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The History of a Ghost Town, Caribou[1]

JOHN W. BUCHANAN*

Eighty-three years ago Sam Conger sat down on a rock and rested. It was hard work, trailing an elk far back toward the range. Sam noticed that any exertion brought heavy breathing. He was 9,800 feet above sea level and as he looked to his left, toward the west, he saw Caribou hill—to the right, Idaho mountain. Ahead of him was Old Baldy, which never shed all of its snow, even in the summertime.

Sam was about eight miles west of Nederland. He was sitting down right where the town of Caribou was going to be. But Caribou hill, ahead of him, exposing an abundant flow of lode blossom rock on its northern slope, made only a small impression on him. He was after that elk. It was wild, desolate country—just the kind of country Conger, who was a notable prospector and hunter, liked.

It wasn't until eight years later (1868) that he remembered Caribou hill.

Sam was in Cheyenne that fall, walking down by the freight depot. His eyes saw a broken box of Comstock silver ore from Nevada in transit over the Union Pacific railroad.

"If that's silver ore," Sam thought, "I know where there is plenty of it," remembering the blossom he had seen on the elk hunt in Colorado in 1860. It was fall and howling blizzards soon would turn the high country into blinding white deserts of snow and cold. Sam knew it would test the mettle of any man to face a timberline winter alone—but he had the prospector's fever to keep him warm. He headed for Caribou country.

When Sam walked between Caribou hill and Idaho mountain that fall he tramped over snow. The entire north slope of the hill was covered with large drifts. Sam was persistent. When he

1. Much of the material for this story was gathered from the few remaining survivors of Caribou days, three of whom have passed away since my interviews with them. Data were also obtained from the following: *Boulder County Mining* (published by Boulder County Metal Mining Association, 1910 and 1919); *History of Clear Creek and Boulder Valleys, Colorado* (O. L. Baskin and Co., Chicago, 1880); Frank Fossett's *Colorado* (1876); C. W. Henderson, *Mining in Colorado* (Department of Interior, Professional Paper No. 138, 1926); and early issues of the *Boulder Daily Camera*.

*Mr. Buchanan, who has done considerable writing for magazines and newspapers, lives in Boulder.—Ed.

wasn't hunting or carrying wood to his canvas tent-home he was rooting around on Caribou hill.

It was that way all through the hard winter. Sometimes it was more a battle for life than a battle for silver ore.

But one day in the spring his heart skipped a beat. He discovered an ore vein higher up on the hill than where he had seen the outcropping that summer day eight years before. He dug a little hole with his pick and shovel.

That little hole grew in depth during the years. Conger didn't know then, when he scratched the surface, that he was opening up the Caribou mine, that was going to produce $8,000,000 in silver ore—the greatest silver mine in Colorado.

Sam Conger worked on his rich find through the summer of 1869. He would have liked to have kept his find a secret—but he soon saw that there was silver enough for all, and he had to have help to get it out. Quantity of good ore was not the problem—it was the mining and transporting of it. Ore is valueless until it gets to a mill.

So, in August of '69, Conger took five partners with him to the rich find—William Martin, George Lytle, Hugh McCammon, John H. Pickel and Samuel Mishler.

Lytle suggested that they call the lode the Caribou—Canadian name for a kind of small reindeer. Lytle had been in the Caribou gold diggings of British America.

Specimens of the ore taken to Central City and assayed proved surprisingly rich and the owners were assured of a fortune.

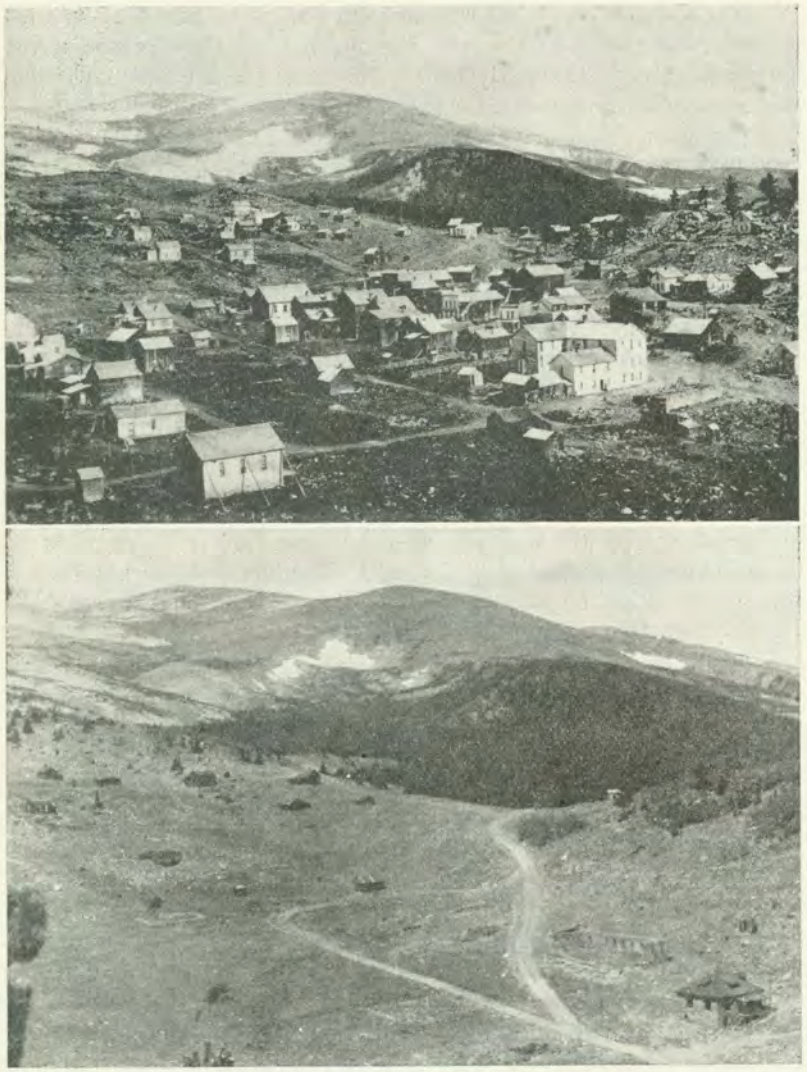
They were a joyous six men who packed supplies up to Caribou for the winter of 1869-70. They built a winter cabin and packed in supplies on their backs. All winter they worked, in the midst of howling blizzards, and piled up ore around the prospect hole.

There was no road within four miles of the mine; but before winter had set in the men had cut a way through the forest so that one load of Caribou ore was carried to Professor Hill's smelting works at Black Hawk. The men stuffed their pockets with hundreds of dollars.

They made a deal—Conger traded his one-sixth interest in the Caribou lode for the entire right of his partners in the Poorman—another outcropping.

The development of the mines was remarkable and the huge stock piles of ore that the men had built up during the winter could not be kept a secret.

A great rush of prospectors, adventurers and speculators was made to the spot, beginning in June, 1870, which is the springtime in that altitude.



UPPER: CARIBOU IN 1897
LOWER: CARIBOU IN 1944

That was the beginning of the boom town, Caribou.

During the exciting summer of 1870 many rich finds were made at Caribou. Among them was the Idaho, from which the finders realized over $6,000 in one month's sinking of the first 20 feet. Others were the Trojan, Boulder County, Sovereign People, Spencer, No-Name and the Seven-Thirty.

The heaviest capitalist who came in was A. D. Breed, from Cincinnati, who paid $50,000 cash for one half of the Caribou mine. This was on September 21, 1870. The mine yielded about $70,000 that season, so the purchase was well worth while.

Other rich mines subsequently discovered were the Anchor, Belcher, Comstock, Crown Point, Centennial, Dutch Park, Eagle Bird, Tehel, Eureka, Fred Albrect, Grand View, Grant County, Idaho, Isabella, Mignon, Monitor, Montecarlo, Mount Vernon, Native Silver, Ontario, Potosi, Perigo, Rose of Killarny, Sherman, Shoshone, Silver Point, Single Jack, Spencer, Saint Louis, Sweet Home and Up-to-Date.

In July and August of 1870 several hundred men had gathered in the valley just east of Caribou hill. Many camped under trees, in brush houses and in tents until log cabins and frame buildings, stores and hotels had been erected.

The town was laid out in 1870 and building progressed as rapidly in the fall of that year as was possible with the supply of lumber at hand. By the next spring—the spring of 1871—there were about 60 good, substantial buildings in Caribou and the population was about 400. It wasn't long before business houses crowded Idaho Street for a distance of 1,200 feet.

The town's first newspaper, *The Caribou Post*, with Collier and Hall of Central City as its proprietors, was established in the spring of 1871 and was published until August of the following year. A. Bixby, then a resident of Caribou, was the writer for this paper.

With an influx of miners, Caribou's fabulous silver production got into full swing. In January of 1871, the Caribou shaft was 200 feet deep and in 1872 and 1873 the mine yielded beautifully.

In 1872 the silver wealth of the Caribou mine was made especially notable by a walk of silver bricks, the product of the mine, extending from the carriage in the street to the doorway of the Teller House, at Central City, laid for President Grant to walk in on at the time of his visit to that city.

In 1872 Mr. Breed built a reduction mill on Middle Boulder, four miles from Caribou. The following year he sold the Caribou property to "Gentlemen of the Hague, Holland," for $3,000,000. One half was paid for in stock and the remainder in cash. Breed received $1,000,000 and the original Caribou owners about $165,000 each. The remainder went to other shareholders—Cutter, Anker, Shaffenburg, and others.

The Nederland Mining Company, as the new association was called, with Van Diest, Anker and Prince as agents, did not prosper. After bad management, selfish purposes and legal complications had had their run, the sheriff passed the property over to the Hon.

Jerome B. Chaffee on September 15, 1876. Chaffee bid in the mine and mill for $70,100. For several years he maintained a payroll of $12,000 to $15,000 a month.

In 1874 the mine produced 1,800 tons of ore, valued at $130,000; in 1875, $204,703 worth, and in 1876 only about $25,000 worth.

The mine's average yield in 1875 was only $69.49 a ton—which was far from high grade and not equal to some mines in the district—but the Caribou produced quantity—$204,703 worth in that year, or more than all other Boulder County silver veins combined.

In 1910 the Caribou region was credited with output of $20,000,000 worth of metal, mostly silver, and of this about half came from the Caribou mine.

The No-Name, Spencer and other adjoining claims were finally consolidated with the Caribou in one strong stock company, of which Eben Smith, a resident of Boulder, was the successful manager.

The Caribou mine was one of seven in Colorado that produced over $200,000 in 1875. During most of the time between 1870 and 1910 from eight to 15 tons of ore was mined daily.

The Caribou wasn't the only producer. There were a number of other very rich diggings, although the Caribou produced about half of the silver at the fabulous camp high in the Rockies. The Poorman mine was one of the best. In 1874 and 1875 it produced 152 tons of ore, for which $21,504 was paid at Black Hawk, Golden and Nederland. In 1876 the yield dropped markedly, however. The Poorman vein was only one to two feet wide, but the ore was rich.

Some of the richest ore found at Caribou came from the Sherman mine. There the vein was only six to 12 inches wide. In 1876, 300 tons of ore of the average value of $270 were sold to Boston and Colorado smelting works.

The Caribou camp sent such a magnificent display of ores to the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876 that the attention of the world was focused on the "silver capital" and there was a great influx of people and capital.

In 1873 a large chloridizing and amalgamating mill was built at Nederland, from which silver bricks poured into the United States mint at Denver. Rumbling ore wagons, with their loads of silver treasure, stirred the dust of the "Coon Trail" road between Caribou and Cardinal, and then on to Nederland, Boulder, Central City, Black Hawk, Golden and Denver.

Caribou's population rose to between 2,000 and 3,000 people. In 1880 it had about 1,000. The town was served by daily mail

from Boulder and tri-weekly from Central City. W. L. Smith's stages ran between Caribou, Central City and Boulder.

The Denver, Boulder and Western railroad touched Cardinal, only two miles from Caribou.

It was said that "Caribou taxes built the Boulder County courthouse."

Talk to the people who used to live in Caribou—the real old-timers are few—and they will tell you about the thriving business district, the happy parties and celebrations, the good drinking water, the long, hard winters, the awe-inspiring view of the Rockies and the plains, all at one sweep of the eyes. They'll tell you of the first snows that sifted across Old Baldy—there was snow about nine months of the year.

They don't exaggerate when they talk of the business district. Potosi Street was lined on both sides with business houses. The Sherman House, Caribou's main hotel, was the gathering place of the community. The Sherman House was a huge three-story building at the east edge of the business district.

During some of the worst winters there was a snowbank level with the upstairs windows, through which guests entered and departed. Uncle Billy Donald was proprietor of the Sherman House for many years. People will tell you that was a place to get a meal.

Caribou had four streets running east and west. The one to the north was Main Street, the next Potosi, the third Jones and the fourth Quigley. One north-south street was Sherman, which ran immediately east of the Sherman House, and the other, at the west end of the business district, was Brewery Street, which ran south to the old stone mill.

It was a rugged life the miners, businessmen and their families lived at Caribou. At best it was a life for only the stout-hearted. It took a strong people to build the town up twice from smoldering ruins of two fires that virtually destroyed the silver camp. The first big fire was in 1879. Everything on Caribou hill, including a few dwelling houses and cabins beside the mine buildings and valuable machinery, burned. Long rows of wood corded for winter use was a total loss. There was nothing left below the Sherman House —to the east. Forty houses and cabins burned along with everything in them. Another fire in the winter of 1905-6 again practically wiped out the town. But always the residents, with a courage bred of frontier living, rebuilt.

High on a saddle to the north of Caribou, where one can look to the setting sun of the west across a sweeping valley that is the lap of Old Baldy mountain, and high where the wind never ceases to blow and where the snow piles high in the wintertime, Caribou

buried its dead. The cemetery is a beauty spot in summertime, a playground for snowstorms in the winter—a lot like Caribou itself.

Stories of two epidemics of scarlet fever and diphtheria are written in the stone and wooden grave markers. Of the fourteen markers still readable, seven of the deaths were in 1879.

Men, women and children died at Caribou. And strangely enough the cemetery—a symbol of death in the thriving days of Caribou—is about all that is left as a symbol of the living now. Headstones endure where frame houses tumble in the path of capricious winds.

Caribou, like the reindeer it was named after, pawed its food—silver—from beneath the frozen snow. The lifeblood of its silver veins pinched out, and the town stumbled to a stop, and died.

Ever-blowing gales, furious rainstorms have polished white the bones of its carcass. The town "where winds were born," as the miners used to call it, has succumbed to them.

Heavy wooden doors on the few cabins remaining swung on rusty hinges for a while and then blew down. Shingles rattle on roofs and the winds howl through the broken windows of tottering frame houses.

No one lives there now.

In wintertime cabins are filled to their roof-tops—inside and outside—with snowdrifts. The timberline weather takes its toll every year in another cabin or two crushed down.

The wind has drowned out the sound of laughter drifting from the windows of the Shoo-Fly dance hall, has torn down the shacks of painted ladies on lower Idaho Street, and has blown out the kerosene lights that, of a night, cast yellow patches on Potosi Street.

Mine buildings that remain creak from age, and not from the weight of fabulously rich silver ore hoisted in buckets from the cavernous shafts on Caribou hill.

Only the spring, oozing ice-cold water, that was there before Caribou was, now remains in the heart of what was the business district.

Timberline, the land of nothingness, remains. In the fringe of life below, twisted, gnarled trees fight for life. Their branches are twisted to the east and their surfaces exposed to the west have become red, toughened bark. Eventually, like the town of Caribou, they will tumble down.

Caribou was born in a wild country. It was a strong child. It led a tempestuous life, worked hard for its living, and sat around in the twilight of its existence to tell a gripping story of mining in the West.

And then it died on the fringes of timberline, losing a fight with the winds of time.

Harry L. Baldwin

MRS. L. W. GRACE*

Harry Lewis Baldwin, first child of Henry Lyman and Anna Cosley Baldwin, was born July 12, 1860, in a two-story log house on the old Santa Fe Trail, between the towns of Lawrence and Topeka, Kansas. His parents were a link in the mysterious "Underground Railway" which aided the escape of runaway slaves. For several years after the Civil War they rendered assistance to Negroes in becoming self-sustaining.

In the year 1860 occurred a great drouth. Those who could not leave the state or get assistance from eastern relatives came close to starvation. The Kansas River went dry and fish were scooped up in baskets and salted down for winter use. The potatoes were so small that it took dozens of them to fill a quart cup.

When Harry was three years old, Mrs. Baldwin pointed out to him a small cloud of smoke directly east, and said: "The rebels are in Lawrence and are burning all the buildings and killing the people." That was his earliest remembrance. An uncle was killed in that raid.

In 1869, his mother developed asthma from exposure, and this led to removal of the family to Denver four years later. On the day they left, the Old Settlers and Horticultural Society held their annual meeting, and about 100 friends were present to bid them goodbye. Union Pacific car 2555 was loaded with two horses, cows, dogs, a crate of chickens and a few turkeys, as well as the spring wagon, household furniture and organ.

They arrived in Denver on August 21st. The first impression, as recorded in a letter to those at home, was of "a very nice town, trees along all the streets and a stream of water on each side thereof." There were a few stores on Lawrence Street, but Larimer was the principal one, with stores for about three blocks, from 14th to 17th, and a few on Blake. The northeast end of town was at 20th Street, and West Denver ended at 5th. The east edge of town hardly reached to Broadway, with only about six houses on Capitol Hill. From anywhere in town the mountains could be seen in one unobstructed view from Pikes Peak to north of Longs Peak.

School started shortly after their arrival, and Harry entered the ninth grade with about a dozen others. Four years later, 1877, the first high school class graduated with seven members, his class coming next year with five, 1879 had about thirteen, and 1880 about twenty. This, in a city of some 8,000 population, shows fairly well

*Mrs. Grace is a daughter of Mr. Baldwin and lives in Denver. She has compiled this biographical sketch from her father's autobiography (ms.).—Ed.

the very small number of people who received even a high school education in those days. His class was the first to really have the entire course, and he was the only boy among four girls. Members of his class (1878) were Mattie Arnold, Jessie Williams, Ada Lockwood and Adella Condit (who for many years was a teacher in Denver schools). None of this class became famous, but from the previous class Irving Hale became a General of the Army in the Philippines; Robert Steele, Chief Justice of the State of Colorado. In the class of 1880 were Ammons, Governor of Colorado, John Hipp, candidate for Vice President of the United States on the Prohibition ticket; and Edwin Herr, president of a railroad and later of the Westinghouse Electric Company.

MR. AND MRS. HARRY L. BALDWIN

Shortly after New Years, 1878, the *Denver Tribune* had a long article on the eclipse, due July 29, 1878. When F. C. Penrose, F.R.A.A., came all the way from England to observe the eclipse, bringing with him a three-inch telescope, and applied to Professor Gove, the Superintendent of Denver Schools, to recommend an assistant, Harry Baldwin was chosen. The station near Inspiration Point, north Denver, was about the best place that could have been selected, as it gave an entirely unobstructed view of the entire mountain range for about one hundred and fifty miles, all of which was covered by the line of totality, and which lasted for about three and one-half minutes.

Quoting from Mr. Baldwin's autobiography: "All I had to do was a little physical work, note the exact time of the four contacts, record same, and every ten seconds give the total elapsed time while Mr. Penrose sketched the indescribably beautiful corona. Every notable phase of the eclipse was observed; when the chickens in the nearby yards began to get uneasy and finally started on a run for their roosts; when the totality shadow began at the extreme visible mountains to the northward and then began to rush towards us at the rate of nearly a mile per second, blotting out every trace of landscape, which seemed to unaccountably disappear right before our eyes; then the flashing out for a few seconds only of "Bailey's Beads," followed by the glorious corona which lasted three and one-half minutes; Baileys' Beads again and a very large solar prominence, while all the time the mountains to the south were fading into absolute nothingness, until all were gone. Mountains to the northward followed as suddenly and spectacularly as the previous destruction had taken place, and in less than two minutes the entire range had again become visible, just as if unrolled after it had been rolled up. Nothing more impressive could be imagined, and no finer setting probably anywhere in the world for the staging of so grand a spectacle. Just at the close of totality, I called Penrose's attention to the peculiar shadow bands slowly passing over the ground. These seem not to have been noticed before, or recorded anywhere, although they were very distinct, peculiar and readily noticeable. I saw them again at the 1900 eclipse and they are noted now at every succeeding eclipse."

In 1873, the U. S. Signal Service, now the Weather Bureau, had established an observation station at the summit of Pikes Peak and had built a supply trail to the top, nine miles long. The family decided to take this trip to the summit. The two horses were ridden by Mother and sister Katie, father and son walking. It was an excellent trail, scenery fine. At about twelve thousand feet elevation, one of the many drifting clouds enveloped them, and for a few minutes it snowed like a severe midwinter storm. They pressed on to the summit, where they spent all night.

When Denver University was organized, Harry Baldwin was the first to enroll, being the only one in the college course, all others being preparatory, and even down to first graders. Dr. Moore, later one of the nine bishops of the Methodist Church, had a three-year contract to conduct and make out of it what he could, he paying all expenses. The faculty consisted of five men and two women, and as the University was the pet dream of Ex-Governor Evans and John Iliff, an early Colorado cattle king, they probably

contributed very heavily to help out. Denver University will always be a splendid monument to those early pioneers.

Electric light was not yet in commercial use, except that the previous year, 1879, a two-light arc lamp had been shown in Denver from the Midland Hotel and had one thousand candle power. It was on its way to Leadville for use in the mines. To advertise the University and himself, Professor Short borrowed from the Brush Electric Light Company of Cleveland a two-lamp dynamo, from Edison a dozen of his first lights, and the third phonograph ever made. Professor Short gave three lectures on telephone and electric light in the Methodist Church. Several telephones were arranged in a sort of "sunburst" from two chandeliers, and the church choir sang to another transmitter at the Midland Hotel, half a mile away. It was quite a thrill to hear the choir singing very faintly. Before and after the lecture, the two arc lights were arranged with one in front of the church over the door, and the other on the church roof in the focal point of a locomotive headlight borrowed from the Union Pacific Railroad. This was fixed so it would move on a pivot, and John Hipp and Harry Baldwin thus operated the first searchlight ever shown in Denver. At the back end of the church was a small steam engine to operate the small dynamo to furnish the electricity. This could be switched to the light bulb inside the church. The two arc lights were placed inside the church and a city photographer took what Professor Short said was the first photograph to be taken by electric light. When printed, it could easily be believed to be the first one. Contrasts of light and shade were immense and hideous. It was good advertising, but rotten photography.

On hearing that an examination for Princeton was to be held, Harry took the examination and passed it. On leaving for Princeton in 1881, a big railroad war was on and fares changed from day to day. Fare from Denver to Kansas City cost $19.00, with a rebate at Kansas City of $18.50.

Mr. Baldwin graduated from Princeton on June 21, 1884, with the degree of Civil Engineer. Three days later he took an examination under Civil Service for Assistant Topographer in the United States Geological Survey. He passed very high, and was offered appointment at Fort Wingate, New Mexico. The Geological Survey was only five years old, and appointments had been made to sons or friends of Congressmen's sons. There simply had to be some trained brains in the survey to do the work. Major Powell, after five years, had gotten the survey to going fairly well, and decided the best way to get the brains was through Civil Service examination. Civil Service itself was then only a few years

old. Of thirty-five persons examined at the same time in Washington, only seven passed, and all got appointments.

Mr. Baldwin worked for the U. S. Geological Survey from 1884 until 1908, doing field work in Arizona, Utah and New Mexico, his home office being Washington, D. C., for half of the year. It was during this time, 1888, that he became a charter member of the National Geographic Society. He also helped charter the Washington Society of Engineers and belonged to the Princeton Engineering Association. He was author of "Manual of Topographical Surveying" and the topographical portion of the General Land Office's "Manual of Surveying Instructions." From 1906 to 1918 he was with the U. S. General Land Office; 1919, U. S. Reclamation Service; 1919-1924, Geologist for the Ryan Petroleum Corporation; 1925, Geologist, Quimby Oil Company.

In 1895 he met and married Elizabeth Jane Watson, and from this union had four sons and two daughters: Elizabeth Stribling, Fort Worth, Texas; Harry Lewis, Jr., Geologist, Phillips Petroleum Company, Bartlesville, Oklahoma; James Watson, corporation lawyer, Empire Companies, Bartlesville, Oklahoma; Mrs. L. W. Grace, Denver, Colorado; John Milford, Chief Technician, KDYL, Salt Lake City, Utah; Dr. George Curriden, Assistant Professor of Physics, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

On June 8, 1943, at the home of his eldest daughter, he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage and passed away one week later without regaining consciousness.

Pioneer Days in Crestone and Creede

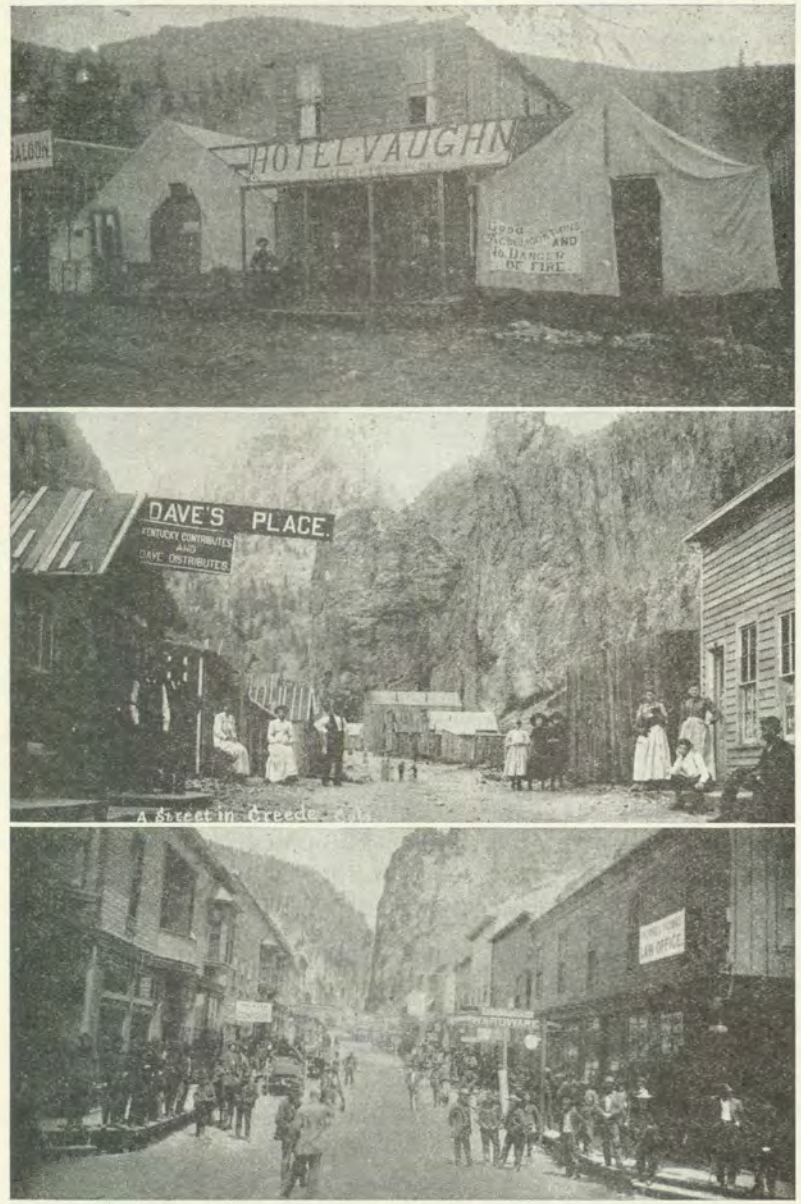
MRS. A. H. MAJOR*

A. H. Major, a young man of thirty, entirely new to the West, came out from Detroit, Michigan, to join his friend and "buddy," Everett L. Pingree, at Rosita, Colorado, in 1880. The two had planned to go into business together if a desirable location could be found.

While at Rosita they formed the acquaintance of some men who urged them to accompany them on a trip to inspect some mining property on the western slope of the Sangre de Cristo Range.

They outfitted for the trip with a team and wagon for the supplies, riding horses for the men, and with a famous character of the West, Moccasin Bill, for guide.

*Mrs. Major still lives in Creede, Colorado.



VIEWS OF CREEDE, 1892 AND 1893

They camped over night on Mosca Pass, and Mr. Major had his initial experience in the art of cooking; he made the biscuits and Moccasin Bill cooked the meat and made the coffee. The second night they reached the Steve Kinney ranch in the San Luis Valley, and the third night the ranch home of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Adams, on Baca Grant No. 4.

The following day they reached the mining property in Burnt Gulch. This was in May, 1880.

Because of the discovery of gold along the mountain range at this point, prospectors from all over the West began to come in. Then a Philadelphia company, represented by Colonel Carter and Major Cooper, became interested and began building a concentrating mill, which cost something more than a hundred thousand dollars.

As there was no place nearer than Alamosa (the terminal of the D. & R. G. Railroad at that time) to purchase supplies, it seemed a good business opening. Mr. Major and Mr. George H. Adams formed a partnership and put up a frame building, bought a stock of goods, opening the store in July, 1880. That fall they built a substantial adobe building.

The last of May Mr. Major returned to Rosita for Mr. Pingree (who was tubercular, and had come West in search of health), making the trip on horseback. The day they left English Billy's ranch on the Muddy, they got lost, traveled all day and surprised themselves, as well as English Billy, by arriving at his ranch again that night.

The writer has known Mr. Major more than fifty years, and has never known of his being lost since, except for losing his way that same winter, in a blinding snowstorm between Alamosa and Crestone. One of his freighters was lost in a blizzard that winter, too, and when he realized he was lost, and with night coming on, he unhitched his team from the wagon, grasped a breeching in each hand and turned the horses loose. His hands froze to the breeching. The horses reached the Taylor ranch in the night and awakened the men by neighing. The Taylor ranch was one of the two ranches between Alamosa and Crestone at that time, the other being the Steve Kinney ranch.

Mr. Taylor rescued the freighter, who was unconscious and almost frozen to death, and the next day sent men out to locate the load of freight, sending it on up to Crestone.

The mining camp was named Crestone after Crestone Peak, and a petition for a post office was sent in in July. The post office was established in August, 1880. Mr. Major was postmaster for the eleven years he lived in Crestone.

It was a live, boom gold mining camp. When the first saloon was finished, there was, according to custom, a grand opening, free lunch with liquors. The result was the first death in the new camp. A Mexican, Juan Fernandez, left his flock of sheep and came to town for the event. Clad in the picturesque garments peculiar to his race—sombrero, leggings, sash and an enormous pair of spurs—he presented the appearance of a Mexican dandy.

Juan seemed to fear that the free lunch would prove insufficient, so he visited the A. H. Major Grocery and purchased and devoured, according to Mr. Pingree, three cans of pig's feet, three cans of baked beans, and two cans of salmon! He next visited the saloon, and after drinking freely, poor Juan passed out.

The patrons of the saloon, in fright, hid the body in a hay stack, where it was found the following morning. A mock inquest was held, then a funeral service, and the unknown son of the south was given a good send-off, with Windy Billy, the sage and orator of the camp, to deliver the oration. He finished the service with these remarks: "To Juan's veracity, all can bear testimony; to his capacity, sad to relate, there was a limit." On a board tacked to a pinon tree underneath which lies all that is mortal of this unfortunate Mexican, is the terse epitaph:

"Here lies the body of Juan the glutton,
Who could eat a beef and a couple of mutton.
To fame and fortune quite unknown,
He brought a famine on Crestone."

In the fall of 1890, some excitement was created by the discovery of silver ore by N. C. Creede, in the mountains forty miles above Del Norte on the Rio Grande. In March, 1891, Mr. Major and his brother-in-law, Finley Frazee, drove over to look over the situation. They decided to order logs cut to erect a log store building, and were ready for business, with the first stock of merchandise to be shipped into the camp, in May, 1891. The following year a substantial two-story building was erected in North Creede.

In the spring of 1893, Mr. Major was appointed local agent for the Continental Oil Company in Creede, and held the position to the time of his death in February, 1933. Up to that time he was the oldest employee in the service of the Continental Oil Co. When that company first put in a station at Creede, with W. T. Kirkpatrick as representative, the railroad had not been extended to Creede, so the gasoline was sent up from Del Norte in ten-gallon cans, freighted in heavy wagons drawn by mule teams.

Those were exciting times in the boom days of 1891, '92 and '93. The camp was ruled by "Soapy Smith," a notorious gambler

and three-card-monte man, with his forty or more tinhorns and bad men.

When Parson Uzzell, of Denver Tabernacle fame, first visited the camp he preached from a pool table in a newly constructed pool hall. Soapy's men listened respectfully, but that night some of them cut a hole in the tent where the parson was sleeping, reached in and stole his trousers and the collection, hidden underneath his pillow. When he learned of the incident, however, Soapy compelled them to return the pants with more money in the pockets than when they were stolen!

There were many killings among the gamblers and their kind in '91 and '92. Their burying ground was outside the cemetery (owing to objections being raised about burying them inside the cemetery). It was here that Bob Ford (the outlaw who killed Jesse James and years later was treacherously killed himself) was buried. At one of these funerals the friends of the gambler who had been killed drank champagne at the open grave, then joining hands, they marched around the grave singing Auld Lang Syne.

Three of the notorious women gamblers here were Poker Alice Tubbs, Calamity Jane Bourke, and Killarny Kate, all of whom smoked mammoth stogey cigars while playing, and had the reputation of being successful players.

People rushed into Creede from all parts of the world, and in all sorts of conveyances. Several trains a day arrived, filled to capacity, men clinging to the sides, and on top of every box car of the long freight trains. They drove teams, came on horseback and even on burros, and many "counted the ties." The Pullman Company sidetracked a string of sleeping cars to accommodate the crowds of people, but they were far inadequate. Men who were lucky enough to have a roll of blankets gladly paid a dollar per night for the privilege of spreading them on a floor anywhere under shelter. Mr. Major sometimes loaned blankets to traveling salesmen who had no place to sleep, the blankets being spread on counters to form a makeshift bed. One night two salesmen, Mr. Major and his brother-in-law were awakened by the rattle and ping of bullets against the logs of the store building. Evidently some trouble in the saloon next door! The two traveling men rolled off the counter, declaring that never again would night overtake them in Creede!

Business houses, hotels and restaurants were open nearly all night, while the saloons and gambling houses did not close at all. These were the times referred to by Cy Warman in his poem, "It's day all day in the daytime, and there is no night in Creede."

But in the hurry and rush of events, big deals pending on every side, excitement every moment, the highlight of the day

was the incoming mail. The post office was a log cabin, home-made pigeonholes for the letters, the papers frequently tossed into the fire, while hundreds of people waited in line for that letter from home. Seeing pieces of paper sailing out of the stove pipe, someone would call out, "There goes my letter." Another would yell back, "No, it was mine. I saw the post-mark."

So they hit on the plan of having the mail come in by express. The postage was five cents per letter. The mail came in sacks and was emptied into a big box outside the depot. Each person sorted out his own mail. This unique method was in vogue when Mr. Major was appointed postmaster in '92. A larger building was procured and lock-boxes installed.

To quote from a tribute paid him by a friend, "Mr. Major apparently possessed no particular desire for the distinction which is presumed to go with public service, but was, nevertheless, ready at all times to serve the community, and in every position of public service to which he was called—and there were many—he served not only faithfully and honestly but efficiently."

Experiences of Harry Petrie

Edgar C. McMechen

Those romantic days of the open range cattle industry, which bulk so large in the history and fiction of the West, ended in Colorado about 1885, when the range became overstocked and depleted. This was the era of the longhorn trail herds; of the cattle kings, such as John W. Iliff, John Hittson and Finis P. Ernest in northeastern Colorado, and of John W. Prowers, Lonny Horn and Sam Doss in the southern part of the state. While some Texas trail herds traversed the eastern border of the state after the date given, a very definite change in cattle types and range conditions took place at this time.

Few men are alive today who are familiar with and have participated in the western livestock industry from trail herd days to federally-controlled range today. The State Historical Society, therefore, feels fortunate in having assembled, through interviews and correspondence, the story of a man whose experience bridges this long period.

Harry Petrie, for many years superintendent of the Denver Union Stock Yards Company, and one of the founders of the National Western Stock Show, not only has managed some of the largest cattle and sheep outfits in the history of the American

livestock industry, but as Chief of the Cattle and Sheep Section of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, bought 8,200,517 cattle and 4,000,000 old ewes and Angora goats, in 23 states, from June to December 3, 1934. These purchases, made during the drought years of the early thirties, prevented many financial wrecks among western stockmen and banks. Without further prelude this absorbing biographical sketch of Harry Petrie is presented,

Harry Petrie was born September 12, 1868, in Madison County, New York, the scion of a distinguished line of fighting ancestors. Both his father and grandfather were officers of the Union Army during the Civil War. Major Theodore Foster Petrie was his father; General Thomas F. Petrie his grandfather.

Among his direct or collateral ancestors were General Herkimer and Colonel Bellinger, both active in Indian warfare in the Mohawk Valley before the Revolutionary War. The former was killed at the battle of Oriskany. Dr. Petrie, of Scottish nativity, was the first of the name to come to America, leaving Alsace-Lorraine in 1680 to settle two years later in New York state. General Winfield S. Scott, of Mexican War fame, was first cousin of Harry Petrie's maternal grandmother.

Harry Petrie attended grade school in New York state and in Philadelphia, completing a high school course in that city in 1883. Upon graduation he left for Denver on an immigrant ticket, arriving at 6. p. m., June 21, 1883. He was then fifteen years old.

The next morning Harry secured a job driving a half-wild delivery team. He held this for two years, attending business school at night and filling in with some bookkeeping. From the first, the handling of livestock appealed to him. Soon after reaching Denver he began to break colts in the evenings and on Sundays, whenever a spare moment offered. These he would sell, and reinvest in more wild colts.

A railroad career opened on April 23, 1885, when Petrie became a truckman on the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad platform at Denver. The date was impressed upon his mind by a peculiar example of pioneer humor. A heavy snow had fallen during the day, followed by a warm rain that night. The dirt street ran with small torrents and a large pool formed at the intersection of Sixteenth and Curtis streets. An enterprising merchant erected a "No shooting" sign and floated his stock of wooden decoy ducks. At that time, open irrigatng ditches ran down Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Sixteenth streets to water young shade trees planted along these thoroughfares. Wooden sidewalks were rather sketchy and those who had hip-boots after heavy rains were fortunate.

From 1885 to 1890 young Petrie filled various positions with the Rio Grande Railroad at its Eleventh Street Station—truckman, night weighmaster, car accountant, yardmaster, clerk and assistant yardmaster. By 1886 he had saved enough to buy twenty-five broncho mares. He then sought and located a registered Hambletonian stallion to which he bred all the mares in 1888. The bronchos were half-wild horses of mediocre value, possessing plenty of endurance, but not of the conventional saddle or driving horse type. However, the combination with the Hambletonian sire proved to be sound practice and produced good horses. With the sale of his horse herd in 1888, Petrie invested in cows, which he ran on his father's ranch in El Paso County, southeast of Palmer Lake. Major Petrie had preceded his son to Colorado by a few months, but never became a large cattleman. The son continued this business as a side issue until 1902, increasing his herd until he had to lease pasture land both in El Paso and Douglas counties.

For one year, 1890, Petrie served as agent and assistant superintendent of the Denver, Lakewood and Golden Railroad, which had a plan for a short-line extension to Salt Lake City. The next year he became General Yardmaster of the Union Pacific and the Colorado & Southern railroads at Denver. This was at the height of the smelting activity at Argo and Globeville and his position was an important and exacting one. Twenty-six switch engines were then in use to handle the several hundred cars of ore and fuel each day for the Grant, Argo and Globe smelters.

Denver still was very much the frontier town during the eighties, and the environment of Harry Petrie during his boyhood and early manhood had been definitely rough. This toughening experience now stood him in good stead. Always of the athletic type, Petrie stood six feet one inch in height and weighed more than two hundred pounds. An accomplished rifle and revolver shot, he also was a fine boxer. On many occasions he was forced by circumstances to make use of this ability. Typical of the times was a fracas that broke out suddenly one night in 1893 during a large fire in the McPhee and McGinnity Lumber Yard at Nineteenth and Wynkoop streets.

In an effort to be helpful, Petrie asked one of the city firemen a civil question, but received a blow in the mouth and an answer that he later described as "definitely derogatory." This fireman was the crack boxer of the Denver Fire Department, as Petrie soon discovered, but a clean blow to the point of the chin soon laid the fireman out cold. About that time three other firemen in rubber boots arrived, and one of these struck Harry behind the ear with a wrench. They then began to kick him, but Petrie's great agility and quickness enabled him to rise. He was doing a fairly

good job of licking his opponents when a deputy sheriff whom he knew stopped the fight and asked: "What are you trying to do, Harry, lick the whole fire department?"

"No," was the reply, "but if you leave me alone about two minutes I will lick three of them."

There were occasions, however, when a boss or a superintendent faced more serious trouble. One of these arose when Petrie discharged a railroad employee who had won a reputation as a killer in early Cheyenne days by shooting a man in the back. This man made the public threat that he would kill Petrie upon sight. One day, when riding west of the Platte River, Petrie saw this man at some distance. To have avoided the issue would have been fatal to his authority. He rode directly up to the man, pushing his horse as close as possible, so that when he dismounted one step took him within striking distance. His foe had placed his hand upon his gun but Petrie, poised for an instantaneous blow, addressed the man in an easy conversational voice. There was a tense and watchful moment while the man sized up the situation. Then he dropped his hand—smiled uncertainly. In the standards of the Old West he had lost in a test of nerve. The incident was ended.

Petrie resigned from the Union Pacific April 16, 1898, to accept the superintendency of the Denver Union Stock Yards, just at the time that an expansion of this western stock market was contemplated. He held this position for eight years and, in 1905, was one of the promoters and charter members of the National Western Stock Show, of which Elias M. Ammons, later Governor of Colorado, became the first president, and Harry Petrie the first manager.

It was in 1890, on November 1, that Petrie met with an accident that would have ended the life of any but the most vigorous of men. He had completed during the day the purchase of more than 200 carloads of baled hay for the Denver Union Stock Yards at Maxwell, Nebraska, and had then shot fifty-five bobwhite quail and some prairie chickens, when evening found the hunting party returning to Maxwell in a buckboard. The driver drove into a hole in the road, throwing the occupants forward. Petrie's 12-gauge shotgun caught in the wheel and exploded, distributing some 800 chilled shot in his left arm between shoulder and elbow. He was examined by three doctors when the party reached Maxwell. All declared that there was no pulse, and that Petrie had bled to death. In this, as in Mark Twain's case, the announcement of death proved exaggerated.

Petrie left the Stockyards to accept a more lucrative job as manager of the Seabury Spraying Machine Company, organized

by a Cheyenne veterinarian of that name, who had invented a process of spraying cattle with a crude oil solution to prevent or cure mange. The cattle scabies, or mange, is entirely different from the sheep disease and is not contracted from the latter.

Cattle spraying sounds prosaic, but actually is one of the most exciting operations in handling these animals. The technique requires that the herd to be handled in one operation shall not exceed 3,000 head. "When the power-sprayed liquid came into contact with all parts of the animals' bodies," said Petrie, in describing this experience, "they just raised hell; that is, in many cases tried to wreck the whole machine.

OFFICERS AND ORIGINATORS OF THE FIRST NATIONAL WESTERN STOCK SHOW AT DENVER, DECEMBER, 1905
Left to right: W. S. Guilford, Asst. Mgr.; Fred P. Johnson, Sec.; Governor Elias M. Ammons, Pres.; Harry Petrie, Mgr.

"We sprayed cattle from Texas to Alberta and, in the year 1907, sprayed nearly 375,000 head. The farthest point north was between Calgary and Lethbridge, Alberta, where we sprayed 10,000 head for the Circle (0) outfit. In August, 1906, we sprayed 75 buffalo at Goodnight, Texas, for 'Uncle' Charlie Goodnight, then about 75 years old; also about 1,000 Angus cows on the Salt Fork of Red River.

"I last saw Colonel Goodnight at that time, and he was a very fine old gentleman, standing six feet one inch and very active on

foot or horseback, with the courage, if necessary, to tackle a bear bare-handed."

Colonel Goodnight was one of the men who tried repeatedly to cross the buffalo and cow in the effort to develop a larger and better beef animal. The attempt frequently was made with Angus cattle because of the theory that the Angus would prove successful. But, in Mr. Petrie's estimation, this cross "produces only a fair carcass, because it has too much meat on the forequarters and not enough on the hindquarters."

In January, 1908, Petrie returned to the Denver Union Stock Yards Company as superintendent. During this year he also managed the Inter-State Fair and Races at Overland Park, Denver; and in 1909 and 1910 managed the National Western Stock Show, the latter year handling it as a double assignment in connection with the Overland Show.

The old Overland Park Fair and Racing Association had been organized prior to this time by Bennett & Myers, George Wahlgren, Ed Gaylord, Doctor Dunlevy and others interested in horsemanship and the development of racing activities. The Inter-State Fairs held during 1908, 1909 and 1910 were large and important. In August, 1910, the Fair Association gave a cowboy breakfast at Overland in honor of Ex-President "Teddy" Roosevelt, at which the distinguished guest ate cowboy "chuck" from tin plates in company with Governor John F. Shafroth of Colorado and Mayor Robert W. Speer. Members of the Colorado Sheriffs' Association in woolly chaps and ten-gallon hats formed a guard of honor. Another noted guest was United States Senator Simon Guggenheim of Colorado, with whom Petrie renewed acquaintance for the first time since they had been classmates together in the Philadelphia high school in 1882 and '83.

The mention of this colorful western celebration brings up an interesting point as to where the first rodeo was held. The claim often has been that this show event first was held in Denver in 1901 in connection with the Festival of Mountain and Plain. Some of the older Wyoming cattlemen assert that the famous Cheyenne Cattlemen's Club held bucking horse contests before this in connection with holiday celebrations for members and guests. Harry Petrie, for several years marshal at the Mountain and Plain Festivals and also familiar with the Cheyenne Cattlemen's Club during its life, says that the first rodeo was held at Riverfront Park in Denver, located on the north side of lower Fifteenth Street adjoining the Platte River. This park was created in the early eighties by John Brisben Walker, known as the father of the Denver Mountain Parks system. What Denverites call today the "old stone castle" just north of Sixteenth Street Viaduct near the

Platte was the administration building of this almost forgotten amusement park.

In February, 1910, Petrie resigned as manager of the Stock Yards Company to manage his own ranch properties, having acquired the Bunney and Berg ranches on Ralston Creek below the present Ralston Dam. The Bunney ranch, filed upon by a Central City miner, was one of the oldest in the state and held a water right dating back to 1861.

By this time Petrie's reputation as a stockman had become national and in the fall of 1910 he went to California at the solicitation of William Kent of Kentfield. There he entered into contract to manage the Golconda Cattle Company and the Golconda Telephone and Power Company at Golconda and Winnemucca, Nevada, as manager and vice-president, with a working interest in the company.

Kent owned about 86,000 acres of land in Humboldt, Elko and Lander counties in Nevada, and leased 106,000 acres (checkerboard land) of the Southern Pacific Railway Company, south, east and west of Golconda, Nevada; also held permits to graze 12,200 ewes and their lambs on the Humboldt National Forest in Elko County, Nevada. In addition, he grazed more than 1,000,000 acres of public land—Uncle Sam's grass, as it was called then.

The livestock inventory showed that the company owned 8,000 cattle, 20,000 sheep and 7,000 horses. The operation of this vast domain was highly profitable to the owner during the years that Petrie managed it, or from 1911 to June, 1915. The profits the first year were about $50,000, but each year showed a profit. During the last year this totalled $80,000.

The Golconda (dry lot) fed steers for the California markets. Although Petrie had resigned June 2, 1915, and returned to Denver to operate his own ranches, he had begun negotiations with a group of Utah men interested in the project before he had left. He brought this sale to a successful conclusion, completing a deal on March 17, 1917, whereby he delivered the company's assets and received the initial check for $665,000. The balance of the payments all were made in three years' time. Total sale price for the property was $1,103,000 plus.

One of the most important results of the Golconda experience arose through the request of William Kent that Petrie study and advise him as to the best method to control Elko County land tributary to large Golconda holdings in valleys and along streams. The result was the preparation by Petrie of the Kent Grazing Bill, which was introduced in Congress by Kent in 1913, but failed of passage. Congressman Jones of New Mexico reintroduced the

same bill at a later date but it met with the same fate. It remained for Congressman Ed Taylor of Colorado to engineer a grazing bill through Congress in 1934. This is the present Taylor Grazing Act, which is almost identical with the Kent bill. This bill has been a great boon to livestock operators in the West, as it has given them control of practically all of the remaining public domain in Continental United States. It has permitted the classification and simplification of range management, and has made range wars a thing of the past.

While with the Golconda, Petrie became involved in one of those range disputes that have often resulted in killings. He had been forced to discharge one of Golconda's foremen, a man known as Big George, who had considerable reputation as a gunman. While counting a herd about forty miles north of Elko, Big George showed up, belligerant and set upon trouble. Following the pattern that had before carried him beyond danger without recourse to gunplay, Petrie edged closer to Big George, imperceptibly, talking the while in a moderate tone of voice. Big George was not fooled and reached for his gun, but a lightning jab from Petrie knocked him to the ground.

Big George rose, scowling, glanced about him, noted the gun at Petrie's hip and, with the terse statement, "I will kill you for that," turned and walked away.

About that time a heavy storm broke. Lightning flashed, thunder roared. Three thousand uneasy cattle, milling about, suddenly broke and dashed wildly away in stampede. For hours Petrie and the cowboys worked like mad, heading off, rounding up and corraling the cattle. Before this was done Petrie, riding in and out among buildings and corrals in the dusk, had a definite feeling that he would make an excellent target in his white shirt and light riding breeches. However, nothing developed at this time. Several years later, upon entering an Elko hotel he saw Big George seated at one side of the lobby, his eyes fixed steadily upon Petrie. Without hesitation he walked over to Big George, asked where he had been, inquired about his health—but kept him under close scrutiny. The tension passed and with it the danger of an attack.

Upon three occasions Petrie's presence of mind and cool control of his temper headed off gunplay that would surely have ended fatally for someone. From the standpoint of skill with firearms, Petrie had little to fear in these encounters, as he was one of the best rifle and revolver shots in the West. One instance of this marksmanship has been told by his friends. Petrie was once talking to some friends, when one of them began to bait him about his skill. A woodpecker was drumming upon a wooden silo

some 25 yards distant, when this friend suggested that Petrie show them how to knock it down.

Petrie had with him a 25 caliber target gun. Without a word he drew this, sighted and fired. The bird came down in a spiral motion that, to Petrie, meant that it had been shot through the head.

"You hit him!" exclaimed one of the party in considerable awe.

"Yes—I think it was through the head," said Petrie.

This proved to be the case and his companions took it to mean that Petrie had made this shot purposely. That ended the baiting.

Upon his return to Denver in 1915, Petrie had purchased the Bellinger and Mitchell farms on Ralston Creek, giving four farms, extending up and down the creek for two miles on either side. This had perfected his water rights.

About this time Petrie formed a partnership with his old friend James A. Scott, former sheriff of Julesburg, Colorado, and a highly capable cattleman. Scott's worst enemy was drink. He had ranches at Deer Trail and in Hay Gulch, plus 13,000 acres northeast of Agate on the heads of Muddy, Beaver and Rattlesnake creeks, but had fallen into difficulty with his financial backers. Petrie knew that Scott's word, once given, would not be broken, so he wrote a contract that is, perhaps, unique in range history. This contract provided that Petrie would do all the drinking for both partners, and that Scott was to stay with the sheep, with which the range was stocked, thirteen months of the year.

"Why the thirteen months?" asked Scott.

"Twelve months with the sheep," said Petrie, "and day and night with the lambs during lambing season. That makes thirteen months." Scott signed without another word.

The partners and their bankers were enthusiastic about the prospects but, like many stockmen who have failed in the West, they borrowed too much money in expanding the business to be able to withstand the loss caused by reduction of land and livestock values that occurred in 1920 and 1921. They managed to hold on for a few years, but when 1929 checked in on the calendar they were among the complete casualties.

In November, 1921, while on his Ralston Creek Ranch, Petrie received a telegram from Rudolph Spreckles, President of the First National Bank of San Francisco, which then held a bond issue of $2,200,000, signed by W. H. Moffat, President of the Union Land and Cattle Company. He also held an unsecured mortgage of $400,000 signed by W. H. Moffat and Herb Humphrey. The

Union Cattle Company was a California-Nevada concern. It is doubtful whether there was ever a larger livestock holding in the country. The company had failed for $5,500,000 and was then in the hands of Receiver W. T. Smith. Creditors included the First National Bank of San Francisco; and Rudolph Spreckles, Chairman of the Creditors' Committee, representing the Reno National Bank, First National Bank of Chicago, National Bank of Commerce of New York, Old Colony Trust, Shawmut National Bank and First National Bank of Boston.

Petrie was appointed manager at a salary of $12,000 per year, plus bonus, but the latter was never paid. In November and December, 1921, he personally counted all livestock, which included 45,000 grown cattle, 45,000 ewes and 8,000 horses and mules. Next year the same creditors asked Petrie to take over the Smoke Creek outfit, also in California and Nevada. This embraced several hundred thousand acres, 30,000 ewes, 2,500 cattle and 600 horses and mules. During the winters 7,000 steers were (dry lot) fed for west coast markets so, all in all, it was a busy time for the manager who had to buy, sell, sort, and classify these varied livestock holdings. Petrie managed the company for five years with great success.

In May, 1925, when the receivership of the Union Land and Cattle Company was about to be terminated, William Kent made Petrie an attractive offer to take over the presidency and general managership of his Mt. Tamalpais and Muir Woods Railroad, which had steadily lost money since 1915. Mt. Tamalpais is a peak in the Coast Range rising 2,600 feet from San Francisco Bay, in Marin County, California. The railroad, from Mill Valley to the summit, is eight miles long, with 281 curves, many so sharp that they can be negotiated only by having a constant stream of water dropping on the rail. The cars are pushed upward by a Shay engine. About one-third the way up a branch detours to Muir Woods.

Kent evidently believed that, since Petrie had made him more than $500,000 on the Golconda Cattle Company, and nearly as much on large land holdings in North Carolina, he could rehabilitate a railroad. This, in fact, he did in a six-months period. However, Kent died in 1927, and Petrie resigned shortly afterward upon failure to agree upon policy with Kent's son.

Upon his return to Denver in January, 1928, Petrie bought the R. Brackenbury Commission Company at the Stock Yards, and organized the Petrie, Staunton Commission Company. This he sold December 31, 1930, to Merrion & Wilkins, Denver.

The following year Petrie accepted a position as fieldman for T. H. Ramsey, President of the Pacific National Agricultural Credit Association of San Francisco, which then held three and

one-half millions in cattle and sheep loans, secured by various ranch holdings. His duties were to check loans in California, southern Oregon, Nevada, Utah, western Colorado and southern Idaho; also to check and investigate new applications for loans. He then became manager and receiver of Abel, Courtner Quarter Circle A outfit in Humboldt County Nevada, then running 8,000 head of cattle.

While engaged in this occupation Petrie received a telegram on October 13, 1933, from Chester C. Davis, Administrator of AAA, to come to Washington for an important cattle conference. The result was Petrie's appointment as Chief of the Cattle and Sheep Section of AAA, with responsibility in forty-eight states. When the drought of 1934 became serious in twenty-three states, Petrie was placed in full charge of the government buying program. From June 2, 1933, to January 1, 1934, Petrie bought from his Denver headquarters 8,200,517 cattle. On August 7, 1933, orders were received from Washington to carry out a similar program in connection with old ewes and female Angora goats. In a trifle over four months 4,000,000 head were purchased for the government at $2.00 per head for ewes and $1.40 per head for the goats.

Regardless of political criticism, this program saved many financial wrecks on western stock ranches, as a large file of complimentary letters from bankers, loan companies, stockmen and livestock associations attest.

The AAA was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in January, 1936, and from that time until July 15, 1938, Petrie's work was with the livestock men in the Western Division (thirteen western states), relative to the government program for range conservation and restoration. There followed a period of one and one-half years when he engaged privately in buying and selling for the market and feeding for market. He bought registered Hereford bulls and cows, registered bucks and ewes and four different strains and breeds of registered goats for Venezuela, and made one shipment as far as Colombia.

On August 30, 1940, Petrie was asked by the government to travel in seventeen western states to attend livestock meetings in connection with range conservation and restoration, with official headquarters in Laguna Beach, California. This is his present occupation.

The basic principles of this program involve re-seeding with native grasses, or better vegetation if it can be found; development of earthen tanks or reservoirs, proper tilling and irrigation.

Out of his great and varied experience, Petrie believes that this program will go far toward ameliorating many of the stock-

men's troubles. The reason that so many stock outfits have failed, he says, is that too much money has been borrowed to finance and maintain them. Storms, drought and fluctuating markets have then intervened to bring about insolvency. The tendency now is to reduce the size and extent of cow outfits, and the day of the great cattle empires as they once were known probably is gone forever. Likewise gone is that frontier incident, the cattle and sheep war. "I do not believe that sheep will ever exclude cattle in the total domain," says Petrie. "There are now defined sheep and cattle ranges. According to the present estimate of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics there are less than 52,000,000 sheep and about 84,000,000 cattle."

La Porte and Some of Its Early Citizens

NEWTON C. GARBUTT*

Cache la Poudre. Somewhere along this rippling stream in early days, French explorers cached their powder, from which event comes the name, and in the quiet valley some ten miles below the point where the river emerges from the mountains Antoine Janise, an early French trader, with his companions constructed cabins which formed the nucleus of the town of Colona, subsequently named La Porte—the gate.

Evidently some of the trappers, perhaps intrigued by the beautiful surroundings, concluded to make this temporary abode their permanent residence; at any rate, the little colony soon developed into a thriving town. Here settled John B. Provost, a French-Canadian, with his two half-blood Indian children, Louis and Lizzie, and his French wife, who took possession of the stage station, which they converted into a tavern for the entertainment and refreshment of traveler and resident alike. Provost was a big man physically, and conducted an orderly and efficient establishment. He made some claim to being a foot racer and boasted of his achievements along that line until challenged by one of the local athletes to exhibit his prowess. He accepted the challenge, but, handicapped by years, went down to defeat, and afterwards had little to say on the subject of foot racing.

In 1867, Edward N. Garbutt, leaving his home in the Genesee valley near Rochester, New York, crossed the plains by ox team,

*Mr. Garbutt has been Reporter of Decisions of the Colorado Supreme Court from 1920 to date. He came to Denver with his parents November 1, 1883, and the family proceeded immediately to La Porte. Here Mr. Garbutt spent his boyhood. He was admitted to the practice of law in Colorado in 1894, practicing in Fort Collins before coming to Denver.—Ed.

arriving in the Poudre valley in July of the same year, and established himself as a farmer near La Porte, subsequently acquiring ownership of the general store, which he conducted personally for a time, and which he continued to own until shortly before his death, October 25, 1898.

Soon after his arrival at La Porte, young Garbutt became a civic leader in the community. Having had some university training, he was elected superintendent of schools, and served for some years in that capacity. It is said that he did not always take his educational duties seriously, and on occasion, while visiting a country school, and behind the back of the young lady teacher, would entertain the pupils by letting his artificial teeth flop up and down in his open mouth, to the amusement of the children and great embarrassment of the teacher, who was at loss to account for the unseemly conduct of her charges in the presence of their august visitor. Garbutt subsequently became clerk of the district court under Judge Victor A. Elliott, and also served two terms as county treasurer.

His official duties necessitating a relinquishment of some of his business activities, Ed, as he was familiarly called by his friends, persuaded his young brother Cameron to leave the ancestral home in New York and come to Colorado to take charge of the mercantile business. Young Cam seemed naturally to fit into the community as one of its members and continued the successful operation of the store and post office, until he one day announced that he was going into the cattle business on his own account, and shortly thereafter left La Porte, eventually locating at Sheridan, Wyoming, where he became one of the leading citizens. The management of the La Porte store was not without its problems.

The store naturally became a meeting place for the smokers and gossipers of the little town, and there they congregated during the long winter evenings to recount experiences and take part in conversations of varying character. Seating room was limited and some of the men made a practice of sitting on the dry-goods counter, much to Cam's annoyance, particularly when lady customers came in to make purchases from the limited stock of linens and calicoes.

He remonstrated in vain and finally rigged up a gadget by means of which, by pulling a string, he could force a needle through a small hole in the counter at the point occupied by an objectionable sitter. The contrivance operated satisfactorily for a time, but one evening something went wrong with it. One of the habitual visitors came in and boosted himself up on the counter in the forbidden area. Cam retired to the post-office compartment and pulled the string. No results; the sitter continued to sit. Cam crawled along under the counter to investigate. Apparently the mechanism was intact and in working order. Again he went back and jerked the string,

and again no results. It subsequently developed that a victim of the needle decided he would put a stop to its usefulness and procured a piece of sole leather which he placed in the seat of his trousers, then, seating himself in the forbidden area, he calmly awaited results. The impervious sole-leather pants did the trick, and the needle operations came to an end.

Cam was succeeded as manager of the store by his older brother, H. I. Garbutt, who continued to act in that capacity until elected county judge, and upon the expiration of his term of office he established himself in the practice of law at Fort Collins.

Gradually the population of the little settlement increased. Came the Farrar brothers—Mart, Ike, Reed and Clint. Little was known of their previous history. It was rumored that Mart was an ex-Indian fighter and trapper, and that he had participated in the battle of Sand Creek. Reed was content to settle down to gardening, Clint to raising sheep, while Ike moved into the near-by mountains, where he was afterwards accidently killed by a shot from a rifle in the hands of a hunting companion. The fact that this companion later left for parts unknown with Ike's attractive wife, gave rise to speculation as to whether the shooting was entirely accidental.

To the little town came also stockmen, one of whom, Tobe Miller, acquired large acreage near by and engaged in the raising of blooded cattle. A. T. Gilkison and H. B. Newlon, ex-mining men, purchased fruit farms, agricultural acreage and garden tracts, and established permanent homes adjoining the town. Andrew McGinley, with large cattle interests in Nebraska—for reasons known only to himself—established his wife and daughter in a comfortable cottage near the store, where he visited them for short periods at varying intervals. Wesley Tharp, an invalid, located his home across the street from the store on a garden tract, the operation of which he supervised for a number of years, but finally gave up the struggle against his continually failing health and committed suicide.

Louis Abler, an excitable little Frenchman, with his motherless daughter, took up their residence a few doors from the store. Naturally, the good-looking daughter attracted the young men of the community to the family home, much against the wishes of the father. On one occasion, returning unexpectedly from his work, he found Richard Robbins calling on Carrie. Abler didn't like Richard and ordered him off the place, saying: "Richard, you go away and stay away; if you come back, I wring your neck like one damn chickon." Richard didn't return.

An interesting character who made his home in La Porte for a time was Fred Mautz. Fred had been reared in the slums of New York City, where as a boy he had to fight his way up, engaging in

frequent physical encounters with other boys of the neighborhood. From this early training he developed into something of a pugilist, although as a man he was peaceable and law-abiding. However, on one occasion a long, lank Missourian, who had stopped temporarily on his way west to replenish his finances by working in the gardens as a day laborer, made the mistake of calling Fred a name to which the latter took exception. A fistic controversy resulted in which the Missourian made a poor showing. Afterwards, in explaining his battered condition, he remarked: "I didn't figger on finding a prize fighter in this one-horse dump. I'm pretty good with my dukes, but Fred had me licked before I could get started."

George Stearly was an important member of the community, and as "village blacksmith" kept the horses shod and the agricultural implements of the farmers and gardeners in repair. Then there was F. T. (Dick) Dexter, the carpenter, who constructed buildings and kept them in repair. Why he was called Dick, no one seemed to know. He was a good workman, and seldom idle.

John L. Armstrong, whose slight accent disclosed his Irish ancestry, was a rather notable personage, being water commissioner of the district. John's principal loves in those early days were his meerschaum pipe and a big bay horse which he rode in patroling the stream and regulating the headgates of the various ditches in his territory. On one occasion he stopped at the post office for his mail, leaving the horse by the raised platform in front of the building. On coming out of the office, instead of descending to the ground to mount his steed, and perhaps thinking of showing his agility as a horseman to the bystanders, he attempted to leap from the platform into the saddle on the wrong side of the horse, and without using the stirrup. Dobbin objected to this unorthodox method and in perfect unison with his master, jumped forward. Result—John made a perfect two-point landing, missed the saddle by inches, and bounced from the horse's rump to the ground, somewhat dazed and completely crestfallen. As he regained his feet, solicitous friends inquired if he was hurt; he replied in the negative, attempting to laugh off the incident, and then his face suddenly sobered as he pulled from his pocket the remains of his beloved pipe. Mournfully he remarked, "a broken arm would have healed in time, but me poor pipe is ruined beyond repair." Later John married one of the local school teachers.

On the whole, these early residents were a peace-loving, law-abiding and industrious people, and they settled down in earnest to the business of making a living at their various vocations. For the most part they engaged in gardening and fruit raising, being successful in both. The market in the early days was limited and many of the producers transported their crops by team and wagon to the

neighboring cities of Laramie and Cheyenne, where they had no difficulty in disposing of their loads quickly and at good prices. These trips, however, took time, from three to five days, and eventually nearer markets became available.

The social life of the community, naturally, was somewhat curtailed. The ladies occasionally gathered at different homes for sewing bees or quilting parties, to exchange ideas on subjects in which they were interested, and neighborhood gossip probably was not neglected. There were frequent card parties, and dancing for the younger set was a favorite pastime; also in the winter there were weekly gatherings at the schoolhouse where entertainment in the way of music, recitations and literary programs was provided for those who cared to attend.

An annual event for several years, and which disturbed the peaceful life of the little community for a short period was the advent of the tie drivers. The firm of Coe & Carter had a contract with the Union Pacific Railroad Company to furnish railroad ties for use throughout the neighboring territory, and annually sent gangs of workmen into the mountains on the upper reaches of the Poudre and its tributaries, where, during the winter months, they cut and hewed to size large numbers of ties, which in due course were hauled out of the timber and deposited on the banks of the streams. Melting snow in the spring changed these ordinarily tranquil watercourses into raging torrents; then the tie drivers took over, the ties were deposited in the streams, guided down to the main river and on to their destination in the quiet waters near La Porte, where they were dragged from the stream by teams of the neighboring gardeners and deposited in the railroad yards for distribution to various points as needed. This matter of floating ties down the river, over the falls and through the narrows was a difficult and dangerous business. Evidence of that fact was the accidental drowning of a foreman of one of the gangs, who lost his balance and was swept over the falls to his death. Placing the ties in the shallow waters of the river below the town ended the work of the drivers, who then proceeded to celebrate in true western style, to the enrichment of the coffers of the local saloonkeepers and annoyance of the citizens, the latter breathing a sigh of relief when the noisy and turbulent visitors moved on to other scenes of activity.

Today La Porte is just another little town on the map. The pioneers are gone and few of the present residents have any personal knowledge of those early days which, however, fill a niche in the history of the state, and the importance of the town in that respect is somewhat enhanced by the fact that at one time it was a contender for designation as the county seat of Larimer County.