. Condon's Corners was a store owned by Barney the first publisher and editor of the "Wray Rattler" newspaper.

Mr. Burns paid up on his pre-emption and timber claim in September of the first year he was there. He then took out homestead papers on a quarter section in Section 13, which adjoined his land in Section 14. He then had three quarters of the best farming land in the county. After living there for a number of years, he decided he would like to have all of his land in one section, and to own the whole section. He then traded his one quarter of land in Section 13 for two quarters in Section 14 that had a \$1900.00 mortgage attached to it. He then paid the mortgage and possessed then all of Section 14. He owns this land today, together with another half section close to Wray which his son John lives on and farms.

During the World War, Mr. Burns' sons enlisted and left him without anybody to help him farm, and as he was getting rather old, he decided to move into Wray. He came to town and asked one of the local real estate men if there were any good house that could be purchased. In ten minutes he had purchased a half block of eastern Wray, with a large house and good barn on it. Then in early April, he moved to town, in 1918.



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Mr. Burns was one of the most instrumental men in building and organizing the first Catholic Church in Wray, Colorado. He collected the money by subscription for the first church, and for every addition that has since been added.

The following names are of people that will be remembered with the early days of St. Andrew's Parish: Edmond O'Donnel, Andrew Hoy, Mrs. C. W. Hudgel, Lawrence Downey, Tom Downey, Mr. and Mrs. Bernard E. Devlin, Mrs. Margaret Conway, John Emanuel, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Brady, Robert Brady, John McCarthy, Carl Lippert, John Miller, Mr. Mochat, Martin Rice, Fred Sternberger, Paul Storm, John and Mary Toumey, and Mr. and Mrs. Timothy Burns.

The following are the names of priests who have been in charge of St. Andrew's Church: Fathers Cullen, Hickey, Faber, Schrafel, Riordan, Brinker, Robertson, Froegel, Lyon, Dubble, Buchazie, Julia, Robinson, Martin, Vincent, Hughsoll, Mynot, Cotter, and J. A. Korb, the present priest.

Father John Cullen came to Wray as early as 1882, to visit the railroad workers. He was the first missionary known to have been in this country. He came out from McCook, Nebraska.

The Catholic congregation of Wray was organized in 1887. From that year until 1891, a Father Hickey was in charge of the local parish, first coming from the Denver Cathedral, and subsequently, from Brighton, Colorado. The holy sacrifice of the Mass in those early days was offered in different places: The home of Edmond O'Donnel, actually the first settler in the town of Wray, and the foreman of the section gang on the B. & M. Railroad; the home of Andrew Hoy, after whose patron saint the church is named; the section house at Eckley, and at the local



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school building. The St. Andrew's Catholic Church in Wray was erected in the year 1891, and dedicated in the fall of the same year by Rt. Rev. Bishop Matz of Denver, at the cost of \$800.00, the work being donated by members of the congregation. The original church was 24x24 in size, and has since been added on to. In 1914, an addition was made 12x24 feet on the end of the church. Again in 1928, another addition was made and at the same time a beautiful Gothic altar was donated by Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Sullivan at the cost of approximately \$1,000.00.

There were about eleven families in the first congregation that met in the church, now there are about 220 members in the parish. The church has a capacity of 200 people. This parish extends over the eastern part of Yuma County and covers approximately 1500 square miles.

After alternating between a parish and a mission for several years, the growing parish has had a resident pastor continuously since April, 1918, and this has proved a very decided factor, both for its material and spiritual advancement. The new church was dedicated by the Rt. Rev. J. Henry Tihen, Bishop of Denver, on the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, in 1928. The following priests assisted at the ceremony on that occasion: Fathers Lappen Walsh, Cimichine, Taugher, of Denver, and Father James T. Cotter, the priest of St. Andrew's parish at that time.

During the years of 1893 and 1894, Mr. Burns did fairly well although he didn't make any money. One of the things that was to his advantage was the amount of stock he had that year. He owned 50 cattle, 50 hogs and 8 horses, which with a number of chickens, helped him considerably. At the end of 1894, most of this stock was gone. In 1893, he sowed 100 acres of corn and



wheat. The corn didn't grow at all, but he got an average of 3 bushels to an acre on the wheat which would hardly pay the expenses of threshing it. In 1894, he planted 100 acres of wheat and 80 acres of corn, and did not harvest a bushel of either. The wheat never even sprouted and the corn reached a height of six inches. There wasn't a bushel of corn or wheat harvested in the county that year. The horses he had that year he turned loose on the prairie and let them forage for themselves, and he sold all of the cattle and hogs, which if he hadn't had, would have left him with nothing at all.

The year 1895 was really more difficult to get through than the previous two years. In the first place, he had to borrow some money to purchase some cattle, hogs, and chickens. Then he had to get some feed for his horses in order to use them in planting his crops. This left him in debt.

He planted over a hundred acres of wheat and approximately that same amount of corn. He then took out hail insurance at a cost of \$123.00. During the early summer before he had threshed his wheat and it was yet green, he was completely hailed out. Just before he had sent his claim in to the insurance company, the company declared bankruptcy. So he was left without a thing.

After the year 1895, Mr. Burns was over \$1500.00 in debt. In the fall of 1898, he had paid off this debt and made a down payment on another farm.

Mr. and Mrs. Burns celebrate their golden wedding anniversary on January 13th of this year. On January 17, 1934, they will have been in Yuma County for 47 years. Mr. Burns is one of the most successful farmers in the community, and although practically



blind from cataracts covering his eyes, is in good health and expects to live another ten years. These two people are well known the county over and well liked respectable citizens.

(Signed) T. Burns

Submitted by  
John T. Kearns