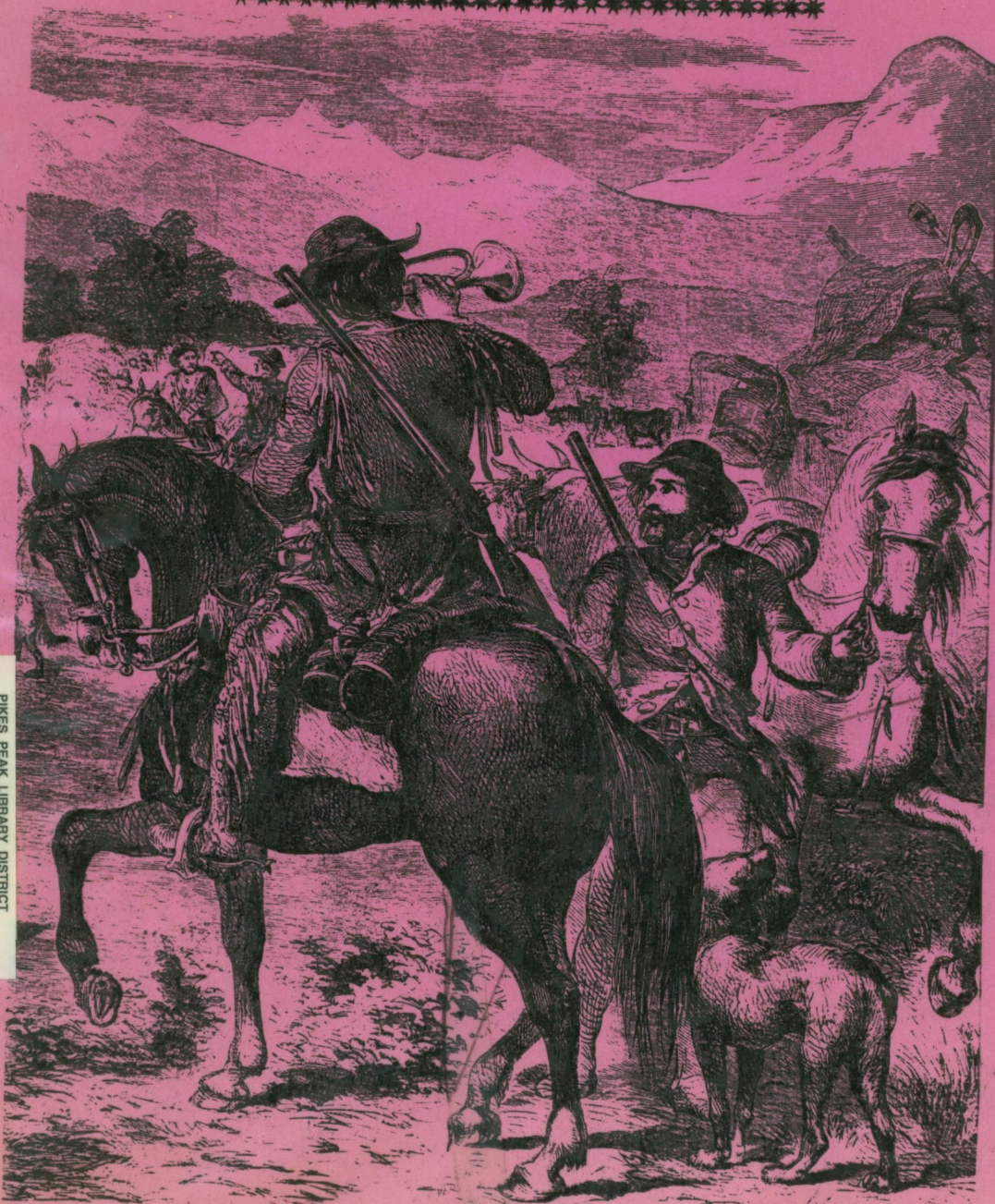




Colorado Stories to Read, Read Aloud, and Write



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Collected by
Richard Knowles

Colorado Stories
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Hi Willow Research and Publishing
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While doing research for *The Colorado Sourcebook* (Hi Willow Research and Publishing, 1994), the author encountered a few gems which had long been out of print which deserved to be known by another generation of young people. "Hardship in the Mountains" and "Josephine Meeker's Account of the Ute Massacre" were discovered in mimeographed publications in the Douglas County Library. "The Bent's Fort on the Arkansas" was published by the State Historical Society in 1954 and because of its comic book-type format is reproduced here courtesy of the Society. "17 Flags Flew Over Colorado" was a pamphlet published by The Title Guaranty Company (no longer in business) from material they sponsored as a series of advertisements in *The Denver Post*. The illustrations are so striking that teachers can read or use the accompanying text but they are best used as story starters since all the pictures can represent many Colorado history episodes. Finally, I have included a set of pictures which originally appeared in "Harper's Weekly," a famous New York magazine which appeared in the 1880s. These pictures appear without caption and can be used for story starters or to stimulate research.

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Hardship in the Mountains: The Fourth Expedition of John Charles Fremont (A Read-Aloud Story by Thomas E. Breckenridge)

John Charles Fremont made five expeditions through Colorado in search of a good route for the railroad. His expeditions became so famous that he was nominated to become president of the United States.

Fremont's most questionable decision was made in the winter of 1848. Fremont decided to try to find a route that would be passable even in winter. His guide advised him not to try to cross the central Rockies in December, but Fremont insisted the group make an attempt.

The following are the words of Thomas E. Breckenridge, one of the last survivors of the group who told his story to J. W. Freeman and Charles W. Watson.

Our expedition left Westport, now called Kansas City, October 18, 1848, and followed the line afterwards pursued by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, to Fort Bent on the Arkansas River.

At Fort Bent we found "Old Bill" Williams, one of the oldest mountaineers and guides in the West, a man of forty years, experienced in the mountains and among the wild tribes which inhabited the country between the Pacific coast and the Mississippi River. Williams had been with Fremont's Topographical Corps on its trip from St. Louis to Sutter's Fort, California, in 1845. He was engaged by Fremont to hide our expedition, although he disagreed with Fremont in regard to the route to be followed.

The route outlined by Colonel Fremont and Senator Benton led to Pueblo in the Arkansas Valley, thence to Hardscrabble, and over the Wet Mountain and the Sangre de Cristo range, striking

the Rio Grande, which was to be followed to its source.

After resting one day at Fort Bent, we resumed the journey up the Arkansas Valley, reaching Pueblo, which consisted of half a dozen adobe houses. We then pushed in a southwesterly direction about forty-five miles to Hardscrabble, where we stopped a week to recuperate and prepare for severe work in the mountains. The weather was unusually cold for the month of November, and the snow fell almost daily during our stay in camp.

Until we reached the summit of Wet Mountain, our party consisted of thirty-three men; but at that point, Dick Wootton, one of Colorado's pioneers who had joined us at Fort Bent, turned back. After a good long look at the valley below and the snow-covered Sangre de Cristo Mountains beyond, he exclaimed: "There is too much snow ahead for me," and immediately mounted his horse and disappeared down the mountain toward Hardscrabble. That was the last we saw of Dick Wootton. I have always since thought that Wootton's head was level on the subject of mountain travel in the winter.

Crossing what we called the Sand Hills, and those bleak, bald ridges between the White Mountain and Wet Mountain Valleys, the very aspect of the men was chilling. The breath would freeze upon their faces and their lips be so stiff from the ice that it was almost impossible to speak, their eyelids in a similar condition from the freezing of the water which the cold wind would force from them, the ice standing on their lashes. Long icicles hung down from them, the nostrils, and the long beard and

the hair stood out white and stiff with frost, each hair standing to itself.

The mules looked similar to the men; their eyelashes and the long beards about their mouths stood like icicles and their breath passing back settled upon their breast and sides until they were perfectly white with frost, and the snow would clog upon their fetlocks and under their hoofs until it formed a ball six inches long, making them appear as though they were walking on stilts. With the deep snow around us, and the pendent frost upon the leafless trees, nature and ourselves presented a very compatible picture. Two trappers, Old Bill informed us, were frozen to death here the previous year.

After crossing the Sangre de Cristo range, our stock was put on short rations, only one quart of corn a day being allowed to each animal. The men fared no better, as our flour was exhausted; but we thought we would find an abundance of game when we reached the valley of the Rio Grande, since called the San Luis Valley, as well as plenty of grass for the stock. We were continually looking for something better, and the conditions were daily growing worse.

It was hard work punching through the snowdrifts, but the men worked cheerily, although we advanced only five or six miles a day. Our clothing was seldom dry and the snow fell almost continually. Little did we imagine the awful suffering that was before us.

On reaching the valley of the Rio Grande, we found the snow about three feet deep. The weather had changed; it was very cold, and the northwest wind blew the snow in great clouds; but we pushed on, beating trails for the stock, in the hope of reaching the Rio Grande as soon as possible, where we thought we would find grass for the stock. Our march to the river was very slow on account of the keen piercing wind blowing the snow in our faces, the stock continually trying to turn around and go back on the trail. It seems to me that those mules had a premonition of their fate (the expedition began with 125 mules and ended with none). Animal instinct

had forewarned them of the suffering in store in the gloomy mountains at the head of the Rio Grande. We could see the storm-clouds approaching from the west, a great dark barrier rolling toward us.

Just before we reached the river, about three o'clock one morning, we were aroused from our sleep by the announcement that the mules were gone. They had stampeded, and three of us were detailed to follow. It was intensely cold, but we immediately struck their trail, and at the end of four hours we overtook them. There were no prayers said in driving those mules back to camp. We reached the river only to find it frozen over and the snow fully as deep as at any place in the valley. The heavy storms had driven the game away, and the snow covered the grass to such an extent that it was impossible for the mules to get even a mouthful to eat. The outlook was gloomy, indeed, but there was no grumbling among the men.

In camp there was a disagreement between Colonel Fremont and Williams. Williams was a man that said but little, but he spent a long time with Fremont that night, and when he turned in (we bunked together), he said that they disagreed in regard to the route we should follow. He said the snow was deeper and the weather worse than he had ever known it to be before. He said he had advised a route out of our difficulties, to go south around the San Juan Mountains, and then west along what is now the line between Colorado and New Mexico.

We pushed up the river, plunging through the snow growing deeper day by day. The weather was terribly cold and many of the men were obliged to repeat what had been done in 1845 in Nevada--kill and eat the pack animals. We would camp early and climb the cottonwood trees that grew along the river, cutting off the branches to feed to the mules.

We continued to advance up the river, the snow growing deeper day by day. The weather was terribly cold and many of the men were frost-bitten. We could see the mountains ahead, and on account of their tremendous height and distance, we felt it would be impossible

to cross the range. Colonel Fremont knew it, too, for he talked with Williams again, and Williams advised returning to Saguache, or south to New Mexico; but Colonel Fremont evidently thought he could make a short cut over the La Garita Mountains and accomplish the same thing, for we turned north, left the Rio Grande, and began to ascend the mountains, following a little stream which I think is now called Embargo Creek. Our trail lay through deep mountain gorges and among towering crags and steep declivities, which at any other time of the year it would have been dangerous to traverse. Several of our animals stumbled and fell headlong over the cliffs and were dashed to pieces on the rocks. To make matters worse, it had commenced snowing again. It seemed as if the elements were against us, but the men held up well, and although all were more or less frozen, I cannot remember that I heard a word of grumbling. Men would push ahead and make a trail until tired out when others would take their places. At night, all wet to the skin, we would gather around great camp-fires, cook and eat our mule meat, and then wrapping ourselves in wet blankets, would go to sleep.

These times were tough. Poor mules! It was pitiable to see them; they would roam about all night generally on account of their extreme weakness, following back the path of the previous day, pawing in the snow three or four feet deep for some sign of vegetation to keep them alive. They would fall down every fifty yards under their packs and we would have to unpack them and lift them up, and that with fingers frozen and lacerated with the cold. Finally the mules began eating the ropes and rawhide lariats with which they were tied, until there were no more left in camp to tie them with, then they ate the blankets which we tied over them at night, then came in camp and ate the pads and rigging off the pack-saddles, and ate each other's tails and manes entirely bare, even into the flesh, and would come to us while sleeping and begin to eat the blankets off us; would tumble into our fires over the

cooking utensils, and even stick their noses into the kettles for something to eat. But, poor things, little relief could we afford them; for, though they suffered much, we were in no better condition.

I have spent many winters in the mountains, but have never experienced storms similar to these. On the 17th day of December, after any number of ineffectual attempts to force our way up the mountains, we found it impossible to make further headway. We remained in camp several days hoping the storm would cease, living on the carcasses of the faithful mules that had died from cold and hunger. The storm wind filled the air with drifting snow at all times. We could hear the roar of snow-slides as they rushed from the steep sides of mountain peaks to the valleys below, carrying everything before them. Sometimes they were far away, at other times so close that the sound was like the crash of artillery. It is impossible for one who has never been placed in a similar position to imagine the state of terror we were in during our stay in that camp. rightly has it been named "Camp Desolation."

We lived in holes dug in the snow with a campfire in the center. There were several such fires, and each camp was separate, as the snow was so deep that the men could not look into the next pit. We had as provisions for thirty-two men probably fifty pounds of sugar and about as much coffee, and a small quantity of macaroni and candles. I mention the candles as provisions, for they were found afterwards to be a luxury indeed. Our staff of life consisted of frozen mule meat. It was soon evident that to remain in camp meant to us starvation and death, and it became our main topic of conversation how to get relief. The snow was growing deeper day by day, our hope of relief ever growing less, and our poor pack animals were dying fast. They had absolutely nothing to eat, and had eaten each others manes and tails until there was not a hair left. At night their cries of hunger but added to the horror of our situation.

Finally came Christmas Eve. We had been in camp eight days, when

Colonel Fremont sent for me to come to his tent. He had been studying the situation and our chances of escape. He admitted that the situation was very serious, but he was not despondent. He had a plan which eventually he thought would give us relief if carried out. "Breckenridge," he said, "We have been in many tight places together, and I know you are one of the hardest and toughest men I have, and you are able to endure more than the average man; but what I shall ask of you will try both your nerve and endurance to the utmost. Relief we must have, and as soon as possible, and a small party can get along faster than a large one; therefore, I have concluded to send yourself, Kreutzfeldt and Bill Williams, under King, down the river for relief. King, Kreutzfeldt and Williams have volunteered--now will you go?" I said, "I will go. If anyone can make the trip, I can." He then said he thought Taos was probably the nearest point where we could get aid, and the distance was, as nearly as he could estimate, about one hundred and eighty miles.

In the morning we were ready to start. On account of the depth of the snow we planned to carry as little weight as possible with us. We took one blanket apiece, a few pounds of frozen mule meat, about one pound of sugar, a little macaroni, and a few candles. We had three Hawkin's rifles for defense against the Indians, about fifty bullets, and one pound of powder. We also had one shotgun.

With this equipment our little band of four men was to start a desperate trip of one hundred eighty miles, on foot, in the dead of winter, through the roughest country of America.

I will never forget that Christmas breakfast. We had no luxuries, but plenty of variety, especially in meats. The bill of fare was not prepared for the occasion, being in use every day.

Bill of Fare, Camp Desolation
December 25, 1848

Menu
Mule

Soup

Mule Tail

Fish

Baked White Mule
Boiled Gray Mule

Meats

Mule Steak
Stewed Mule
Mule Chops
Broiled Mule
Fried Mule
Boiled Mule
Scrambled Mule
Shirred Mule
French-fried Mule
Minced Mule

Damned Mule

Mule on Toast (without the toast)
Short Ribs of Mule with Apple
Sauce (without the Apple Sauce)

Relishes

Black Mule
Brown Mule
Yellow Mule
Bay Mule
Roan Mule

Tallow Candles

Beverages

Snow
Snow-water
Water

It really made no difference how our meats were cooked, it was the same old mule.

Before our departure I handed Colonel Fremont a sack, which every man had to carry in those days, called a "possible sack." I told the Colonel that in the sack was all the money I had, \$1200 in Spanish doubloons, and I wished him to take charge of it, and bring it out with him when he came, and if anything should happen to me, to send the money to my father at St. Louis. Colonel Fremont promised this, saying, "If anything should occur, and it is lost, I

will see that the loss is made good to you."

The sack with the coin was left behind when Colonel Fremont broke camp. Human life at that time was of more value than Spanish coin. I have never had the loss made up to me by the government as promised. The following Spring several men who did not wish to go on to California were sent into the mountains to the old camp to recover such property as had been left there. Bill Williams was of the party. They secured the valuables, but on their return trip were attacked by a band of Indians and the entire party massacred.

The first day out we advanced about five miles, and at night camped under a large spruce tree, making a fire of such dry limbs as we were able to break from the trunk. We slept but little on account of the intense cold. In the morning, after eating scant rations, we rolled our blankets around the little store of provisions and were ready for another day's journey. By accident, the sugar was tipped over in the snow and lost--to us a very great misfortune.

The second day's travel was about the same as on the first. We camped at night under a pinion tree, where we suffered greatly from cold. The next morning the storm showed signs of abating. When ready to start I found that my feet were numb; but we had not gone far before they began to warm, and I discovered from the peculiar painful pricking sensation that they were frostbitten.

We reached the river about four o'clock in the afternoon of the third day as hungry as wolves. Two tallow candles, the last of our supplies, had served as breakfast hours before. The situation was growing desperate. We had traveled in three days but a short part of our journey, and there was not an ounce of food in sight. Before night I had the good fortune to kill a small hawk, which was cooked and divided among the four of us. The meal was rather limited and a trifle tough, but it helped a little. At noon, in the absence of dinner we buckled up our belts a couple of holes.

In the afternoon the carcass of an otter was noticed on the ice. It did not take long to start a fire and cook a delicious morsel, though it was, by long odds, the gamiest I ever attempted to swallow.

As we struggled down the river, our feet became so sore and inflamed from freezing that we were obliged to discard boots and shoes and sacrifice a portion of our blankets to wrap around them. We did not throw the boots away but carried them along, suspecting that they might come into use for roasts, when we got so hungry that we could endure it no longer. That very night one of them was nicely browned over the fire.

For days we had nothing to eat but parched leather. My memory is clouded concerning a portion of the time, so near was I to death, but to the best of my recollection we lived eight days on our boots, belts and knife scabbards. It is an utter impossibility to describe the agony of those days.

On the afternoon of the last day before leaving the river, we had noticed Williams looking out toward the east with his hand over his eyes. We asked no explanation, knowing well that if he had any information to impart we would receive it in due time.

That night while we were sitting despondently around the campfire, Bill said, "Boys, you saw me looking down the river this afternoon. Well, the river just below where we are, makes a great ox-bow bend (the bend east of Alamosa where it turns south past Las Sauces). The distance across the neck between the rivers is about fifteen miles. The distance around by the river is much greater. My advice is to cross this neck and not try to go around, and I have good reasons for asking you to take this course. This afternoon I saw smoke down the river in the bend. At first I was not sure, it was so very thick and hazy, but later on I became sure it was smoke, and, Boys, that smoke don't come from the campfire of a white man--it is the smoke of an Indian camp, and if these are Indians on the bend, they are Utes."

We were glad to hear him say they were Utes; we knew that Bill had

lived among the Ute tribe and could speak their language, and I had heard that he had a squaw among them. We would engage them to go back with us to the camp in the mountains and rescue our comrades.

Bill sat with his head between his hands for a long time as if in deep thought. Then he looked up and said, "I have an explanation to make. When I was a young man I was adopted by the Utes and lived among them. I was sent to Taos for supplies for my friends and was betrayed into a drunken spree. It was during this time that I blindly led the soldiers against my comrades. It was the meanest act of my life. For my treachery every Ute Indian rightly seeks my scalp."

It is needless to say that we decided to cross the loop. Bill said it was but fifteen miles, but that fifteen miles seemed to stretch to eternity. In that distance were crowded all the agonies of hell. The weather had cleared up, causing us to make a fire. At night we would pack down the snow and make a hole. In this we would spread a blanket; then sitting in a circle, with our feet together we would draw the remaining parts of the blankets which continually grew smaller about us. Those around our feet would wear out, and we were obliged to tear off new strips to protect them. God only knows how we suffered down in those holes in the snow. Sleep was out of the question except for a few minutes at a time.

Through the day we went staggering on, limping and toiling, and growing weaker every hour. We talked but little and suffered in silence. I do not recollect that there was ever a word of regret for having started on this mission to do or die. Our stock of burnt boots was now gone. We began to chew the leather of our knife scabbards as we staggered on. When these were gone we began on our belts.

There was no game in sight, although we still carried our guns. During those terrible days, while crossing this fifteen miles of snow, our one thought was to get to the river where we pictured game in plenty. When we were

within about a quarter of a mile of the water, King stopped and said, "I can go no further, I am sorry, but I am tired out, and will sit here until I am rested. You three leave me and push on to the river and make your camp. When I am a little rested, I will follow."

We urged the poor fellow to make one more effort, offering to assist him, and telling him that when we reached the river the worst of the journey would be over, and we should find plenty of game. Knowing that he was starving, we tried to stimulate him with the hope of a good meal. It was no use. He was even then too far gone to hope. Poor King! He was about to cross that other river from whose borne no traveler returns. Sadly we left him lying in the trail to rest, as he said, but "at rest" would more properly convey the idea of our feeling.

It required two hours to traverse that quarter of a mile. We suffered the greatest agony with our frozen feet. At last we arrived at the river about four o'clock in the afternoon, and setting fire to a large heap of driftwood hugged it close for warmth. We could not but think of King, and Cruetzfeldt volunteered to go back and help him into camp. Williams declared the exertion would be useless. He knew King was dead even before we had reached the river. I asked him why, and learned that while we were toiling through the snow he had looked back and had seen a raven circling over the place where we had left our comrade. The circles had grown smaller and smaller, until the bird lit on the snow where King lay. This was a sign of death, which Williams had declared he had never know to fail. Cruetzfeldt, however, was determined to go.

When he returned after some hours, he reported that King was dead, and from the position of the body, evidently had not moved after we left him. Cruetzfeldt now became very despondent. His mind seemed to dwell upon the poor fellow's death. When he had approached King he thought the latter was asleep, and was much startled at finding his old companion dead. I could

see that the shock was affecting his mind. He could talk of nothing else.

That night I dreamed of my mother's kitchen at Christmas time; of the roast meats and turkeys, and the pumpkin pies, cakes and fruit. Then I would awake to experience the terrible feeling of emptiness, the indescribably painful craving for food.

In the morning we broke camp and started down the river not caring if we were not alive by night. At this time I went ahead and broke the trail. Towards night Cruetzfeldt, played out entirely, and lying down refused to go further. Before we had left the camp in the mountains it had been agreed that if any of our party gave out, no time should be wasted on him. We were to push on and leave him to his fate.

But we concluded to wait for a short time and do what we could for our comrade. There was driftwood a few rods away which we set afire. Cruetzfeldt was dragged and rolled to a position near the fire.

Williams and I concluded that Cruetzfeldt would die before morning, and that we could do him no good by staying. It was a very trying time. Williams being the older man, I was willing to do as he should advise. His plan was for me to go on down the river, and in the course of time he would slip quietly away from Cruetzfeldt and follow.

I started on sorrowfully, so weak that I could walk but a few steps at a time without falling. Then I would crawl on my hands and knees until it was a relief to walk again. After going a short distance, I went to the bank of the river to look over the mesa, in the hope that I might see some kind of game. Putting some snow to my eyes to cool them so that I could see, I raised my head cautiously above the bank and saw distinctly five deer but a few yards away, standing sideways to me.

I have been in many trying situations in my life, and in many places where death stared me in the face, but there was more excitement crowded into that moment than in all the other years of

my life put together. There they stood! What if they should run away? This was the supreme moment. Life or death rested on that shot. Usually I had plenty of nerve, but now, weakened by starvation and nearly blind, I had scarcely strength to lift my rifle, and when I did so I could not see through the sights on the barrel. I realized that if I messed that shot, Bill Williams and Tom Breckenridge would never leave the Rio Grande Valley. I trembled like an aspen leaf. Suddenly there came to me the thought of poor Cruetzfeldt, in the snow, dying. If I brought down one deer, his life would be saved. My nerves were steady on the instant. I would shoot, and shoot to kill! I dashed more snow into my eyes, and pushing my rifle up over the bank, pointed it in the direction of the deer and pulled the trigger. I was so weak from excitement that I could not walk. And I crawled out on the bank. To my inexpressible delight one deer was down. I crawled as fast as possible with my knife in my teeth. I was afraid he would get up and elude my grasp in some way. It proved to be a three-pronged buck. I was momentarily insane for joy. I cut the deer open, and tearing out its liver, devoured it as ravenously as I have seen hungry wolves devour the flesh of a buffalo. It was the sweetest morsel I ever ate.

With my knife I cut off a piece and started back stronger, a hundred times stronger than when I crawled up on the bank on my hands and knees. I had never lost hope, but now it was supreme within me. I was a new man. I could have danced for joy had it not been for my poor mutilated feet.

I hastened up the river where I had left Cruetzfeldt by the fire, carrying the venison with me. Williams was the happiest man I ever saw when his eyes fell on my burden. He came and took the meat in his long bony hands, and began tearing off great mouthfuls of the raw flesh, like a savage animal. I hurried to Cruetzfeldt. Poor fellow! There was but little life left. After a while he roused up to ask if he had not heard the report of a gun. I held the meat to his mouth. The

change was instantaneous. it put new life into him. He seemed to be dazed. All at once, it seemed to occur to him that we were saved. He sprang to his feet, and hugged and kissed me, calling me his savior and preserver, and exhibiting more strength than one would expect in a man who had lain down to die. Moving our camp nearer the spot where the deer was killed, we built another fire. Cruetzfeldt was so elated after his meal of raw meat that he went out and brought in the carcass of the deer, a piece at a time--entrails and all. We felt that we might have use for everything.

That night we were three of the happiest men on earth. We sat up and cooked and ate venison until midnight then turned into our remnants of blankets. We cooked and ate deer meat all the next day. Strange as it may seem, none of us were inconvenienced in the least from over-eating.

While we were making ready to start the next morning, we saw a party of four coming on horseback from the river. In the instant, all was excitement. It was natural for us to suppose they were Indians, and if so, it meant a fight. To be sure, we would be outnumbered, but we felt strong now after our feasting, and just the least bit inclined for a skirmish, and as we placed ourselves in positions that would give us the most advantage, Williams remarked that when the fight would be over, the Indians "Would have more hair or we more blankets."

We watched the party as it came slowly on. Suddenly Williams rose to his feet, and swinging his gun in the air, shouted with all the strength of his lungs.

The head of the party was Fremont himself. At first he did not recognize us, so changed and emaciated were we. Fremont's party had left the camp in the mountains with the intention of following the river until they should meet the relief party, for they had confidence that we would eventually reach the settlement. His men were scattered along the river, suffering the terrible agonies of hunger and cold. Fremont had met a party of six Ute Indians, who were trapping on the river.

He sent their ponies and such provisions as they could spare, with one of their number as a guide, back to the relief of his men now pushing on as fast as possible in search of further assistance.

Fremont remained just long enough to cook some venison, then pushed on, ordering us to follow as fast as we could, to the settlement which the Utes said was about forty miles down the stream, and leaving ten or fifteen pounds of jerked venison meat.

We immediately started on our journey, strong in the faith that we could get through--full of hope. Only forty miles! The distance was nothing--we felt strong.

But our frozen feet soon gave out. We were compelled to get down on our hands and knees. For nearly the entire distance, we crawled on ice or through snow. Before half the distance was covered our remnants of blankets had been used to wrap around frozen limbs. Our suffering was almost beyond description. Those who have been affected with snow blindness can appreciate our situation. Our feet had been so frozen and thawed that the flesh began to come off. It was a painful operation to dress those horrible sores. We were obliged to use day after day the same old pieces of woolen blankets covered with deer's tallow. Truly, that last forty miles was a trail of blood. It required ten days to reach the settlement--ten days of the most excruciating pain. Looking back, after so many years, I cannot understand how we lived through it.

We finally reached the settlement about ten o'clock at night. The people had been expecting us, as Fremont and his party had stopped there and informed them that we were on the way. The settlement was located in a small valley, and was called the Red River Settlement. We were received by the Mexicans very kindly. They did everything to alleviate our distress. The Alcalde's wife, a Mexican woman, attended to our frozen limbs, bathing them several times a day with juniper tea. During the next three weeks the survivors of Colonel

Fremont's party were brought in, many of them in a critical condition. When the first reached the Rio Grande there had been thirty-two of us--eleven had died from exposure and starvation.

I have been in the mountains many winters, but never experienced a storm that equaled in severity that of 1848.

Roster of the party: Col. John C. Fremont, Commanding; Charles Preuss, Topographical Engineer; F. Croitzfelt (Creutzvelt?, Kreutzfeldt?); Bill Williams, Guide (joined the party at Pueblo); John Scott; Thomas Martin; L.D. Vincenthaler; Thomas Brackenridge (Brecenridge?); William Bacon; Josiah Ferguson; Henry Wise; Benj. Beedle; J.E. Ducatel; Capt. Chas. Taplin; Capt. Cathcart, late Babeau, nicknamed "Sorrel" (probably redheaded); I. Moran (a Frenchman, probably should be Morin); Raphael Proue; Midshipman Andres, Sr.; Roher; Carver; Longe; Dr. Kern; R. Kern and Ed. Kern, Artists; Henry King; Alexis Godey; Theodore McNabb, a boy of fourteen, Godey's nephew; Sanders Jackson, a free colored man (Col. Fremont's attendant); Manuel, Joaquin, and Gregorio, three California Indians, who had come East with Col. Fremont on his previous expedition; Ducatel; Vincenthaler (or Haler).

Other historical notes: Longe, a Canadian Frenchman, and an old mountaineer, daunted by the prospect of the deep snow upon the mountains replenished by continual storms" quit the party at Hard Scrabble, Nov. 25, "predicting evil to those who continued." The elder Andrews was left at Bent's Fort. Ten of the original members died before reaching Taos. Proue froze to death beside the trail on their retreat to the Rio Grandé de Norte. This was their first fatality and apparently happened early in January. Wise was the second to die about the middle of January. "He laid down on the ice upon the river and died." The next day, Carver "wandered off and we never saw him again." Two days later, Tabeau (Sorrel) "Laid down on the river bank to die." "Moran soon joined him and they never came up again." Andrews (Jr.) died "in the course of the night as he lay by our side," about Jan. 22nd. Roher died January 23rd. King died on the river (probably the first half of January.) Hibbard died Jan. 25th, his body being found by Godey's rescuing party "yet warm." Beedle died about the same time.

Sources:

Typed manuscript courtesy of Douglas County Public Library. See also *The Journal of Mississippi History*, Vol. XIV, No. 2, April 1952.

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Josephine Meeker's Account of The Ute Massacre (A Read-Aloud Story)

Editor's note:

Josephine Meeker was a tall, slender girl, just out of Oberlin College, when she arrived in northwest Colorado in 1879. She cut her dark blond hair to shoulder length, set up an Indian school, and became a model for pioneer women.

Though she tried very hard to educate the Ute Indians from the day she arrived at her father's White River Indian agency, Josephine shone brightest after the Meeker Massacre, in which she was held hostage by the Utes.

Angered by Nathan Meeker's treatment of Indian customs, the Utes revolted in 1879, and Josephine and several other women and children were taken as a hostages. For three weeks she lived the life of a hostage.

When she was rescued by U.S. soldiers, Josephine left Colorado and worked for the Office of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C. and then for Colorado's Senator Henry Moore Teller. Though she never returned to live in the West again, she gave lectures about the Indians in eastern cities until her death.

The following account is reprinted from the original without modification. Josephine had spent much time with the Indians as a teacher and understood them as much as any white person could at the time. She sympathized with them, but felt that they should learn to farm because the days of their wide spaces and hunting grounds were gone. In this account, she refers to Indians as "savages"-- a common term for them at that time. The reader may wish to replace this word with "Indians" as the story is read aloud. Before reading, the hearers should know about the life of Josephine Meeker and

her father - what they were trying to do and why they were where they were.

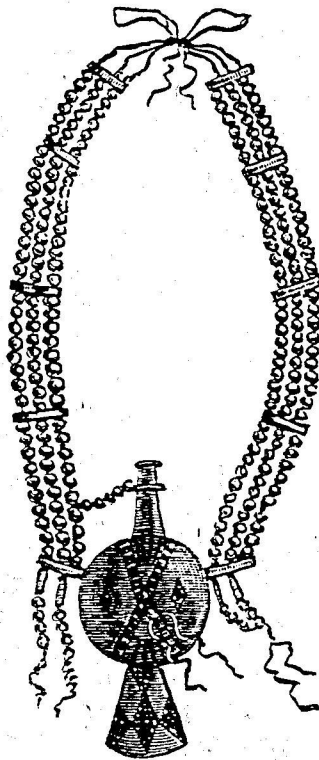
The following account was given to an unknown interviewer and published in 1879.

"Please tell us all the story from the beginning."

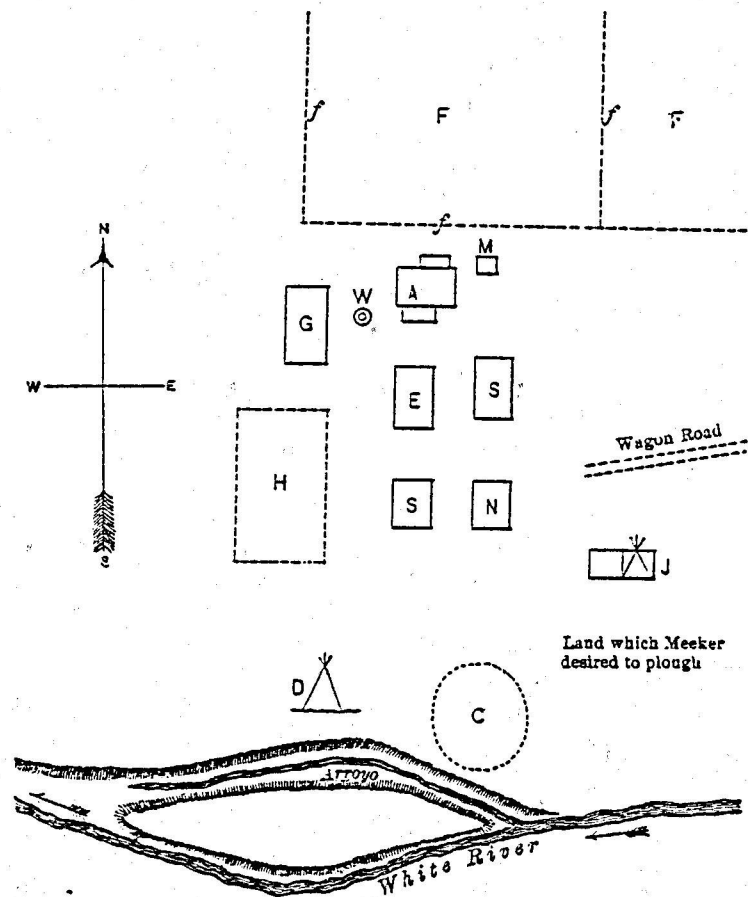
Well, to begin at the commencement, we, at the agency, never dreamed for a moment of the awful avalanche that was about to fall on us, until it came down. To prevent any misunderstanding about the cause of the massacre, it was just this. Mr. Price, according to Government instructions, began ploughing up some ground for crops for the Indians. Now the savages have a tradition or superstition, that, as soon as the white men plough land it soon becomes his, and the red man loses it.

The result was that Mr. Price heard bullets whizzing around him, and he was obliged to stop. The Indians then held several councils among themselves, and Panvit, who was urged by his squaw, Jane, made a 'heap trouble' as they called it.

Father was always kind to the Indians, and did his best to let them see he was their true friend, so after talking with these two about the affair, he gave them a plot, built a house and dug a well, and gave Jane a cook stove and several articles. Besides all this, he treated two or three more of the troublesome ones with kindness and gifts. This course smoothed matters over, and the Indians thereupon gave their consent to have the ploughing resumed, which accordingly was done. The agreement was that half



A Ute necklace and box for percussion caps. (*Leslie's*, November 15, 1879.)



- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| A. Agent's house. | G. Granary. |
| C. Corral. | H. Hay corral. |
| D. Douglas's teepee. | J. Johnson's house and lodge. |
| E. Employe's quarters. | M. Milk-house. |
| FF. Ploughed fields. | N. New building. |
| SS. Stores. | O. Well. |
| | P. Well. |
| | ///. Fences of enclosed fields. |

Plan of the White River Agency as described by Chief Douglas. (Dunn, 1886.)

of the original extent was to be ploughed, or about half way to the river.

New Johnson, another chief, did not happen to have been at the council when this was agreed to, and when he found, on coming back that the ploughing was going on, he became highly incensed, not only with father but also with the Indians. There was no use in talking to him at all, for when father went to him and tried to pacify him, he assaulted him and pushed him out with great violence.

No more was said or done at the time, but father wrote to Washington to say that its policy could not be carried out

except sufficient protection could be afforded for that purpose.

The reply to this was that his desire should be complied with. Word came too, from Governor Pitkin, that troops had been sent. The next thing we knew from the Indians themselves, that the soldiers were at Bear river, about fifty miles or so above the agency.

The Indians instantly held one of their councils, and resolved to ask father to write to Thornburgh to send five soldiers to camp and not allow the rest to come into the reservation at all. This message father sent Thornburgh at once, but left the decision as to what should be done with that officer himself.

With the courier who took this message went several of the Indians and these latter came back on the next Sunday morning. Two councils were held, one at the agency and the other at the chief's camp. This was Douglass, and though the tents were kept as usual, he had all the Indian women moved away, and the bucks seemed greatly excited.

The next day at noon the courier, who had gone to Thornburgh's camp, came in and told father that the soldiers were making forced marches so as to reach us quickly. The agent was to tell the Indians that Thornburgh would beat five of their braves at Mill Creek, which was between fifteen and twenty miles distant, that night. This, of course, was a ruse on his part to have them suppose that he was quite near at hand, whereas he could not possibly get his men up for twenty-four hours.

The Indians dispatched their five warriors to meet Thornburgh, and we began to feel perfectly safe. But hardly had they gone, when a Ute runner came galloping in with the news that the soldiers were fighting. This runner was seen to go to Douglass' tent, and in less than half an hour more, a score of the Utes came charging over from his camp to the agency, and began firing at the men.

All that morning Douglass had been at the agency, and had even eaten dinner with us, seeming in a very good humor, and laughing and joking with myself and mother, and singing Negro camp-meeting tunes, of which he was very fond. I think Mrs. Price and I joined in one or two of them, as well as his boy, whom both mother and I used to teach, for we took much interest in him.

I was in the kitchen with mother, washing up the dishes, and Mrs. Price was just outside at work at the washtub. As the reports of the guns broke upon my ear I looked up out through the window and saw the red fiends shooting the men down. I don't remember what I thought on seeing this horrible sight, for the next moment my attention was attracted by Mrs. Price, who rushed into the house, snatched up her little boy Johnny, the

baby, and turned to fly. The same moment Frank Dresser half staggered into the room holding his leg where he had a ball.

Till this moment, I had been rather dazed, but now I gathered my senses and began to act. So turning to the corner, I snatched up a loaded rifle and jumping to Dresser, gave it to him, exclaiming:

"Here, Frank, here's Price's gun!"

He grabbed it and I bounded to mother, and taking her hand and arm, I hurried out back with her to the milk house. Her thigh had been broken about two years ago, and between this and her excitement, she was almost helpless, so our movements were necessarily slow--or, at least, comparatively so. I remember distinctly the first volley of balls that came smashing through the window, and Dresser raised his piece and shot the chief's brother, who fell dead on the instant.

My most vivid recollection of the attack, however, was my picking up the little boy Johnny Price by the arm. The poor child did not comprehend what was occurring, and he seemed for an instant or so very much astonished at my roughness. I knew from their habits that quite likely as he was a boy instead of a girl, some on the savages would take him by the heels and dash his brains out. And he was such a favorite with us all that I resolved to save him, if at all possible.

From the house, we all ran to the milk shed and barricaded the door as well as we could. This place had only one window of small dimensions. For several hours we were concealed there, and during all that time, we could hear the firing of the guns and we could imagine the horrible scenes that were being enacted, and also that the blood-thirsty Utes would soon be after plunder in the milk house in which we had taken refuge. It may seem odd to say it, but it is a fact nevertheless, that at every discharge, we would notice and say whether or not it was a Government or an Indian rifle, for there is a great difference in the sound of each.

How long we were in the milk room, I do not know, but it was not until smoke began to pour into it and we knew the agency was in flames that we left.

"What shall we do now?" gasped mother, speaking to Dresser, who had come with us to afford us such protection as he could.

"Save yourself, Frank," said I several times to the brave fellow who, though wounded in the leg, never dreamed of leaving us.

"Oh no, Josie, If I cannot save you ladies and children, I'll go under myself."

It was now close on to evening, for the coming of which we were longing so anxiously in order to make our escape into the brush. But the smoke became so dense and the two children, in spite of all our efforts, began to cry so loudly, that at last we were obliged to risk the effort.

Once we decided to do so, it was not more than a minute before opening the door we all ran out. As we glanced about us, we saw that the Indians were all engaged in gathering blankets and other plunder from the barn buildings. Thinking this would give us a favorable opportunity, we dashed on with all our speed.

"Keep in a single line, and run so as to have the building between you and the red devils!" exclaimed Frank Dresser.

We followed his advice, and had run about three hundred feet when a fierce yell told us that we were discovered.

"Run! run! now or never!" shouted brave Frank, and wheeling round, he came to a halt, and brought his rifle up for a shot. But the act did not seem to deter the savages for a single moment, though they knew he was a dead marksman. We did not see what became of him, and I was encouraging mother to renewed exertion, when all at once she exclaimed:

"Oh, Josie, I am shot!"

The Indians were close upon us now, and began shouting out:

"Stop, squaw! White squaws stop! We no shoot! Come with us!"

Perceiving that farther flight was only madness, I halted and put my arm around mother to help her to stand, and the bullet had cut her thigh badly. Mrs. Price also halted, and in a moment more, we were in the midst of our pursuers.

A Ute brave, named Pursane, seized hold of me first, and immediately after, a second chief, Joseph, took me on the other side. They grasped me very tightly, and began hurrying me back toward the river. Several other savages took mother, Mrs. Price and the two children and marched them, or more correctly speaking dragged them to the camp of Douglass.

Presently we came to a deep, wide ditch that father had caused the Indians to dig for the purpose of irrigating some fields. I drew back and refused to go into it, saying I was unable to cross it.

"Ugh!" grunted Joseph, "you no go when me tell. Me show squaw. Now come!"

Then I was dragged through by main force. I thought they would pull my arms out. Having on nothing but light moccasins, and my skirts becoming saturated with the water, I was in a miserable plight when I got through. The brutal captors who had the other two ladies and the children, dragged them through the same ditch. I did not know which to pity the most, my poor wounded mother, or the two children in their soaking wet and muddy clothes. The Indians seemed to take special delight in this display of their hatred and revenge, because this ditch was for agriculture, and they abominated it for that reason.

On the other side, the two who had me, began to quarrel as to which of them I belonged. I had often read of the atrocities that savages practiced on their female captives, and I made up my mind that I would fight the moment there was any insult offered me, and that I would keep up the fight until they had killed me. Not only that, but I resolved not to be in the least afraid of them. There I knew lay the best chance of good usage for us all, for Indians not only admire, but also

respect bravery, especially in women. So during all our captivity, whenever there was any rough handling toward either mother or Mrs. Price or the children, I did not hesitate to take their part, notwithstanding the threats of shooting and stabbing me that were freely indulged in by the Indians. And I feel firmly convinced that it was to this demeanor--and Mrs. Price did the same thing--that the lives of us all were not taken.

Joseph pushed Pursane away with great violence and ordered him to go off and give me up to him. But Pursane just as angrily refused to do anything of the sort, and a terrible quarrel ensued. I remained perfectly indifferent, walking along.

Several times the two drew out bottles of whiskey and took drinks. I noticed the bottles were strange; we had none like them about the agency, father always being exceedingly strict about preventing any liquor coming to the agency.

After awhile, Joseph walked off and left Pursane victorious. I must add in justice, that this Indian became, I may say, almost devoted to me after this incident, and treated me with respect and considerable kindness.

When we reached the river, Pursane led me to a pile of blankets that he had stolen from the store rooms at the agency. He left me there while he went away, and when he came back, he had a lot more besides some other plunder. With him also, he brought an immense mule on which to transfer his booty. I recognized the animal as one belonging to the Government at the agency. Until now, Douglass had remained in the vicinity, but now he went away. He is a bad Indian, and treated us very, very badly.

During the night, all the savages gathered with the goods and animals they had stolen on the river bank preparatory to retreating into the southern wilderness, for they were well aware that the troops would soon be in pursuit of them.

Early next morning they started, and their words and expressions which I could understand in their language I could

make out that the most knowing ones among them counseled that we prisoners be kept alive, and not abused too much, in order that when overtaken, they might use us as hostages for their own safety and to enable them to make better terms than they otherwise could. Others again were in favor of putting us to death by the most frightful tortures, and several times a day, some of these fiends would come and strike us and tell us in the most hideous and revolting language what they would do to us. It was sometimes quite shocking and bestial, the way they talked. And I had to call out to mother every now and then not to mind them, and to utter words of encouragement to her. I varied this with upbraiding the savages with their meanness and cowardice.

"Brave warriors ought to plague warriors or soldiers, and not women who cannot defend themselves. Go fight boys! You are not men but old women!"

I taunted them in this way until they would be ashamed and sneak away. One fellow rushed at me with a huge butcher knife in a frightful passion and threatened to kill me. There were twenty or thirty of his companions. I laughed at him, though my heart was in my mouth with fear, and I exclaimed:

"I'm not afraid of such as you! All the scalps you ever took you got off a woman's head. You never took a scalp from any brave like these warriors here. Go be a squaw!"

As I spoke, I gave him a violent push and sent him head over heels. Instantly, the others joined in a chorus of jeers and groans at him, and he actually ran away into a tent to hide himself.

"What about the incident between you and Chief Douglass? Was he not going to shoot you?"

Yes, he thought he would scare me, and so one day cocking his rifle, he put the end of the muzzle right against my temple and said he would shoot me. He did this three or four times, and each time, I stood firmly and told him:

"Shoot if you want to! I am not afraid of you, nor your gun."

On this occasion as on the others, this display of bravery--though I did not feel it much, I can tell you--aroused the admiration of the savages. Douglass, like the other bully, sneaked away much chagrined and unable to wreak his revenge on me, for had he killed or even injured me then, he would have been forever disgraced as a warrior.

It was a lovely morning that the savages started with us prisoners southward, and though we dreaded what was coming, we little knew how dreadful it would really be. Many a longing, sorrowful glance did we cast behind us as our animals bore us away. But there was no help for it, and we tried to be as cheerful as we possibly could under the distressing circumstances. The horse I was riding on had a saddle but no bridle, nothing but a halter strap, and this was no good, as it was entirely too short, and was constantly dropping off his neck. May Price, the little girl, was fastened on the animal behind me with deer-hide thongs. Pursane rode beside me and urged on the pack mules.

Mother was forced to mount on a raw-boned brute behind Douglass. The position was an awful one and she endured the most acute agony, being obliged to stride the horse and hold on to the half-drunken savage before her to keep from falling off. Her hip hurt her very badly where it had been broken once, as I have described. Added to this was the bullet wound in her thigh, which was at least three inches long and exceedingly sore, though some of the squaws had applied a poultice of crushed herbs to it. Luckily the ball had only ploughed a path through the flesh. Had it gone deep in and lodged, poor mother would never have lived through the week. Indeed, I fear as it is she will never recover from the effects of this awful tribulation and suffering, and the murder, the barbarous martyr of my dear father.

Douglas was the worst wretch of an Indian I ever did see; for if he had been allowed to have his way not one of us would have lived to tell the tale.



Douglas, chief of the White River Utes, hostile to the white man. (*Leslie's*, November 15, 1879.)

One night after threatening me and Mrs. Price, this red devil incarnate walked over to the tent where mother was, and putting his knife at her throat, told her he was going to kill her. She screamed out. He told me before he left my tent what he was going to do, and that I would see her dead in the morning. But I knew he dared not do such a thing, under existing circumstances, and so when mother screamed, I called out to her in a loud voice:

"I'm all safe, mother! don't be afraid of Douglass, he can't hurt you! He's only trying to scare you!"

A few hours later a lot of Indians came drinking and dancing around my bed and the squaws would laugh and make significant motions towards me, and say something to the bucks. Then they would all laugh and dance again. I adhered to my stoical indifference and defiance of them, for I felt more than ever

that safety for us all lay in carrying out that ruse.

Puzane in the morning led my horse up to the tent and knelt down on his hands and knees in order that I might mount. This he always did when he was present, and when he was away fighting our soldiers, his squaw did it for me. This was a mark of special favor and was done for some of the rest, nor did I see it done among the Indians at all.

Had it not been for my anxiety about mother, I should have thought the scenery through which we were traveling at night exceedingly beautiful, for the moon shone so brightly and the atmosphere in the mountains was so clear that everything became do distinct, as though it were day. We all suffered very much, but mother beyond the power of tongue or pen to describe.

Little Mary Price, we called her Mame, cried very bitterly once in a while, for her mother, Mrs. Price was separated from her, being in Jack's camp. I comforted the poor child as well as I could.

About midnight of the second day's march, or flight, for the Indians were now sure that troops were in hot pursuit, we halted in a deep canyon, whose terrific walls seemed to go up right into the sky. I had not seen mother since about noon, and on asking for her was told that she was half or three quarters of a mile behind us in the canyon. I inquired whether she would not be brought up so that I might be with her, but I was told she would not, nor did my captors permit me, as I would gladly have done, to go back to where Douglass had her. I could not sleep at night on account of thinking about her.

Pursane had plenty of the stolen blankets, and putting a pile of them down, he rolled two others like a bolster, and told me that was my bed. After doing so, he went away, and the squaws came and grouping themselves around me, began their old tricks of grinning at me and mocking me.

I took no notice of them, for had I done so, they would most likely have set upon me and beaten me, and perhaps

added torture, for they are particularly bitter and merciless toward any white woman whom any of the braves show the slightest attention to. While I remained silent, I knew they would not abuse me, except with their tongues.

Their language was awful, beyond description, far worse than the men's. I did not care for them, however; and presently I fell into a troubled slumber, in which I dreamed some terrible dreams, through which floated the scenes of the past two weeks with the most horrifying distinctness.

When I awoke the sun was shining brilliantly across the canyon. I helped Pursane's squaw to cook some steaks and corn cakes. After taking a hasty breakfast, Pursane hurried away to fight the soldiers, who were in pursuit of us. Before he went, however, he gave his wife strict charge concerning me.

She was a kind-hearted woman, as indeed were several other squaws. It must not be supposed that all the Utes are like Douglass and Jane. There are among them, both men and women, who, in their rude, wild way, are as tender hearted and really noble in disposition as white people, and it was our good fortune, under the workings of a special providence, to fall in with several of them during our enforced residence among them.

I may say more, which is that we all owe our lives to the sister of Chief Ouray, for when the soldiers had engaged the savages and were defeated, there was a council called as to what should be done with us prisoners. At that council our enemies were getting the best of it, and did what has never been done yet by an Indian woman. She strode into the council and insisted on speaking, would be heard, and refused to be quiet. She then delivered an eloquent and convincing speech, in which she told the braves what would be the result of injuring us, and explained fully to them the advantages that would undoubtedly accrue to their own side by returning us unharmed to our friends. It was well known to all the warriors that she had great influence with Ouray. To disobey Ouray was death, and

so with their natural shrewdness they saw that it would be best to accede to the good squaw's demand. We were thus saved.

The same day mother came up to see me, in company with a little Indian girl. On Wednesday, the next day, Johnson went over to Jack's camp and brought back Mrs. Price and her baby to live in his camp. He said he had made it all right with the other Utes. We did not do anything but be around the various camps and listen to the talk of the squaws whose husbands were away fighting the soldiers.

On Wednesday and on other days one of Supauziquait's three squaws put her hand on my shoulder and said "Poor little girl, I feel so sorry; you have no father, and you are away off with the Utes so far away from home."

She cried all the time and said her own little child had just died and her heart was sore.

When Mrs. Price came into camp another squaw took her baby, Johnny, into her arms and wept over him and said in Ute that she felt very sorry for the captives.

Next day the squaws and the few Indians who were there packed up and moved the camp ten or twelve miles, into an exceedingly beautiful valley, with high mountains all around it. The grass was two feet high and a stream of pure soft water ran through the valley. The water was so cold I could hardly drink it. Every night the Indians, some of whom came up from the Uncompahgre Agency with a message from Chief Ouray for the Indians to stop fighting the soldiers. He had delivered the message, and this was why so many came back.

On Sunday most of them were in camp. They saw they had the soldiers hemmed in a canyon and were merely guarding them. Pursane came back, wearing a pair of blue soldier's pantaloons with yellow stripes on the legs. He took them off and gave them to me for a pillow. His legs were protected with leggings and he did not need them.

I asked the Indians before Brady came where the soldiers were. They replied that they were "still in that cellar",

and the Indians were killing their ponies when they went for water in the night. They said "Indians stay on mountains and see white soldiers; soldiers no see Indian. White soldier not know how to fight."

One of their favorite amusements was to put on a Negro soldier's cap, a short coat and blue pantaloons, and imitate the Negroes in speech and walk. I could not help laughing because they were so accurate in their premonitions. On Sunday they made a pile of sagebrush as large as a washstand and put soldiers' clothes and a hat on the pile; then they danced a war dance and sang as they waltzed around it. They were in their best clothes, with plumes and fur dancing caps, made of skunk skins and grizzly bear skins, with ornaments of eagle feathers. Two or three began the dance, others joined, until a ring as large as a house was formed. There were some squaws, and all had knives. They charged on the pile of coats with their knives and pretended they would burn the brush. They became almost insane with frenzy and excitement. The dance lasted from two o'clock until sundown. Then they took the coats and all went home.

On Sunday night Jack came and made a big speech, also Johnson. They said more troops were coming, and they recited what orders they say had been brought from Chief Ouray. They were in great commotion, and did not know what to do. They talked all night, and the next morning they struck half their tents and put them up again. Part were for going away, part for staying. Jack's men were all day coming up into camp. They left on Tuesday for Grand River, and we had a long ride.

The cavalcade was fully two miles long. The wind blew a hurricane, and the dust was so thick we could not see ten feet back on the line, and I could write my name on my hand in the dust. Most of the Indians had no breakfast, and we traveled all day without dinner or water. Mother had neither saddle or stirrups, but merely a few thicknesses of canvas strapped on the horse's back while the young chiefs pranced round on good saddles. She did not reach Grand River

until after dark and the ride for an invalid and aged woman was long and distressing. The camp that night was in the sage brush. In the morning, Wednesday, we moved five miles down the river.

A part of the agency herd was driven along with the procession, and a beef was killed each day. As I requested to cook most of the time and make the bread I did not suffer from the filth of ordinary Indian fare.

While at this camp Pursane absented himself four days and brought in three fine horses and a lot of lead, which he made into bullets. Johnson also had a sack of powder. The chief amusement was running bullets.

No whites are admitted to the tents while the Utes sing their medicine songs over the sick, but I, being considered one of Pursane's family, was allowed to remain. When their child was sick, his family asked me to sing with them, which I did. The Medicine Man kneels close to the sufferers, with his back to the spectators, while he sings in a series of high-keyed grunts gradually reaching a lower and solemn tone. The family join, and at intervals he yowls so loudly that one can hear him a mile; Then his voice dies away and only a gurgling sound is heard, as if his throat was full of water. The child lay nearly stripped. The doctor presses his lips against the breast of the sufferer and repeats the gurgling sound. He sings a few minutes more, and then all turn around and smoke and laugh and talk. Sometimes the ceremony is repeated all night. I assisted at two of these medicine festivals. Mrs. Price's boy became expert at singing Ute songs, and they sang to each other on the journey home. The sick bed ceremonies were very strange and weird, and more interesting than anything I saw in all my captivity of twenty-three days.

We stayed on the Grand River until Saturday. The mountains were very high, and the Indians were on the peaks with glasses watching the soldiers. They said they could look down on the site of the agency. On Saturday morning the program was for twenty Utes to go back

to White River, scout around on the mountains and watch the soldiers; but just as they were about to depart, there was a terrible commotion, for some of the scouts on the mountains had discovered the troops, ten or fifteen miles south of the agency, advancing towards our camp. The Indians ran in every direction, the horses became excited, and for a time hardly a pony could be approached. Johnson flies into a passion when there is danger. This time his horses kicked and confusion was supreme. Johnson seized a whip and laid it over the shoulders of his youngest squaw, named Coos. He pulled here hair and renewed the lash. Then he turned to assist his other wife pack, and the colts ran and kicked.

While Mrs. Price and myself were watching the scene, a young buck came up with a gun and threatened to shoot us. We told him to shoot away, and Mrs. Price requested him to shoot her in the forehead. He said we were no good squaws because we would not scare. We did not move until noon, then we traveled till nightfall and camped on the Grand River in a nice grassy place under some trees by the water.

The next day was the Sabbath, but alas! it was not a day of rest to us miserable. Runners were coming in every hour or so with their horses smoking and ready to drop. Each fresh one brought news of the approach of the soldiers, and of course our captors became more and more excited.

I shall never forget that terrible Sunday. To add to our misery the rain fell in torrents, and yet before we halted at night we had traveled twenty-eight or thirty miles, all the way along the Grand River. These heavy rains continued for several days, and mother and Mrs. Price were kept traveling as hard as the horses could go. But I during the last half of the time was in camp. Johnson had Mrs. Price, and when finally he came to a halt ahead of us the Indians in our rear also marched past us and camped with him.

The following Friday, Johnson held a long talk with Douglass, and as the result, took mother to his tent. His wife, to whom as I have said, we really all

owed our lives, and who is Ouray's sister, cried almost constantly over us, and made good, substantial shoes for the children, both of whom she kissed again and again saying her heart was sore to see them so.

There was another squaw who also lamented for us, but as she had no powerful chief for her brother, her husband, named Cohocha, obtained a heavy raw-hide whip, and seizing the poor creature by the hair whipped her in the most brutal and unmerciful manner, and when he had got through with his cowardly assault, ordered her to pack up for another march, threatening if she did not have all ready by the time he returned he would kill her. Then the hero stalked off as though he had done a very commendable act.

The Utes were now close upon the Uncompahgre district, and for that reason could not retreat much further. The troops also were advancing against them.

Immediately after this, however, news came in that the pursuit had halted in order that General Adams, who had been sent specially by the Secretary of the Interior to treat with our captors for our surrender. This was good news for us.

Yet we began to fear nothing would be accomplished, for the same day we were marched a whole day further to the south and west and camped on a stream called Plateau Creek. The next day after that we were marched twelve or fifteen miles still further off, and it began to look as though we should be dragged from pillar to post and kept out of the reach of our friends.

Thank God, though, our sufferings were soon to end and we were not worried again.

The Rescue

I shall never forget the day, which I can truly say was the happiest of my whole life. On Monday a runner came into camp to say that General Adams, the "Washington Chief," would surely come in, and that we must not go away, or there would be trouble.

The day following, as I was sitting sewing in Pursane's tent, his boy hurried in, and taking up a robe and blanket, he spread them out and said to me "You must go to bed."

I laughed at the urchin and answered "Why no, it's not night yet, and I am not sleepy."

My heart gave a great leap of joy at hearing the request, for I perceived at once that there was a ruse in all this to get me concealed. From this, too, I felt sure that the rescuers had come, and that Pursane wanted to keep me out of the road until they had gone away. His object in this was to induce me to marry him and live among the Ute tribe.

Immediately I began to act as though I suspected nothing.

"Go away," said I to the boy, "go away and don't bother me. I have all this sewing to do, and I'll be two or three hours before I get through."

The lad had evidently been sent to do what he did, and my seeming indifference threw him off his guard, and after loitering a little he went out. Scarcely had he done so, however, before a big squaw came to the tent and hung a blanket over the opening so that I could not see out. In a moment I was on my feet, and peeping over the top edge of it I beheld General Adams and his escort mounted on their horses at a little distance. This sight made me tremble with hope and expectation, and for a few moments I could not move. But quickly, very quickly I recovered myself, and the strength of Hercules seemed to possess me. Taking hold of the blanket I ripped it down as though it had been paper, and sprang outside the tent, where the squaw, a powerful-looking woman, confronted me. An instant more and I seized her and flung her away like she had been a child, and then bounded to General Adams with the glad cry "Oh sir, God bless you for saving us!"

"Where are the rest?" inquired he, taking me kindly by the hand. "You ladies have had a rough time of it no doubt."

"Yes sir, we have indeed; but, thank God, we are safe now."

"Well, we have come for you and we'll take you if we have to fight through the whole way."

My heart was so full that I could not answer a word. Seeing how I was embarrassed the General inquired in a kind voice:

"What is your name?"

I told him and then he talked encouragingly to me, and made me feel much better. I showed him the tent where the rest were, but as I have already told you, they were not there.

Next morning we left for Uncompahgre in charge of Captain Cline and Mr. Sherman. The Captain had served as scout in the Army of the Potomac, and Mr. Sherman as Chief Clerk in Los Pinos Agency. To these gentlemen we were indebted for a safe and rapid journey to Chief Ouray's house on the Uncompahgre River, near Los Pinos. We rode on ponies forty miles the first three days, and reached Captain Cline's wagons on a small tributary of the Grand. Here we took the buck-board wagon and traveled next day to the Gunnison River, and the next and last day of fear we traveled forty-five miles, and reached the house of good Chief Ouray about sundown.

Here Inspector Pollock and my brother Ralph met me, and I was happy enough. Chief Ouray and his noble wife

did everything possible to make us comfortable. We found carpets on the floor and curtains on the windows, lamps on the tables and stoves in the rooms, with fires burning. We were given a whole house, and after supper we went to bed without much fear, though mother was haunted by the terrors she had passed through. Next morning we breakfasted with Mrs. Ouray, who shed tears over us as she bade us good-bye. Then we took mail wagons and stages for home. Three days and one night of constant travel over two ranges of snowy mountains, where the road was eleven thousand feet above the sea, brought us to the beautiful park of San Luis. We crossed to Rio Grande at daylight for the last time, and a moment later the stage and its four horses dashed up a street, and we stopped before a hotel with green blinds, while the driver shouted, "Alamosa". The moon was shining brightly, and Mount Blanco, the highest peak in Colorado, stood out grandly from the four great ranges which surround the park. Mother could hardly stand. She had to be lifted from the coach, but when she caught sight of the cars of the Rio Grande Railroad, and when she saw the telegraph poles, her eyes brightened and she exclaimed "Now I feel safe."

Thus ended the narrative of Miss Josephine Meeker, the bravest heroine of the frontier.

Sources:

The Ute Massacre! Brave Miss Meeker's Captivity! Her Own Account of It. Philadelphia: Old Franklin Publishing House, 1879 (reprinted by VIC Press Books, P.O. Box 883, Cheyenne, Wyoming 82001 in 1975 from a copy of the pamphlet owned by the Western History Department of the Denver Public Library)

17 flags flew over COLORADO



17 flags flew over COLORADO

Including the flag of Colorado Territory, and the present flag which has flown over the state since 1876, Colorado has been under at least seventeen different flags.

The first known title to Colorado resulted from Coronado's spectacular expedition into the Southwest in 1540-42, giving substance to Spain's claim to the entire western interior region of the U.S.

In 1682, LaSalle floated down the Mississippi River and forthwith claimed the entire drainage area of the "Father of Waters," including a substantial part of Colorado, for the French King.

Also during the 17th and 18th Centuries, the British Colonies of New England and Virginia generously extended their theoretical boundaries all the way to the Pacific Coast, overlapping the French and Spanish claims.

Between 1763 and 1848, Colorado belonged, in vary-

ing proportions, to France, Spain, Mexico, and the Republic of Texas.

When Napoleon decided to withdraw his claims from the West, and negotiated the famous Louisiana Purchase in 1803, part of Colorado came under the jurisdiction of the U.S.A. for the first time.

Between that time and 1861, flags over Colorado included those of the District of Louisiana (part of Indiana Territory), the Territory of Louisiana, Missouri Territory, the State of Deseret (predecessor to Utah), Utah Territory, New Mexico Territory, Nebraska Territory and Kansas Territory.

On February 28, 1861, Colorado Territory was created, with its present boundaries—and on August 1, 1876, the Centennial Year of our Nation's Independence, Colorado became the 38th State of the Union.

Compiled and presented by The Title Guaranty Company in the belief that the story of Colorado's progress...the land...the customs...the people... is the story of American progress, and is of interest and importance to us all.

This material first appeared as a series of advertisements in The Denver Post.



The mountain men arrive in Colorado

In 1803, when Colorado was still a part of the world belonging to the King of Spain, two men stood at the top of an abrupt rise looking down onto a flat plain which stretched for miles between the tall peaks that marked its borders. For Colorado, this was an historic moment; for the roughly dressed men, Baptiste La Lande and James Purcell, were the first of the fabulous mountain men to visit the state and appraise the supply of beaver in South Park.

The era of the fur trapper had its origins far away from the America of Pike and Fremont. Indeed, its beginnings were on Fifth Avenue and Bond Street where fashionable gentlemen wanted their tall hats finished with soft beaver skin. The fashion of the day was quickly translated into orders going from giant fur companies to their outfitting posts in the West. Like pebbles dropped in a well, the circles of search widened to the Missouri, then spilled over onto the meadows and quiet streams of the lower Arkansas River Valley, finally carried to the foothills of the Rockies and into them, into country known only to wild mountain rivers, endless forests, and the Indians who laid primitive claim to their resources.

The names and trials of the mountain men who

forced their way into Colorado's natural fortress are history; Ezekiel Williams, who battled weather and the Indians to trap the upper Arkansas in 1811, Chouteau and De Munn, whose opposition came from the Spanish governor to the South, William Backnell, a trader, who drove his wagons over a course that was later to become the Santa Fe Trail, and the indomitable Jim Bridger.

They were a reckless breed—young, strong, crude, fearless, searching. They gladly traded the stagnant life of the settlement for the limitless outdoors to blaze the trails which other men were to follow.

Underlying the magnificent achievement of the mountain men of early Colorado were two predominant themes—a lust for wealth and the restlessness which leads to exploration. The trappers and traders bequeathed a great country to the rank and file of humanity. Humanity responded with a will.

Towns and cities began to grow. In 1858—some 55 years after Purcell and La Lande first scouted the territory—Denver City was organized. Individual authority was replaced by united community action. The rights of property owners were recognized and civilization had arrived in the area.



Refuge at Fort Bent

The scream of an exhausted rider and the savage yells of pursuing Indians were all it took to open the massive gates of Fort Bent, located on the sun-bleached trails that entered Colorado to the South. Situated on the north bank of the Arkansas River between the present towns of La Junta and Las Animas, the Fort was important to Colorado history for two reasons. For twenty years, it provided a place where travelers could take refuge and where commerce could be carried on without fear of Indian attack. More important, it was the pattern after which other forts were modeled—forts which later became the towns and cities of the state.

Second to the American Fur Company in size, Bent, St. Vrain and Co. employed nearly 100 trappers at the height of its activity. The main commodity was fur. The market was the eastern United States. The source of supply—the entire State of Colorado and northern New Mexico. The company's most impressive achievement—Fort Bent.

The structure itself was a masterpiece of frontier ingenuity. The Bents and St. Vrain put into it their extensive knowledge of the climate, the country, and the habits of hostile Indians. It was almost as big as two baseball diamonds with walls four feet thick and fifteen feet high made from a mixture of adobe and wool. Two

squat towers mounting cannon guarded the southeast and northwest corners of the Fort. An ice house was built near the river, and each winter it was filled with a supply of ice for summer use. Large walled corrals were constructed in back of the main fort for the horses and oxen.

But more picturesque than the exterior features were the people who gave life to Fort Bent. There were trappers and traders on their way to or from expeditions, travelers who stopped at the Fort before heading westward along the Santa Fe Trail, and a motley variety of Indians who came to trade furs for food, whiskey, and trinkets. Noise was commonplace—the raucous voices of the trappers, shrieking Indian women, and the squalls of half-breed children. Occasionally, routine came to a standstill while the men took up posts along the wall to defend against parties of raiding braves.

But the colorful world of Fort Bent was doomed by the caprice of fashion. The fur markets dried up and, in 1852, the Fort was abandoned. Much had happened during its twenty years—much which had helped to shape men's lives.

Some of the travelers who visited Fort Bent later returned to Colorado—to dig for gold, to start farming, to open stores, to set up towns. Soon, civilization was flourishing along the foot of the Rockies.



Who owned it?

There was a day, not too long ago, when the only authority for a land title was a long rifle poised in the hands of an enraged settler...defending his ownership of the land.

The first time that title to land in Colorado was ever known to have been vested in an individual was the Beaubien and Miranda Mexican Land Grant of 1843. This grant was generally known as the Maxwell Land Grant, since it eventually came into the hands of Beaubien's son-in-law, Lucien B. Maxwell.

The great Maxwell Grant included 1,714,000 acres of land; bounded on the West by the Sangre de Cristo mountain range; on the East by a line roughly following that of the Canadian River; on the North by the present site of Trinidad; and on the South by a line roughly following that of Colfax County in New Mexico. Maxwell, an enterprising man, was energetic in his efforts to develop

the virgin frontier country. And ultimately the grant was sold to the Maxwell Land Company...a private corporation financed by English and Dutch speculators.

During this period of development, American and Spanish settlers moved into the land grant area...building cabins and establishing ranches for cattle raising and farming. As the land company began to develop its interests, many violent gun battles flared between the "deputized" men of the land company and the so-called "squatters" over the rightful ownership of the land. In many instances, if a squatter was unable to present proof of his ownership of the land, he was given 24 hours to abandon his home and property. Even ministers of the gospel and noted outlaws played a prominent part in the Maxwell land struggles and litigations. Eventually, the Congress of the United States confirmed the ownership of the grant for the land company.



Gold strike at Cherry Creek

The thrilling news of a gold discovery in 1858 along the banks of Cherry Creek traveled with amazing speed in all directions. In the States, the news of gold strikes in the Pike's Peak regions brought thousands of prospectors scurrying to the Cherry Creek gold diggings in search of their fortunes. By 1859, placer mining in the creek beds and gulches was in full swing...and each new discovery brought hope and encouragement to the tired, bearded miners who labored with their pans, shovels, and sluice boxes.

The spiraling growth of Denver City, as an outfitting point at the junction of Cherry Creek and the Platte River, soon gave rise to the need for an efficient medium of exchange in order to carry on the ever-increasing business activity. Because money from the States was scarce, the merchants, miners, and settlers quickly adopted gold dust and gold nuggets as a satisfactory medium of exchange.

Gold scales became standard equipment for merchants, storekeepers, and saloonkeepers, alike. However, this method of measurement was crude and inaccurate. Many customers felt that the merchants were taking unfair advantage through the use of improperly adjusted scales. In retaliation, the miners would often mix a fair amount of brass filings, copper, or quicksilver with their dust in order to get their "fair measure."

Further problems for the merchant came about when they learned that gold dust and gold nuggets differed in quality, depending upon where they had been mined.

Gold taken from Cherry Creek and Clear Creek was considered the purest; Platte River gold was considered the standard quality. In May, 1861, the Denver Chamber of Commerce established the following schedule for gold dust values, as approved by 190 Denver City businessmen:

KIND	PRICE PER OUNCE
Blue River	\$20.00
French Gulch, Humbug, Fairplay, Nigger and McNutly Gulches	17.00
California Gulch	16.00
Russell Gulch	15.00
Clear Creek Dust	17.00
Best Retort Gold	15.00
Common Retort and Dust Gold	12.00

Nevertheless, the controversy continued between the merchants and miners...and finally a new era emerged known as the "era of gold dust buyers." This represented the very first beginning of banking in Denver.

A number of gold dust buyers, operating as brokers and using U.S. currency, began buying the precious metal from the miners and shipping it east to the mints and eastern banking houses for resale. The gold dust brokers were succeeded by the organization of several banking houses, among which was the firm of Clark, Gruber, and Company...Denver's pioneer mint and bank.

The rapid growth of early-day banking speeded up the growth of Denver and gave new vigor and color to the town's progress. The important influence of banking in Denver was reflected in the development of business blocks and expanded industrial activity.



They traded influence for townsites

The influence of two shrewd Indian traders played an important part in the early settlements of Denver in 1858. Traders John Simpson Smith and William McGaa, having Indian wives, carried considerable influence with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes who roamed the Rocky Mountain Region. During that time, title to all the lands in the region was in the hands of the Indians; and the land was not subject to occupation by white men. Gaining the favor of the Indians was important in developing a prosperous new town to handle the increasing flood of gold seekers from the East.

The earliest town company organized on the site of present Denver was called Montana City...located about five miles south of the State Capitol Building. However, it was soon decided this was not the best location for a city. Centering their interests on the Cherry Creek-Platte River junction, a favorite Indian campsite, the small group of town founders induced Smith and McGaa to join the proposed town company. Using the "squaw men's" Indian influence, the new company, known as the St. Charles Town Company, staked out 640 acres on

the east bank of Cherry Creek in September, 1858.

With this accomplished, the town founders departed for Kansas for the winter without erecting any buildings on the site. They were scarcely out of sight when the two Indian Traders, Smith and McGaa, who were left behind to look after the town company's interests, joined a new party of town organizers on the west banks of Cherry Creek. The new company, known as the Auraria Town Company, occupied approximately 1200 acres of land. As more and more gold seekers arrived from the East, the new town quickly began to flourish with log cabins and tents. The town of Auraria (Latin for "gold") was the first real beginning of Denver.

Not long after the organization of the Auraria Town Company, another group of pioneers, led by General William Larimer, organized a rival town company on the original site of St. Charles...directly across the creek from Auraria. St. Charles soon lost its identity with the rapid development of this new company known as the Denver City Town Company. In April of 1860, the two rival towns decided to unite under the name of Denver.



When claim jumpers founded Denver

The Denver City Town Company began much like an exciting Western novel with a major claim jumping. Claim jumping was not uncommon in those days...and the struggle for land ownership was often scarred with violence and bloodshed.

By the winter of 1858-59, the settlement of Auraria on the west bank of Cherry Creek was fast becoming a flourishing frontier town. Meanwhile, the organizers of the St. Charles Town Company, who had staked out their land for a town site directly across the creek, were on their way back to Kansas for the winter...with the exception of Charles Nichols. Nichols started East but was sent back to the junction of Cherry Creek and the Platte River to look after the interests of the St. Charles founders, and to build a log cabin improvement on the site. He returned quietly...only to find the claim to the St. Charles town site had been "jumped." There, on the east bank of Cherry Creek (now lower downtown Denver), General William Larimer and his pioneer followers were busy platting the land and marking the first streets for the *new*

Denver City Town Company.

This was nothing more than outright claim jumping and Nichols began forcefully protesting to the new town organizers. The Larimer group was not impressed with his protests and crisply notified him that any attempt to create trouble for the new town company would put a noose around his neck. This gentle threat had a quieting effect on Charles Nichols.

The new Denver City Town Company, named after James W. Denver, who was at that time Governor of Kansas Territory, began to grow by leaps and bounds... and soon became the vigorous rival of Auraria (now west Denver). Finally, in the spring of 1860, both towns consolidated under the name of Denver.

In the Indian Treaty of 1861, the Cheyennes and the Arapahoes ceded all their lands in the Pikes Peak Region to the United States. A few years later, Congress enacted a law "for the relief of the Citizens of Denver" and made Congressional Land Grants confirming and making good the defective titles that grew from the town organizations.



Denver's first Christmas

Four days before Christmas in 1858, A. O. McGrew made a decision. The men in Spooner camp, a small cluster of cabins near Denver City, simply did not have the holiday spirit. They were far away from their homes and families. They needed an emotional lift.

McGrew would give them one. A self-styled journalist who had come from Pennsylvania pushing his belongings in a wheel-barrow, he was well-liked for his ready wit and unconquerable optimism. He believed it was unthinkable to become despondent at Christmas time. So he organized a wonderful party for Christmas Day. Invitations were handed out to some of the men from the other camps, including General Larimer and Samuel S. Curtis from Denver City. A magnificent meal was planned, featuring an astounding variety of food. There was venison, elk, wild turkey, potatoes, beans, and prickly pears. Dessert would be served, too—bread pudding, dried apple pie, dried peach pie, and rice. The beverage list included coffee and whiskey. The latter was brought into camp from New Mexico and was appropriately called Taos Lightning. Its quality was such that it could scarcely be drunk.

Christmas Day weather was perfect...almost Indian Summer, and during dinner, the men began to forget their loneliness. As the tempo of the party picked up, they sang and recited toasts. Afterwards, full and happy, they called on General Larimer to speak. The General, a

remarkable figure of a man, had been instrumental in organizing several western towns including Denver City. He addressed his remarks to the subject of the future. He talked of railroads, agriculture, big population, and untapped wealth.

Whoops and cheers filled the air as Larimer sat down. Now the men were enthusiastic. They decided to share their spirit with the men of the Auraria camp...perhaps there were newcomers who had news from the States.

A huge fire was blazing in the center of the square around which the Auraria miners had built their cabins. When the Spooner men walked in they were greeted with shouts and back-slapping. Soon a concertina was produced from the back of a wagon. Its merry rhythm was catching. Four men locked arms and began to dance to the tune of "Skip to My Lou." Attracted by the happy noise, several Indians moved into the light of the fire, clapping their hands along with the miners. The whole group laughed, danced, and sang. Loneliness was forgotten. It was Christmas.

General Larimer was right. The men who celebrated together on December 25, 1858 were, indeed, the fore-runners of a great empire. A magnificent city has grown over the spot on which they danced. The words of Samuel S. Curtis spoken that day are a living prophecy: *"Westward the star of empire takes its way and now hangs bright over the Rocky Mountains."*



On to Pike's Peak

The magic element—Gold

The magic phrase—"Pike's Peak or Bust"

The magic year—1859

The story begins in the spring of 1858. Word spread eastward that a party headed by William Russell of Georgia had discovered gold at the junction of Cherry Creek and the Platte River. The stories had been passed from traveler to traveler and had grown with each telling. Soon, Eastern city newspapers were adding fuel to the fire by reports of fabulous wealth waiting to be dug with a hatchet. A few prospectors had jumped at the rumors and started West to hunt for gold before winter. Although bitter at the obvious lack of riches, they reasoned that the spring of 1859 would bring hundreds of thousands of people to the Pike's Peak Region. They believed that land values would soar, that the travelers would need food, tools, guns, and whiskey. So, in anticipation, two towns were organized on the sight of Russell's discovery—Denver City and Auraria. Then, as winter came on, men settled back to await the spring.

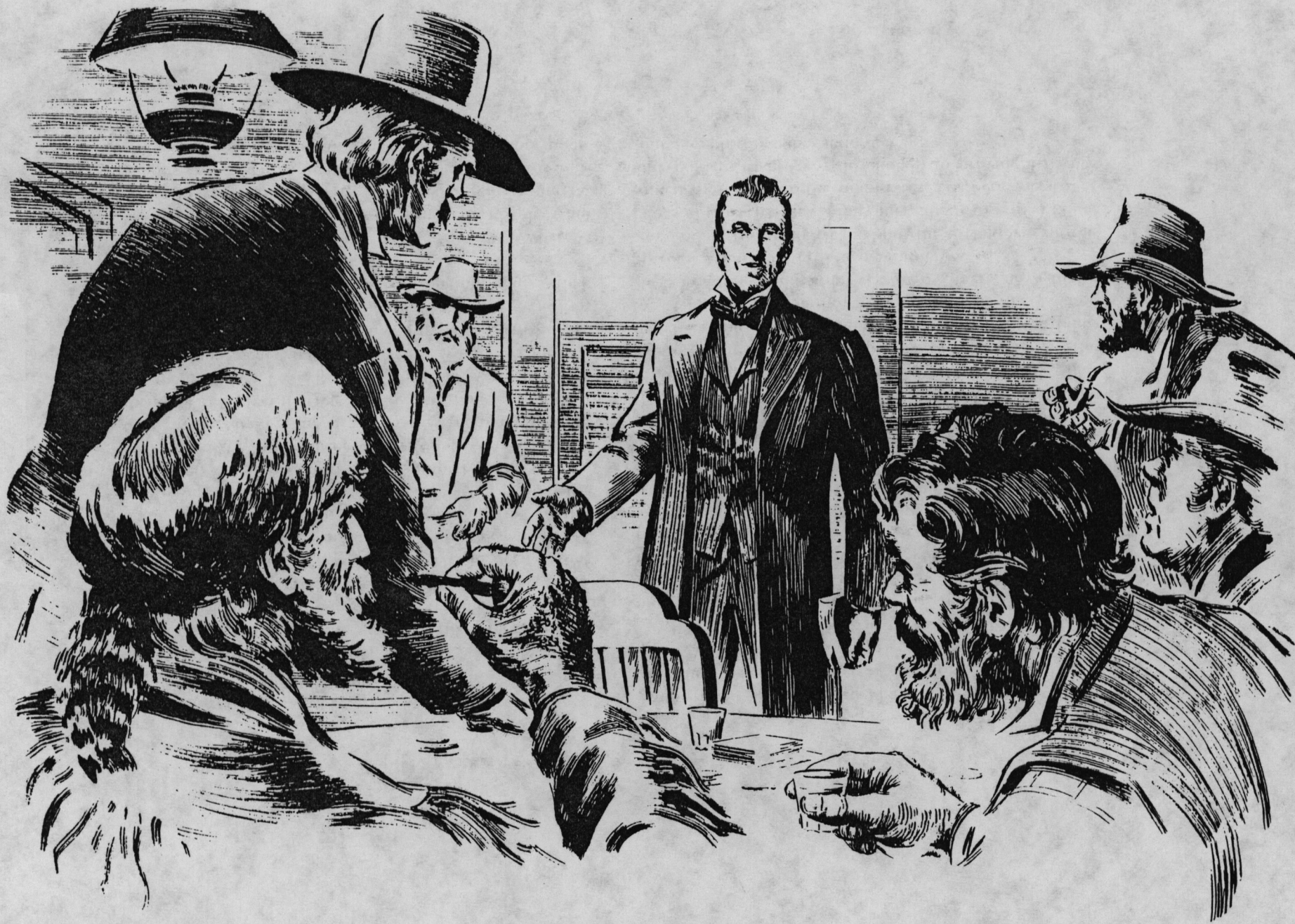
It brought a human flood. People from everywhere—Iowa, New York, Georgia, even England. People who had sold everything to buy equipment. They came in wagons, on horseback, on foot. They fought Indians and mud, slept on the ground, ate greasy meat, drank poor

water. Their life was dirty, hard, sun-up to sun-down; and when they reached their destination, they found nothing. No gold. Skyrocketing prices. Misery and hardship.

By the middle of 1859, at the height of the rush, almost 100,000 people were tearing up the earth looking for the quick wealth. Reality proved deadly. Men were not making much more than twenty-five cents a day. Hope turned to despair, despair to anger. Soon, the movement away from the gold field became greater than the oncoming crowds from the East. The Pike's Peak Gold Rush was called the Pike's Peak Hoax.

At the height of frustration and rebellion, a modest man from Georgia made a discovery which was to prove the basis for Colorado's fabulous gold production. While prospecting near the present sight of Central City, John Gregory found gold outcroppings which represented the first lode gold strike in Colorado...christened the fabulous Gregory Lode. Following closely upon this, George Jackson found gold along Chicago Creek, near Idaho Springs. Then Gold Hill near Boulder.

The news quickly cleaned out the little towns on the banks of Cherry Creek. Many men about to return home joined the rush into the mountains. For here was a real find, gold in quantity, gold enough to provide a living, gold enough to make a state.



Gold camp preacher

He stopped just outside the saloon and pulled a worn Bible from his pocket. Bracing himself, he stepped briskly into the dimly lighted room. A dozen men were crowded around a quartette of roughly dressed miners playing poker. At the bar, another half-dozen were laughing among themselves. Loudly clearing his throat, Reverend John L. Dyer called out, "My friends, can't you close your game and come and hear preaching?"

For a moment, there was stunned silence. The men looked at one another, then at Reverend Dyer, who repeated his plea. Slowly, reluctantly, the gamblers laid down their cards. Avoiding each other's glances, the men followed the minister out of the saloon and toward a small circle of people waiting for services to begin. Reverend Dyer's direct powers of persuasion had won him another congregation.

Colorado's early-day ministers were used to lethargy on the part of most of the miners. But they persisted, and their efforts paid off. They supplied a commodity to the camps which was sorely needed but mostly un-supplied—religion.

When Reverend Dyer left Minnesota for Colorado in May of 1861—with \$14.95 in his pockets—he was undoubtedly unaware of what he faced. He had only to receive his first assignment to learn the reality of life in

Colorado's mining camps.

Dyer's territory was called the Blue River Mission, in the vicinity of South Park, and he preached at seven small camps every two weeks. As a base from which to operate, he purchased a cabin on the outskirts of Lincoln City. His bed was made of pine poles, and his furniture consisted of a table, chair, and a sideboard for his utensils. The Bible, a Methodist Hymn Book, The Methodist Discipline, and an occasional copy of a regular daily newspaper completed his library.

Privation was a part of the ministry at that time. It had been known first by the indomitable Catholic Fathers who established Colorado's first church at Conejos in 1850; by George Fisher, who preached the first sermon in Denver City in 1858; by Bishop Randall, who came to Colorado from Boston to establish Episcopal missions in the mining camps; by the Presbyterian ministers who organized their congregation in Denver in 1860.

No matter where these fearless ministers went, they exerted a wonderful influence on all who heard them. Soon, crude miners' huts were replaced by brick and stone churches. Small congregations swelled in number, and by the time Colorado achieved statehood, there were more than 100 churches in existence in the state.



Colorado's first schoolteacher

October 3, 1859 was a big day in Auraria. Thirteen boys and girls met in a rented log cabin to attend the first school session in the Pike's Peak Region. The man at the head of the class was O. J. Goldrick. His story marks the beginning of education in Colorado.

Undoubtedly, most of the men who brought their families to Colorado in the spring of 1859 overlooked the school problem in their rush to find gold. But they began to feel the need when fall came. In addition, the birth of Colorado's first baby, William Denver McGaa, focused their attention on the need for proper educational facilities to train future generations as useful citizens.

The Cherry Creek gold camps didn't have long to wait for a schoolmaster—even though O. J. Goldrick looked more like an eastern dandy than a teacher when he arrived. He was wearing a black broadcloth suit, a tall silk hat and white kid gloves. If the miners were quick to ridicule him, Goldrick was even quicker to gain their complete respect. The stern-faced Irishman paced off the length of his bull whip, turned, and deftly snapped a fly off the ear of an ox—never touching the animal.

Goldrick soon recognized the need for a school so he rented a cabin and agreed to accept a fee from each student as payment for his services. Education in the state of

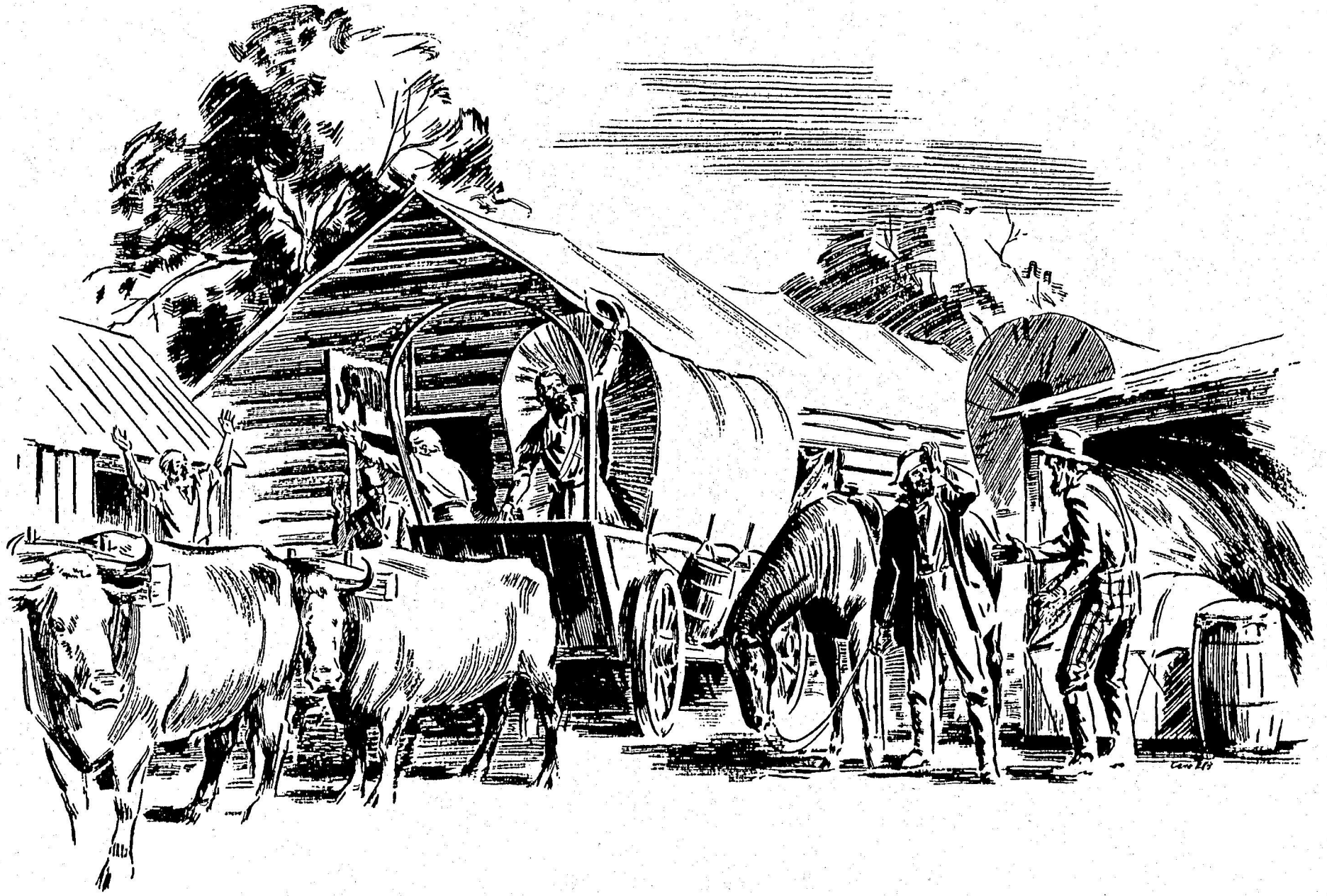
Colorado had finally gotten its start.

The next year, 1860, saw two more developments of historical interest in the state's school system. The first school house was built in Boulder by local citizens who subscribed \$1,200 to do the job. And the state's first woman teacher, Indiana Sopris, opened a school in Denver.

By 1870 there were over 6,000 school children in the territory, 172 schools and 400 teachers. Consequently, that year the Territorial Assembly provided for a Superintendent of Education as well as a Territorial University—to be located at Boulder and to be called the University of Colorado. It opened on September 5, 1877 with fifty-four students and two teachers.

The Colorado School of Mines was conceived when the legislature discovered an unspent balance in the educational fund. It was to be operated in connection with an Episcopalian School in Golden, Jarvis Hall. Later, the agricultural school at Fort Collins was started with a grant of \$1,000 from the 10th Territorial Assembly.

Facilities for public education were springing up everywhere. O. J. Goldrick's rented log cabin of 1859 had become a symbol not only of the growth in learning but of the growth of the state of Colorado itself.



The Elephant Corral

The arrival of a clattering wagon train in Denver City in 1859 was an exciting event for everyone at the famous Elephant Corral. For the tired oxen, there was the sweet smell of freshly cut hay; for the drivers, the rich aroma of frying beefsteak; and for the passengers, it was the end of a weary trip and the beginning of the search for riches in the new gold country. For the citizenry, a new wagon train meant new supplies of merchandise along with news from the States and news of Indian developments.

The months immediately following the founding of Denver City were a period of expansion and boom...alive with people coming to the frontier town and scattering in all directions to seek their fortunes in the state's gold areas.

At that time, Denver's largest building was the Denver House (later known as Elephant Corral), a mercantile business and hotel located in the block between Blake and Wazee Streets...and 14th and 15th Streets. The log structure, with canvassed roof and windows, was built by merchants A. J. Williams and Charles H. Blake. Because all merchandise was freighted in by oxen or mule trains, a large, thick-walled corral was provided for un-

loading goods and quartering animals adjacent to the Denver House building. Having more space than needed for the mercantile business, Williams and Blake expanded the Denver House activity to include a hotel, restaurant, saloon, and gambling house. Later, they disposed of their interests and, under new ownership, the Denver House and Corral was remodeled, enlarged, and renamed the Elephant Corral because of its size. Nearly all the merchandise sold to Denver citizens was sold by the Elephant Corral. As it fast became a business and social center, it also grew famous for the tragedies, comedies, and drama that took place.

It was here that entire wagons were unloaded and shipments auctioned on the ground; here, tired pilgrims and tenderfeet sought lodging and supplies before starting for the mountains; ranchers brought their cattle and horses to be traded and sold; here, miners sought escape from their boredom at the hotel's saloon and gambling tables.

Elephant Corral soon became a symbol of booming business in Denver City during the days of the enormous rush to the Pikes Peak Region.



Justice comes to Denver City

On April 7, 1859, John Stofel was arrested for the murder of his brother-in-law, Thomas Biencroff. Stofel freely admitted his crime, saying he followed his brother-in-law to Denver City from the States for the purpose of killing him. This was Denver City's first murder and, at that time, there was no jail for the safekeeping of the criminal...and no regular courts in which to try him. Since there was no doubt of his guilt, the citizens acted swiftly by organizing Denver's first People's Court. A judge was appointed and twelve men were called as jurors. In addition, a lawyer was appointed to see that the man was fairly tried. Frontier justice was swift, and the jury returned a verdict of guilty, which was confirmed by a vote from the crowd of citizens in the open streets of Denver.

The next day, the prisoner, with his appointed executioner and a minister, was escorted by wagon and oxen to a large cottonwood tree near Tenth and Market Streets. The three men stood in the bed of the wagon as a rope was placed around the condemned man's head and thrown over a limb of the tree. Following a last prayer offered by the minister, the wagon was driven out from under the tree...marking Denver's first trial and execution by the People's Court.

However, the very first courts of justice in Colorado called Miner's Courts were functioning before this Denver incident. With thousands of men converging on the Pike's Peak gold regions, there was an immediate need for law and order in the congested mining communities, camps, and supply towns. The early Miner's Courts were organized in each separate mining district through town

meetings...in a truly democratic manner. In these Courts, there were fair discussions, free speech for all...and the conviction or final judgment of a person rested with the people themselves.

Colorado's first Miner's Court was organized in the Gregory District following the discovery of the rich Gregory Lode in Central City. The citizens elected their court officers and wrote their own civil and criminal codes which were simple and sometimes primitive in nature...but adequately met the needs of the community. Contemporary history books quote the Criminal Code of the Gregory District as follows:

SECTION 1 Any person guilty of willful murder upon conviction thereof shall be hung by the neck until he is dead.

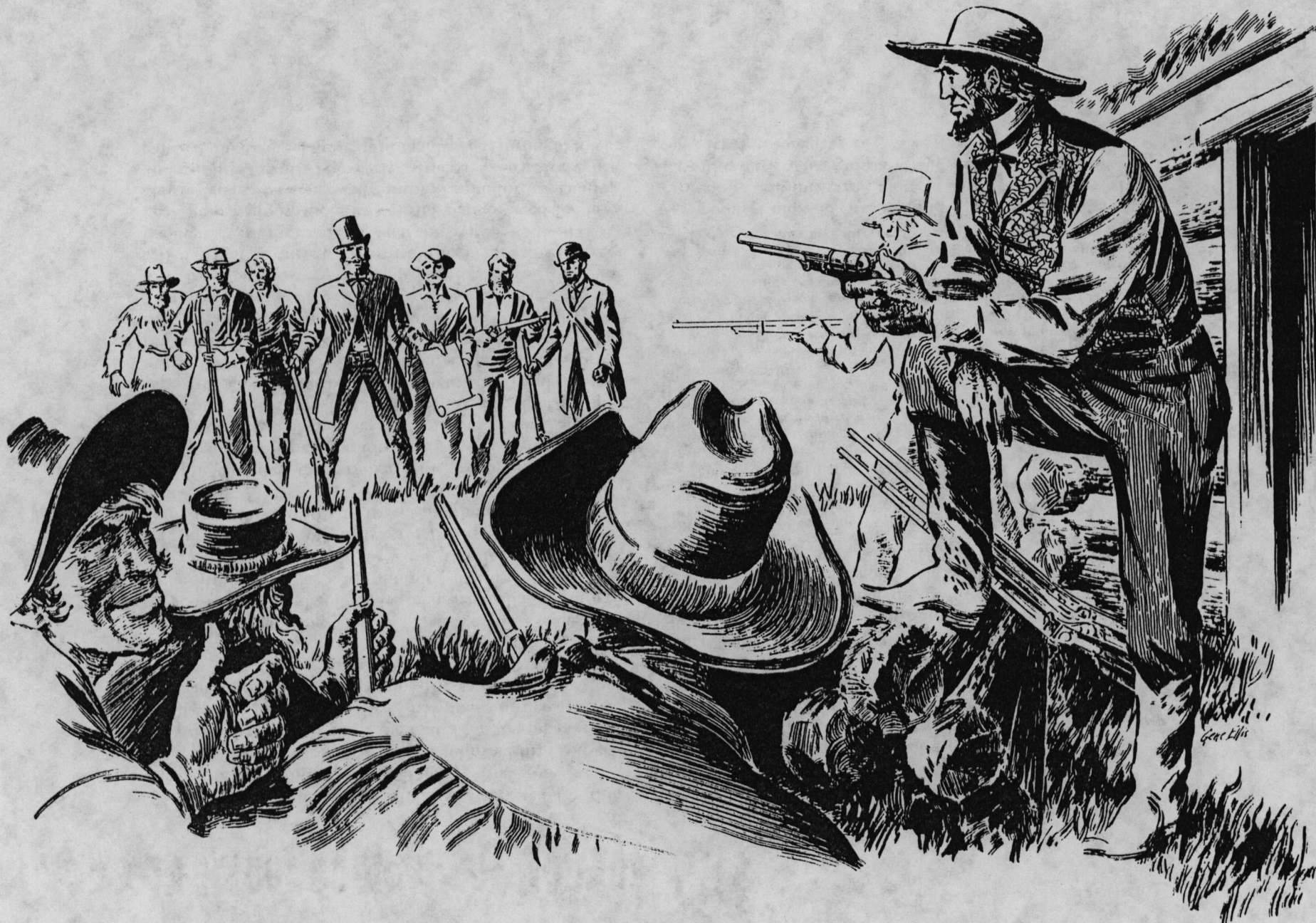
SECTION 2 Any person guilty of manslaughter or homicide shall be punished as a jury of 12 men may direct.

SECTION 3 Any person shooting or threatening to shoot another, using or threatening to use any deadly weapons except in self defense, shall be fined a sum not less than fifty nor more than five hundred dollars and receive in addition as many stripes on his bare back as a jury of six men may direct, and be banished from the district.

SECTION 4 Any person found guilty of petit larceny shall be fined in a sum double the amount stolen, and such other punishment as a jury may direct, and be banished from the district.

SECTION 5 Any person found guilty of grand larceny shall be fined a sum double the amount stolen and receive not less than fifteen nor more than three hundred lashes on his bare back, and be banished from the district and such other punishment as a jury of six men may direct.

Today, Colorado citizens enjoy the protection of modern courts administering modern laws, but in the early days the settler, his gun, and the People's Court solved most legal problems.



The Parkinson Incident

January 30, 1860 would have been just another day in bustling Denver City if it hadn't been for William H. Parkinson. Together with two friends, Thompson and Mickie, Parkinson persuaded a dozen others to join him in jumping several claims owned by the Denver Town Company in present-day North Denver. Despite the fact that the Town Company had itself obtained possession by similar means one year earlier, news of Parkinson's audacity spread quickly. Flagrant claim jumping simply could not be tolerated. A meeting was called and a group of seven men was appointed as a committee to go forth and oust the jumpers.

Climbing into a wagon, they headed for Parkinson's disputed land. Still fired with enthusiasm from the Town Company meeting, they reined up beside a dead stump, got out, and walked over a small rise.

On the other side, less than 90 yards away, they saw a demoralizing sight—fifteen men with cocked rifles aimed directly at them. They called to Parkinson to put down his guns and get off the property. Parkinson said that he had thirty more guns and was ready for battle. The men quickly decided against forcing the issue and, climbing back into the wagon, hustled to town to call another meeting.

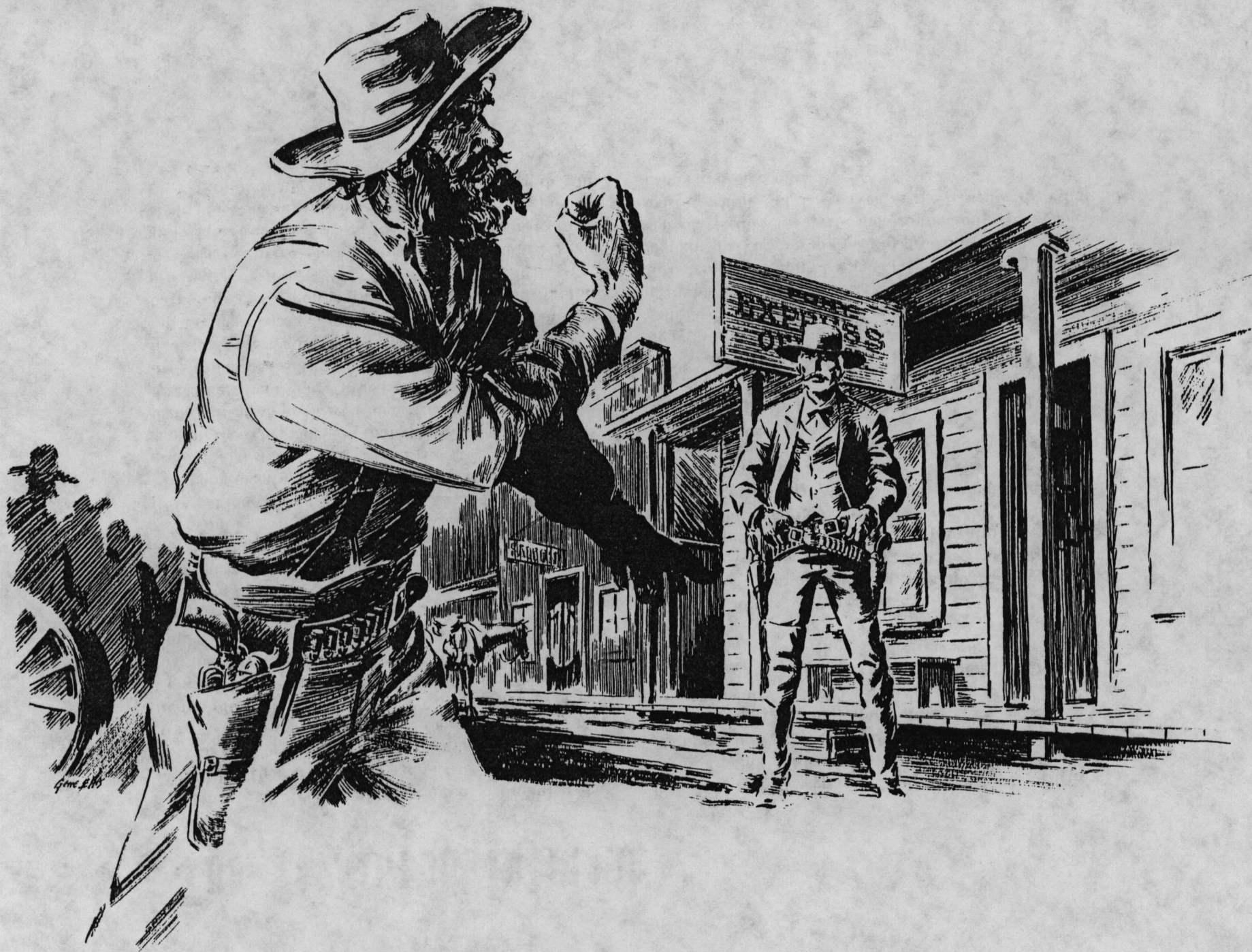
Speeches were made, threats were mouthed again and again, but it remained for one more event to bring about the reaction which led to settlement. On January 31, Parkinson made the early morning discovery that his

first building had been torn down and burned during the night. In short order, he was on the street looking for the man who was responsible. He soon found and accused Major R. B. Bradford, prominent in the Town Company. An argument developed which led to gun play, but no one was injured. However, many citizens realized that something had to be done before the situation got out of hand.

So, on the second of February, E. W. Wynkoop, representing Parkinson's interests, presented a proposition to the Denver Town Company. Parkinson and his friends would agree to give up their land, providing they would receive compensation for their expense, loss, and trouble. After much argument, the Company accepted these terms—although the feeling that the citizenry should have refused payment in money and demanded payment in blood prevailed for several years.

Out of the Parkinson incident came renewed faith in the Claim Clubs, which had been organized to prevent such outbreaks, but whose members had become lax in their duties. The Arapahoe County Claim Club was organized by several thinking people to act as a recording agent for a member's property—and, in the case of trouble, to defend the claim of a member. Had the group been vigilant, Parkinson's grab could probably have been prevented. Needless to say, the incident not only strengthened existing clubs, but also served as the basis for the establishment of new ones.

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A threat to the Pony Express

It was hot and dusty in Julesburg the day that Jack Slade took over the Pony Express office from Big Jules Reni, after whom the town was named. For months, the service out of Julesburg had been bad; and there was ample evidence that the mails had been tampered with. The Pony's owners, Russell, Majors, and Waddell, had hand-picked Slade for the touchy job of replacing Big Jules.

Slade was not a man to fool with and when the two met, Reni gave up the keys to the office with little more than a vicious sneer and a warning.

The Frenchman's threats were more than idle talk. A few days later, while Slade was riding south of town, he was ambushed and left to die on the prairie—the victim of a shotgun blast.

But Reni didn't reckon with Jack Slade's vitality. Doctors patched him up and within three weeks he was back looking for the loud-mouthed Frenchman. He was not hard to find—even easier to kill. As a warning that the Pony Express meant business, Jack Slade nailed Reni's ears to the door of his office.

Such were the tone of events and the character of the men who breathed life into the fabulous Pony Express

and faithfully kept it going for a year and a half.

The job was not easy. Expenses were overwhelming. Relay stations had to be built every twenty-five miles along the 2,000 mile route—from St. Joseph, through Julesburg and Ft. Laramie, across the mountains to Salt Lake, and to San Francisco. Even though the company charged five dollars per ounce for mail, the operation never got out of the red. In addition, the backers had started their venture on the shaky assumption that the government would grant them a subsidy. This never materialized. But the back of the Pony Express was broken by a new, faster, cheaper method of communication—the telegraph, which made horses obsolete the month the first message was sent, October, 1861.

During its life, the Pony Express served the West faithfully and well. It became a legend, a matter of intense pride to the thousands who benefited from its service. Even towns and cities not along its direct route depended on it; usually the riders were met by a stage-coach which would pick up mail and newspapers, rushing them back to waiting settlers and miners. In this way, Denver received the news of the election of President Abraham Lincoln.



The Battle of Beecher Island

In 1861, there were two wars going on in the United States. One ended at Appomattox, the other at Beecher Island.

The Western war, which lacked the politeness of formal declaration, had started when the white man first pushed his way into Indian territory. In time, the conflict threatened to close off continental expansion, since no traveler was safe crossing the plains.

Fully aware that the settlers must be protected, Colonel George Forsyth rode out of Fort Hays, Kansas on a hot afternoon in August, 1868, at the head of a party of fifty hand-picked scouts—men who knew the Indian and how to fight him. Their purpose was to rid the country of the menace once and for all.

The party found little of the trouble for which they were looking. August rolled into September and the plains took on the parched look of Autumn. By the 16th, Forsyth's party had reached the Arickaree River, just south of the present town of Wray, Colorado. It was early evening as the men dismounted and turned their horses loose to graze. The campfire that burned through the night failed to give a hint of the tragedy that morning would bring.

As the sun burst over the camp site, the air was suddenly filled with the scream of 500 Cheyennes and Sioux pounding toward the little group in a wide arc. Out in front, high on his horse, was Roman Nose, one of the most

notorious of the warring Indian chiefs.

Time was life. Pulling their horses, the men stumbled through the shallow water to a small sand bar in the middle of the stream. Frantically, they dug in the sand, piling up meager barricades. In a matter of minutes, the Indians were at the banks of the river. Savage war cries were answered with the hot curses of the scouts as they fired, reloaded, and fired again. Their aim took a deadly toll; for a score of Indians were left behind as Roman Nose led his braves in retreat.

Charge after charge was beaten back—but not without casualties. As darkness came, two of the scouts, Stilwell and Trudeau, volunteered to make a run through Indian lines to Fort Wallace and help. Days came and went as the Indians circled the party, dashing in to attack, then retreating. At the beginning of the ninth day, rations were exhausted, five men were dead, eighteen others were wounded and in need of medical aid. The smell of putrefying horse flesh was overpowering.

Then, the Indians vanished as suddenly as they had come. The reason was soon apparent. Stilwell and Trudeau had gotten through and a company of U.S. Cavalry was riding hard toward the nearly exhausted party.

The battle of Beecher Island, named for a fearless lieutenant who lost his life there, was finally over. From that time on, the territorial menace was ended...the era of development was at hand.



Attack on the Smoky Hill Trail

The Yipl Yipl of the wagon drivers grew louder and wilder as a wagon train entered Indian country on the Smoky Hill Trail between Kansas City and Denver City. The thudding hoof beats of the oxen and the clatter of the heavy wagons were the only sounds to break the silence of the endless, dusty trail...except for the dreaded cry from the wagon master, "Turn in!... Indian attack!" Without panic, the drivers lost no time in turning their wagons in a large circle, end-to-end, to form a barricade. The women helped to herd the horses and oxen inside the circle to prevent stampeding, while the men met the screaming attack of the heavily painted Indians in a fight for their lives. The sharp crack of a rifle was answered by a savage yell, the whistle of arrows in the air, and the whine of revolver bullets as the attack began.

In traveling the pioneer trails to the gold regions of Colorado, the early settlers of Denver soon discovered the value of a well-sighted and well-balanced rifle. Meanwhile, the mounds of bleached buffalo bones that dotted the plains...along with the familiar gray line of each

wagon train on the horizon...were a painful reminder to the red proprietor that the West was no longer his. By 1864, the Plains Tribes, angry at the invasion of their hunting grounds, went on the warpath, attacking the wagon trains and the watering stations along the route. By fall, the Indian attacks on the Smoky Hill Trail grew to menacing proportions for all travelers and shippers coming from the Missouri River to Denver City. Travel, which took roughly 12 days by stagecoach and 20 to 30 days by wagon train, was sometimes completely stopped for weeks at a time.

In the latter sixties, the power of the Plains Indians was finally broken. The tribes were compelled to accept the reservation system, and the savage warfare throughout the central west was ended. This also brought to an end the first land title problems that existed between the settlers of Denver City and the Cheyennes and Arapahoes. Following the ceding of all Indian lands to the United States, the government confirmed the property titles in the names of the original pioneer settlers.



Denver's Civil War

When Davis H. Waite, editor of the *Aspen Union Era*, was sworn in as the state's eighth governor in 1893, he could be thankful for his fighting spirit. Among other difficulties, he was to run headon into the silver crisis, the panic of 1893, mine strikes, and, not the least of these, the famous "City Hall War."

The incident had its beginnings when the legislature under John L. Routt, Waite's predecessor, passed a law placing the appointment of the fire and police boards of the city of Denver in the hands of the governor. This was a handsome addition to the chief executive's patronage powers, and Waite determined early to take advantage of the law to clean up the city.

In February of 1894, he suddenly decided that his appointees were not doing their job vigorously enough. And, since he had given them power, he reasoned that he could also take it away. He didn't count on the results that were to follow his letter demanding immediate resignation.

The two men to whom the letter was written replied that their conduct was above reproach. Furthermore, they refused to resign. Waite insisted. Still they refused to leave their jobs. Angrily, Waite said that he would have the men bodily evicted from office.

Between two and three hundred men, including the

sheriff and the police force, responded to this threat by barricading themselves in the City Hall, at Larimer Street and Cherry Creek. They had an armory of rifles, revolvers and ammunition. Asserting their right to be there, they waited for the governor to start the fighting.

Waite could tolerate the situation no longer. On March 15, he sent word to the state militia to prepare for battle. Cannons were wheeled in and trained on City Hall. Waite devised a plan of attack. The battleground was tense and expectant.

Meanwhile, this activity attracted thousands of spectators. Business in Denver was suspended when the announcement was made that Waite had called out the guard. People jammed the streets leading to City Hall waiting for the bloodshed to begin.

They waited in vain.

At the last moment, Governor Waite yielded to the advice of his friends and called in national troops to maintain order. Several hundred regulars from Fort Logan were soon patrolling the streets while the matter of the legality of Waite's action was hustled through the state Supreme Court. The judges decided that the Governor had the right to remove his appointees as he saw fit. But the high court denied his right to use force.



G. Ellis

The great Cherry Creek Flood

The night air was heavy with the moisture from the rains that had fallen south of Denver. It was midnight, May 19, 1864, and nearly everyone was asleep. Here and there the yellow glow of a lantern could be seen flickering in a cabin window as a tired citizen turned in. Everything was quiet in what seemed the passing of another day in the frontier settlements at the junction of Cherry Creek and the Platte River.

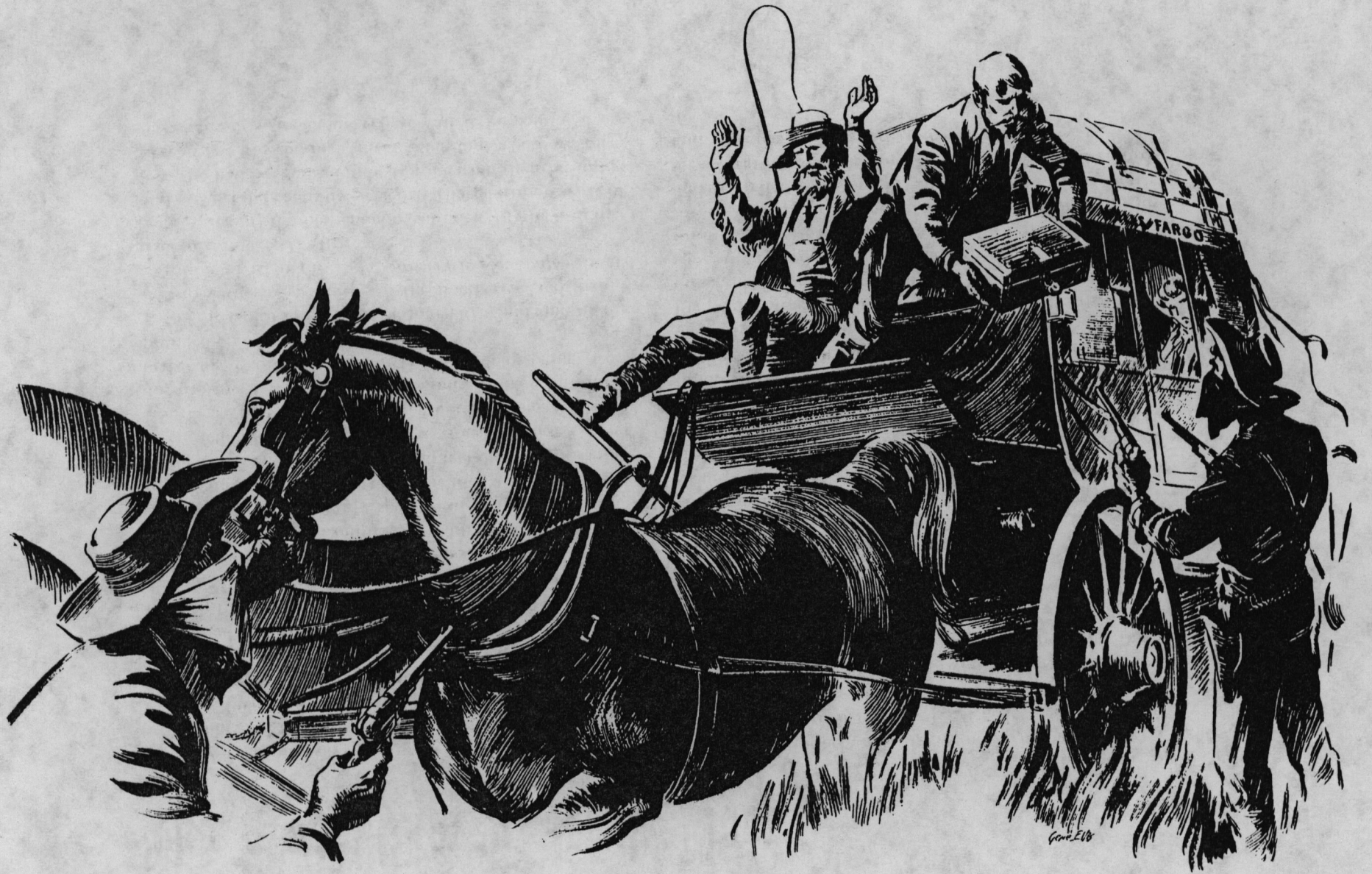
Suddenly, the quiet was broken by a sudden rush of wind, followed by an ominous rumbling from the south-east, and finally a mighty roar, as a great wall of water rolled down Cherry Creek into the settlement. The swollen waters—estimated to be 20 feet deep in the center of the channel—soon engulfed sections of West Denver (Auraria) and the Platte River bottom lands of lower downtown Denver...as swirling tables, broken buildings, bedsteads, giant trees, livestock, and human beings were plunged through Denver streets.

O. J. Goldrick, a pioneer journalist and one of the first to witness the coming of the flood, reported his description of it in the *Commonwealth Newspaper* in its issue of May 25, 1864:

"A frightful phenomenon sounded in the distance and a shocking calamity presently charged upon us. The few who had not retired to bed broke from their buildings to see what was coming. Hark! What and where was this? A torrent or a tornado? Where can it be coming from

and whither going?...Oh, it was indescribably and inconceivably awful to behold that spectacle of terrible grandeur, as the moon would occasionally shed her rays in the surges of muddy waves whose angry thundering drowned all noise...now the torrent swelled and thickened, sweeping tremendous trees and dwelling houses before it—a mighty rush of impetuous water, wall-like in its advancing front as it rolled with maddened momentum toward the Larimer Street bridge..."

By early dawn, the waters that had swiftly spread into the settlements began to recede...leaving in their wake scenes of pitiful desolation. It was a weird night and a tragic morning filled with violence and confusion over which could be heard the plaintive cries of little children for their parents and wives for their husbands. Wreckage, mud, and debris was deposited throughout the lower sections of Denver City. The small frame building used as a city hall, which was located in the Creek bed near the Blake Street crossing, had disappeared. With it, had gone the large iron safe in which were kept the town company records, municipal documents, and papers pertaining to the first real estate titles to Denver land. The loss of these records brought on new land title problems and started the famous "Denver Lot Question" controversy—traces of which can still be found in land records and abstracts at The Title Guaranty Company.



Travel by stagecoach

Few trips to Denver by stagecoach passed without incident. Highwaymen were a constant threat since most of the coaches carried mail, gold, and silver. Prior to 1869, Indians found the stagecoach easy prey, and running battles were not uncommon. The peril to life was often matched by mechanical failure when, for example, an axle would break, or the coach would bog down in knee-deep mud. At these times, everyone, even the women, would get out and lend a hand toward getting the trip underway again.

Before the coming of the railroad, the traveler had a choice among three ways of getting from Leavenworth, Kansas, to Denver. He could go it alone—generally ill-advised—he could join a wagon train—a five or six week trip—or he could buy a ticket and climb aboard the daily stagecoach.

Most of the stage lines which came West in the 1860's used the famous Concord Coaches. They were solid, well-built, and could withstand the abuse of hard travel. New, they cost about \$1,000 and carried nine passengers inside. There was additional space on the upper deck outside at the rear for hardier souls who were impervious to the weather. Four or six horses provided the locomotion.

By modern day standards, comfort came hard. As one early day visitor to Colorado recalled, "a ticket with fifteen

inches of seat, with a fat man on one side, a poor widow on the other, a baby on your lap, a bandbox over your head, and three or four persons immediately in front makes the picture as well as your sleeping place for the trip." If the uninitiated started the trip in fancy clothes, they were quickly persuaded to discard them in favor of something more substantial which could stand the weather...heat, rain, snow, and dust. The only stops along the route were made for meals and a change of horses; for the twelve day trip meant constant traveling, day and night.

Despite its inconvenience, the era of the long distance stagecoach was a proud one for the West. Few means of transportation are so wrapped up with stories of excitement and devotion, and it was not until the first train puffed into Denver that a faster link between the East and the booming Rocky Mountain region was established.

Between the time that the first stage came to Denver and the early 1870's, stagecoach companies saw a great change in the city. Log cabins had been replaced by brick buildings, streets were being improved, hotels and other public buildings were going up. And although many Denver visitors only stopped long enough to prepare for the trip to the mining camps in the mountains, the city was rapidly becoming a center of finance and supply.



Cattleman's justice

The three cowboys galloped over the small rise and down the other side toward a narrow creek, shooting wildly at the ground in front of them. The man at the water's edge leaped up and ran frantically toward his pony. Suddenly he was surrounded with hard-breathing horses...three revolvers were aimed at his chest. In an instant another rider raced over the hill and jerked his horse to a stop by the wide-eyed, frightened man.

"What's all the shooting about?" The owner of the Bar C looked at one of his hired hands.

"Looks like we caught this galoot gettin' ready to make off with some cattle. See, he's already changed the brands on those two." The cowboy nodded toward two rangy calves tied to a tree.

The rancher's eyes narrowed. He got off his horse, walked over to the steers and examined them closely. On the left hip of each were unmistakably fresh burns. The Bar and the C had been poorly disguised as a 4 and 0. The iron had been too hot, though, and the flesh was seared. He walked back to the smoldering fire near the creek and picked up the stranger's improvised branding iron, a green tree limb which had been forced through the cinch ring of his saddle. The metal was still too hot to touch.

The rancher turned to the stranger. "You guilty?" he

asked. The man looked steadily at the ground. He gave no answer.

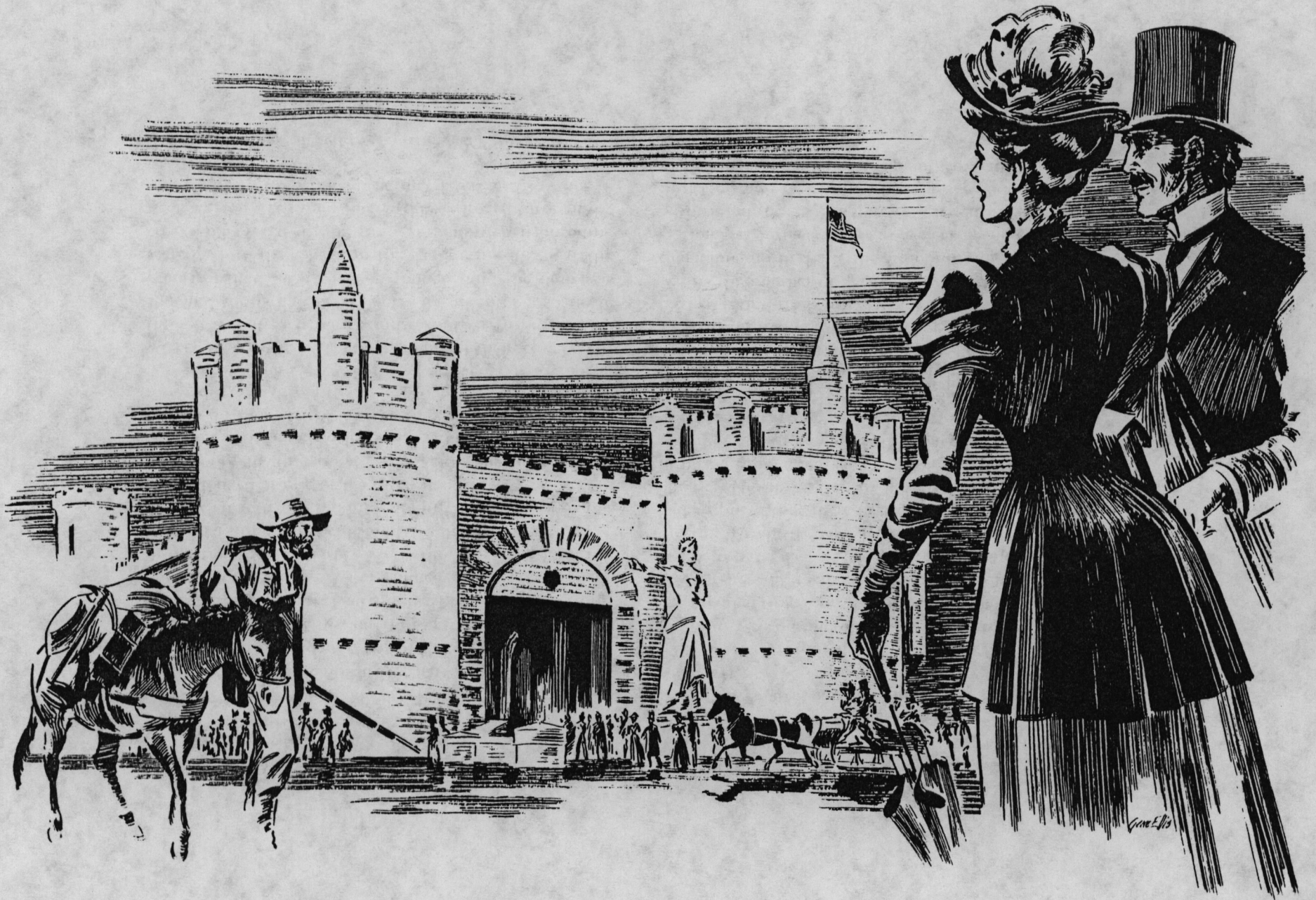
"If catchin' him in the act makes him guilty, he's sure guilty," said one of the hired hands.

A coiled rope hung around the rancher's saddle horn. "Here," he said, tossing it to one of his men, "use this."

Before the days of effective courts in the West—when the cattle industry was getting started—cattlemen often had to prove that their best defense was an unrelenting offense. The protection of brands was necessary to stay in business, for the owner's brand was the only practical means of identifying his cattle from among the thousands of others that roamed at will across the open range.

The practice of branding livestock came from Mexico to Texas, then to Colorado, and at first the mark covered an animal's entire side. Later, the letters and symbols were made about four inches high and were generally burned into the left hip.

As the number of herds grew, brand duplication was inevitable. So in 1867, the Colorado Stockgrowers Association was formed to act as a clearing house for brand registration. By 1899 a statewide system involving brand inspectors and registration fees had been developed. The cattle business had become one of Colorado's biggest and most profitable industries.



Leadville's fabulous Ice Palace

With a gigantic celebration on January 1, 1896, the people of Leadville marked the opening of one of the world's wonders, the Crystal Castle. Visitors from every corner of the nation came to see it; its construction called for hundreds of workmen and thousands of hours of planning; it was the largest of its kind in the world when finished. Probably most startling of all is the fact that the Crystal Castle was built entirely of ice.

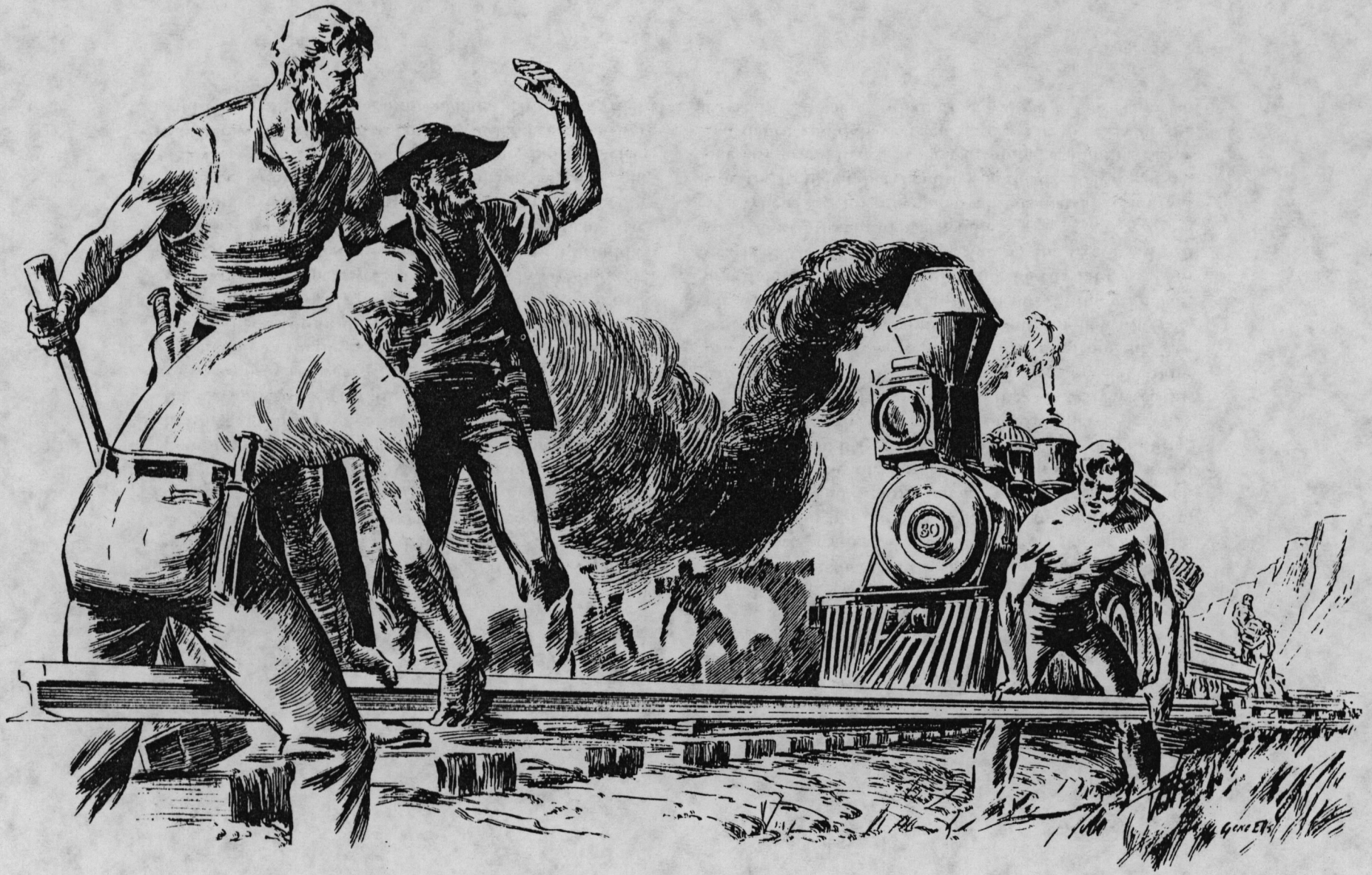
The project began with the suggestion in a Denver paper that Leadville build an ice palace similar to those that had gone up in the northern United States and Moscow. The idea quickly took fire. Soon a committee of backers had collected nearly \$20,000.00. Hopes were high for a good profit since the building and its concessions could be operated for nearly six months and would "bring back \$5.00 for every \$1.00 invested."

The Crystal Castle was an icy giant, 325 feet long, 435 feet wide. Around a wooden frame, blocks of ice—5,000 tons of them from as far away as Palmer Lake—were laid course upon course and cemented with water. Eight

towers, two of them 90 feet high, preserved the Norman style of architecture. Inside there were a dance hall, featuring the cowboy band of Jack St. Clair, a dining room, skating rink, and dressing rooms. A tall statue of a woman—complimenting the fair ladies of Leadville and carved from ice—stood before the main entrance to the building. She symbolized the mining spirit of Leadville.

Thousands of people jammed the cloud city to see this frozen monument to man's ingenuity. Special trains brought crowds from Denver. Journalists from the East sent back glowing accounts of the building and the people who created it. Yet, despite the work, the grandeur, and the publicity, the men behind the Crystal Castle lost nearly \$60,000.00. And all because of the weather which was two months ahead of schedule.

When the townspeople realized that the sun was working its inevitable chemistry on the ice, they organized one last, grand dance in their dripping, crumbling castle. No dance could have been gayer. The backers of the Crystal Castle agreed that a loss was never more enjoyed.



The iron horse comes to Denver City

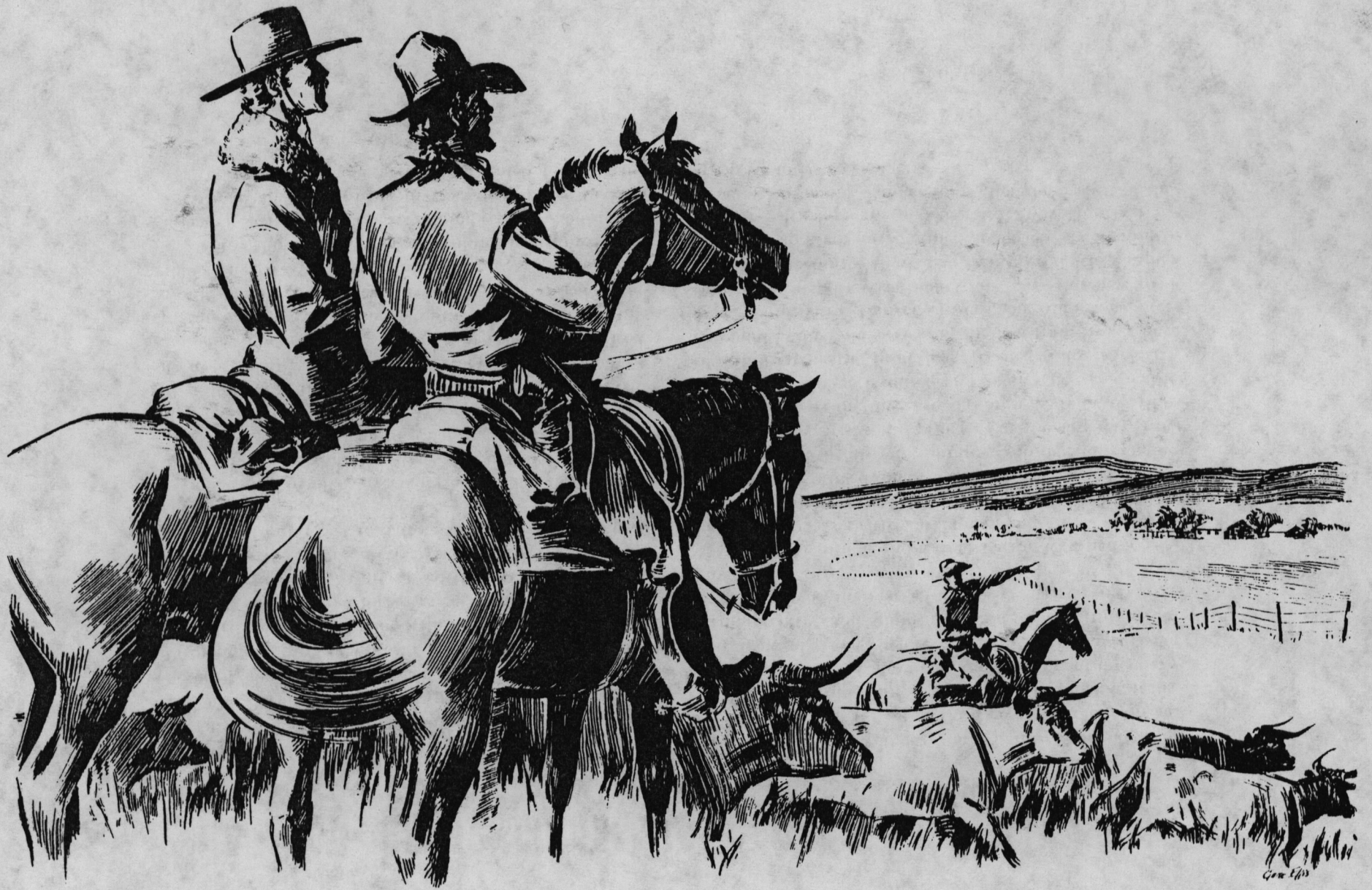
When final plans were crystallized for the building of a transcontinental railroad linking the Eastern States with the Pacific Coast, the town settlers of Denver City naturally hoped and expected that it would be built through their great new mining country. In 1862, Congress provided the Union Pacific with land grants and money for the construction which was to begin at Omaha and travel west to the vicinity of Salt Lake City, Utah. The Central Pacific Railroad was to start at Sacramento, California and build east to Salt Lake City where it was to meet the Union Pacific.

The citizens of Denver City believed that Berthoud Pass could be used as a satisfactory gateway through the Rockies. It shocked them to learn that the Union Pacific had chosen Bridger Pass in Wyoming as its route, and that the great transcontinental railroad would by-pass Denver 100 miles to the north at Cheyenne. This decision influenced many businessmen to close their shops in Denver and move to Cheyenne, with the belief that Cheyenne would become the center of commerce in the region and that Denver City was doomed.

Many, however, stayed on...more determined than ever that Denver City and its mining regions should have a railroad and recognizing that a railroad line to Denver represented the one great force which would bring

rapid development to the region. Almost at once, a group of Denver citizens organized the Denver Pacific Railroad Company to build a line from Denver to join the transcontinental line at Cheyenne. Construction got underway and it wasn't long before the last spike was driven. Triumphant and amid the wild demonstrations of Denver citizens, the first "Iron Horse" arrived in Denver on June 24, 1870.

In the meantime, the Kansas Pacific Railroad, recognizing Denver as a rich market area and a new source of revenue, built westward from Kansas City toward Denver. Construction proved difficult because of repeated Indian attacks; nevertheless, the puffing construction engine nosed its way across the prairie. On the last day, construction crews on the east and west ends of the line raced to outdo each other and made the remarkable record of laying 10¼ miles of track in ten hours. Nearly two months after the arrival of the first train from Cheyenne, enthusiastic Denver citizens, on August 15, welcomed the first Kansas Pacific train over this new road from the Missouri Valley. The Denver and Rio Grande...a railroad that was destined to be closely identified with the development of Colorado...was launched by General William J. Palmer soon after the arrival of the first train to Denver.



The end of the open range

The year 1876 stands out in Colorado's history. On the one hand, statehood was achieved. On the other, the lush mountain meadows and vast, unbroken eastern plains gave rise to a spectacular era. It was richly colorful... powerful cattle kings, gigantic herds of Longhorns and Herefords, sunburned cowboys. It was short-lived... five years saw its development, growth, and the beginning of its decline. Its characteristics were so unique that men everywhere still associate it only with the American West. It was the era of the open range cattle industry.

In the beginning, cattle were driven in by the tens of thousands, many over the Dawson Trail, along the Arkansas River, and the Goodnight Trail from New Mexico. These cattle trails were vague routes defined mostly by a good watering spot or a convenient river crossing, and they ended at rail shipping points like Lamar and Kit Carson. Of course, once the industry was firmly established, the state was divided into round-up districts, and other cities, principally Denver, assumed an important role in transporting beef to Eastern markets.

It was only natural that an industry of such proportion would produce some remarkable captains. Probably the foremost of these was John W. Hiff. Starting with a

small herd and a contract to supply beef to Union Pacific construction gangs, Hiff began to accumulate land. Parcel by parcel, he bought property fronting on the South Platte River. These purchases gave him practical control of additional thousands of acres behind the river, for the open range was useless unless the cattle could get to water. When Hiff died in 1888, his empire, both owned and controlled, extended from Greeley to Julesburg and northward into Wyoming.

Still another spectacular outgrowth of the open range was the Prairie Cattle Company. Organized by Scotch capitalists, the company had three divisions—the southern in Texas, the central in New Mexico and Oklahoma, and the northern in Colorado. The Colorado holdings alone totaled more than 2,000,000 acres. Significantly perhaps, the year the company was organized, 1881, marked the beginning of the end of the open range.

Many factors contributed to its decline. Homesteaders demanded property rights and erected fences to protect their hard-won land. Irrigation ditches broke up the open range, too. In the last analysis, the open range was forced to give way to progress.

Gallery from "Harper's Weekly" Magazine (1880s)

The following picture pages are from the "Harper's Weekly" Magazine published in New York City during the 1880s. Fine steel engravings were made from artist's renderings of photographs and from sketchings made on location. Students can use these drawings to write stories, do research, or even create a scrapbook of these and other illustrations from Colorado history. No captions are provided to allow for maximum creativity.

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