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Was "Mountain District No. 1, Nebraska Territory," the First Mining District Organized in Colorado?

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January, 1859! A typical Colorado January it was. Nothing remarkable or unusual to the Indians who followed the elk down from their mountain fastnesses to the foothills. Most of the days were clear and comfortable, even outdoors, with the bright Colorado sunshine. Snow had fallen early the preceding fall. On the last day of October a ten inch blanket of snow chilled the enthusiasm of the band of about one hundred gold seekers huddled about the mouth of Cherry Creek. To them a town-site became more important than gold and Auraria was born that very night. But by January they were not as badly snowed in as they had feared. The foot-hills were covered with snow which, in the shady spots in the gulches and where it had drifted, was sometimes three feet deep. Although the sunshine was still warm, the nights were severely cold. The ground was "hard frozen" and Clear Creek, as one looked down upon it from Lookout Mountain, was frozen solid.[1]

January, 1859, was not remarkable on account of its weather, but it was made historic by a remarkable series of gold discoveries. During this month gold was discovered at the sites of Idaho Springs, Black Hawk, Gold Hill and Deadwood Diggings. On January 7, 1859, George A. Jackson after thawing the ground by keeping up a large fire, found gold on the little creek, now called Chicago Creek, entering Clear Creek at Idaho Springs.[2] On January 16, 1859, a party of six men from the camp at the mouth of Boulder Canyon struck gold at the foot of Gold Hill.[3] About the middle of January, 1859, John H. Gregory found gold at the site of Black Hawk, incidentally nearly losing his life in a big snow storm.[4] About the end of the month B. F. Langley discovered a profitable placer in Beaver Gulch on the South Boulder, which was

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[1]There was no official weather observer nor even a newspaper to record the weather, so the above facts were gleaned from stray remarks here and there. George A. Jackson's Diary, Dec. 31, in *Colorado Magazine*, XII, 204; O. J. Hollister, *Mines of Colorado*, 17, 62; Frank Hall, *History of Colorado*, I, 188; J. C. Smiley, *History of Colorado*, I, 250; Baker & Hafen, *History of Colorado*, II, 529.

[2]Smiley, *History of Colorado*, I, 250; Jackson's Diary, *op. cit.*, Jan. 7.

[3]These men were Charles Clouser, Col. I. S. Bull, William Huey, W. W. Jones, James Aikins, and David Wooley. Hall, *History of Colorado*, III, 289-290.

[4]Smiley, *History of Colorado*, I, 251.

called "Deadwood Diggings" because of the large amount of fallen timber in the gulch.[5]

Rumors of the discoveries on the Boulder began to drift into the Cherry Creek settlements. Here Placer Camp of the Russell party, where gold was first found in paying quantities in the summer of 1858, had about given out. The Mexican Diggings, three miles up the Platte from Placer Camp, had proven worthless. Jackson committed his thoughts only to his diary and, I doubt not, carefully guarded its secret. From the north alone came cheering news. These rumors from the Boulder attracted some thither. By February "Boulder City Town Company" had been formed with fifty-six shareholders. But as spring approached, interest in townsites gave way to a rush for the alluring yellow metal. Gold Hill was the magnet.[6]

Despite the winter, mining and prospecting in the mountains west of Boulder continued. As the numbers increased and crowding of the most desirable locations resulted, it soon became evident that some form of organization would be necessary. The same conditions developed which a decade earlier had caused the development of mining laws and enforcement machinery in California. Those first on the scene soon discovered that they could not maintain their rights against the increasing numbers of new arrivals unless they stuck together. Accordingly, Mountain District No. 1 was organized by the miners at the Gold Hill Diggings. Unfortunately, the earliest records of this first organization have been lost and the exact date is not known. But, says Stone, "to Boulder belongs the honor of having the first mining district and formulating a code of laws for local government."[7]

This first mining district was called "Mountain District No. 1, Nebraska Territory." The record of the organization and first constitution of this district, if still in existence, have not yet been located. However, we do have a minute book[8] of the meetings of this district beginning with the meeting called by the president for July 23, 1859. At that meeting "a committy was Appointid to Revise the Present [Constitution] & make sutch Amendments as was Deemed expedient." Furthermore, at that meeting the fees for recording a claim were reduced to twenty-five cents. Obviously, a constitution and an organization existed before that date.

In Gold Hill Book "B"[9] Bardwell, Annis & Howell's claim, which was No. 5 on Scott's lode, was recorded on June 23, 1859. So the organization of Mountain District No. 1 must have occurred

[5]Hollister, *Mines of Colorado*, 60; Hall, *History of Colorado*, I, 181.
[6]O. L. Baskin & Co., Editors, *History of Clear Creek and Boulder Valleys, Colorado*, 382; Smiley, *History of Colorado*, I, 239-244 and 253; Hall, *History of Colorado*, III, 290.
[7]Stone, *History of Colorado*, I, 273-4.
[8]Gold Hill records, *Laws of 1859*, Boulder County records.
[9]Gold Hill records, book B, p. 10.

some time between the first discovery of gold in the district and the date of the above entry, i. e., some time between January 16 and June 23, 1859.[10]

There is evidence in the records, however, to warrant the assumption that the organization of Mountain District No. 1 occurred March 7, 1859. At a meeting held on November 5, 1859, another attempt was made to get a new constitution. This time a constitutional convention of eleven delegates was elected to draw up such a constitution. This revision was to be posted "at least ten days previous to the General Election to be held on the first Monday in March, 1860," when it was to be voted upon by the

Courtesy A. A. Paddock, Boulder
GOLD HILL, COLORADO, ABOUT 1888

miners of the district.[11] In view of the practice common among the mining districts of electing their officers for a six months' or a one year term, it seems to indicate that the district was first organized on March 7, 1859.

This assumption is further strengthened by the fact that a great deal of mining activity existed on the Boulders before people were aware of Jackson's or Gregory's discoveries. Of the five reports from the local mines in the first issue of the *Rocky Mountain News* of April 23, 1859, three of them refer to Boulder County

[10]Documentary evidence for the first meeting of miners to draw up laws in Jackson Gulch, May 9, 1859, is found in *Rocky Mountain News*, May 14, 1859, p. 2. J. C. Smiley in his *History of Colorado*, I, 251, says that "at a formal meeting held on the 17th of April, this band of pioneers [Jackson's] organized the first mining district in the Pike's Peak country." This statement seems to be based on the information given in Hall, *History of Colorado*, I, 189. April 17 is the date when Jackson and the twenty-two men he had let into his secret arrived at his discovery. Hall makes no mention of laws or organization of a district.
[11]Gold Hill records, *Laws of 1859*, p. 32.

vicinity and the other two refer to the diggings on Dry Creek (near Englewood). The extracts themselves are illuminating:

"Oscar B. Totten and J. D. Henderson have just arrived from the Jefferson mines, 55 miles northwest from Cherry Creek, via Boulder City, in the mountains, near Long's Peak. They state that a portion of the miners now at work there have been in the same vicinity since the first of January last. They are working in $8 diggings.

"Owing to the heavy snow and deep frosts in the mountains but little successful mining has yet been done, but so well satisfied are the miners now there that very rich diggings surround them that they have joined together and started a trading post and named their point Jefferson.[12]

"Among those there are Judge Townsley of Sioux City, Iowa; B. F. Langley, of California; A. Vinnage and J. Ely, of Iowa; H. Bolton, A. Baker, D. McCarron and J. M. Wainwright, of St. Louis, Mo., and also some 50 others, all of whom are doing well, and are busily engaged sawing timber for sluices, buildings and mining."

"Mr. O. P. Goodwin has just shown us a parcel of quartz gold, which he states was dug by himself about 8 miles west of Boulder and some 35 miles north of Cherry Creek.

"These specimens are intermixed with particles of quartz rock, similar in appearance to that of California. The largest specimen weighs 32 cents, and the parcel is worth something over $50.

"Mr. G. states that he obtained it from a vein of decomposed quartz, six or eight inches in thickness, and lying about three feet below the surface of the ground."

"Mr. B. F. Langley has just arrived from his mining claim on the south fork of St. Vrain's fork [i. e., Boulder Creek] of Platte river, about 40 miles northwest of Cherry Creek and some 15 or 20 miles in the mountains.

"He has been in the same region since about the first of January last, has prospected the ground thoroughly, and feels satisfied that as soon as the weather gets a little warmer, miners can make from $5 to $8 per day. The snow still covers most of the ground to a depth of 12 to 18 inches, so that very little regular mining can be done, but it is melting very fast, and before many days operations will commence and on an extensive scale.

"Mr. Langley has mined four years in California, and pronounces the prospect he has found as comparing very favorably with the coarse gold mining regions of California. He brings in and has shown us a fine parcel of quartz gold."

[12]This was located near the present site of Rollinsville, "several miles up North Beaver Creek." C. W. Henderson, *Mining in Colorado*, 7.

The other two items, not copied here, referred to Dry Creek and have no place in this account, but it is significant that, so far as an enterprising journalist could discover, the greatest mining activity in the Pike's Peak region in April, 1859, when the *Rocky Mountain News* first went to press, was on the Boulder watershed.

Even before the *Rocky Mountain News* went to press the people in Denver and in Nebraska City knew about the discoveries on the Boulder and rushed thither as the following letter indicates:

"Boulder, or
St. Vrain's Creek, R. M.,
Sunday night, Feb. 27, 1859.

"Dear Wife:—In my last letter to you I wrote that our prospects for mining were much brighter; I still feel the same. I am well satisfied that I can make at least five dollars per day. I am quite of the opinion that we have but just commenced finding what we came here for, and our [Nebraska City Co.] discoveries are creating much excitement at all the settlements, and people are coming in every day. There are now here on the creek, over one hundred men; and we hear from numbers more that will soon be here. The gold which we find is of quite different quality from any that has been found at other places, and what is called 'shot gold'—all that has been found in other places is 'scale or float gold' * * *.

A. A. Brookfield."[13]

On March 4, 1859, John Scudder wrote from Auraria, K. T., that "about 40 miles directly north of this place, at the base of the mountains, on what is known as St. Vrain's Creek, a party of men have discovered the shot, or nugget gold. They came down here to purchase tools and provisions and spent some two or three hundred dollars and paid their bills in that kind of gold."[14]

The first quartz discoveries were made early in May, 1859, Scott's lode at Gold Hill being the first. Mr. J. M. Fox of the Leavenworth City and Pike's Peak Express Co. wrote, on May 8, 1859, that "I heard this evening that rich quartz discoveries had been made near Boulder Town, some thirty miles up in the mountains * * *."[15]

By June, 1859, it was no longer possible to get a desirable claim on Gold Run:

"The writer and his companions, who arrived at Boulder in June [1859], finding that they were too late to get a finger into

[13]*Nebraska City News*, April 9, 1859, p. 2. Mr. Brookfield was one of the founders of Boulder and had been mayor of Nebraska City.
[14]*Daily Missouri Republican*, April 13, 1859.
[15]Letter of J. M. Fox to John S. Jones, Esq., dated Office of Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Co., Denver City, K. T., May 8, 1859, published in *Daily Missouri Republican*, May 25, 1859.

the Gold Run pie, did a little prospecting at the mouth of Boulder Canyon, and considered the 'show' good enough to justify mining there."[16]

Henry Villard writing to his paper, the *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, on May 17, 1859, said: "Whatever digging and washing is now going on is north of this place [Denver], and the mines that are reported to be best paying are some thirty miles off in the same direction."[17]

Such evidence supports the accuracy of those historians who recorded that Mountain District No. 1 at Gold Hill was the first mining district organized in the Rocky Mountains.

The organization of the district was patterned after the mining districts established in the California gold rush ten years earlier, which followed closely the earlier Spanish laws. Men who had had experience in the California mines adapted those regulations to the new conditions. Mr. A. A. Brookfield (quoted above) wrote that there were a large number of old Californians in the Boulder diggings in March, 1859.[18] Anthony Arnett, one of the organizers of Mountain District No. 1, had been a Forty-niner in California.[19] Mathew L. McCaslin spent seven years mining in California before he returned via Panama to New York in 1857.[20] Dick (Wm. A.) Blore, whose name appears prominently in the early minutes, had also been in California.[21]

The purpose of the mining district was to protect the claims of the miners in the vicinity. Therefore its organization was very simple. They elected for a term of six months three officials: president, recorder, and constable. The president presided over the meetings which the miners held to agree on rules and regulations for the district. Every miner who held a claim in the district had a right to attend and vote at these meetings. The president was also judge of the miners' court when the miners met to decide on alleged violations of the laws of the district. The recorder kept the minutes of the meetings and recorded the claims of each miner in the claims book of the district. The recorder issued for each claim a certificate signed by the president, which was the individual miner's evidence of his rights. It is in these record books that we find the most complete information about Mountain District No. 1. The third official, the constable, was the peace officer of the district. He held prisoners who were awaiting trial, and because

[16]Sniktau, "Early Days in Boulder County," *Mining Review*, April, 1874, 13. The pen name, "Sniktau," was that of E. H. N. Patterson, see H. H. Bancroft's *Works*, XXV, 493, 576, 529.

[17]Henry Villard, "To the Pike's Peak Country in 1859 and Cannibalism on the Smoky Hill Route," *Colorado Magazine*, VIII, 234.

[18]*Nebraska City News*, April 16, 1859. Letter dated March 5, 1859.

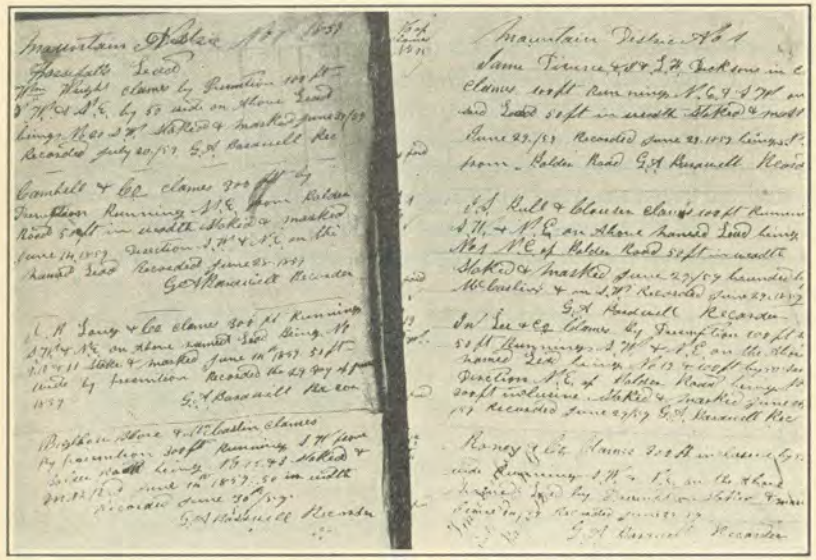
[19]He sailed from New York via Cape Horn on the bark "Clyde"—a "windjammer"—in 1849. See Forest Crossen's *Anthony Arnett, Empire Builder*.

[20]*Boulder County Miner*, Sept. 26, 1912, p. 2.

[21]Interview with Mathew McCaslin, Jr., of Hygiene, Colorado.

he collected fines and could sell properties for debt or to satisfy judgments, he was bonded for one hundred dollars.

A large part of the constitution and laws of Mountain District No. 1 had to do with mining claims. First, they defined the size of a claim and specified how many claims one person might hold. The size of the claim was fixed at 50 feet wide by 100 feet long. The discoverer was entitled to two claims. Claims number three, four, and so on, near the discovery were taken up successively by other miners, each one being allowed only one claim. When a miner put in ten full days' work—working at least one day in



CLAIMS BOOK, MOUNTAIN DISTRICT NO. 1

every ten—on such a claim he received a certificate of ownership. If he failed to do this work his claim became vacant and could be staked by someone else. The discovery claim alone became the property of the discoverer without any work being done upon it, the presumption being that the discoverer did at least ten full days' work finding it.

The first discovery of gold in Mountain District No. 1 was a placer deposit in Gold Run gulch on the side of Gold Hill. The first week in May, 1859, a miner by the name of Scott discovered a quartz vein high up on Gold Hill. Other discoveries soon followed. At the miners' meeting of July 23, 1859, when a committee appointed to revise the constitution made its report, quite a debate arose as to whether or not there should be a separate organization

for the miners in Gold Run and another for the miners on the hill. The outcome of this debate was a unanimous agreement that "the Gulch should be connected with the Hill in District No. 1." The revised constitution of July 23, 1859, therefore defined the boundaries of the district as follows:

"Resolved that this District be called Mountain District No. 1 and that it shall extend two miles in each Direction from Capt. Scott's Discovery claim on the Lead Known as Scott's Lead excepting in the Direction of Bolder District in which Direction it shall extend to and join on the Bolder District."[22]

With the increasing richness of the lode discoveries the fame of Gold Hill spread until by October 15, 1859, we find the secretary using the name "Gold Hill District No. 1, N. T."[23]

The old records of this district throw some interesting light upon the early history of this region. For example, one of the first constitutional conventions which met in the Rocky Mountain region was held when the people of Gold Hill, Nebraska Territory, provided for a convention to make a constitution to be submitted to the people at the general election in March, 1860.[24] This convention consisted of eleven delegates elected by the people.

The first referendum on prohibition was held at Gold Hill approximately a decade before the total abstinence colony at Greeley was founded. The miners of the district passed a law prohibiting the sale of liquors in the district. But the advocates of the saloon formed a persistent minority. At nearly every meeting the wets proposed a motion to annul the liquor law. Every time it was either laid over to the next meeting or lost. Those who defended the right of everyone to buy a drink when he wished thought that many of the drys were hypocrites and would be glad to take a drink on the sly. So they finally hit upon the plan of having a resolution "That the law prohibiting the Sale of Liquor be hereby repealed" voted on by secret ballot. But again the advocates of prohibition won.[25] The resolution was defeated by a vote of 25 to 15. Gold Hill emphatically did not want a saloon.

This government and these laws were only effective within the boundaries of the district and only when the miners themselves were able to enforce them. In fact, they were illegal until the Treaty of Fort Wise in 1861 traded the Indians out of their title to these lands. And they were extra-legal until after an act of Congress in 1861 created Colorado Territory and the new territory passed laws legalizing the acts of the mining districts. As late as February 22, 1862, the miners of Gold Hill voted not to let

[22]Gold Hill records, *Laws of 1859*, p. 5.
[23]*Ibid.*, 25.
[24]*Ibid.*, p. 31.
[25]*Minutes of Gold Hill, Oct. 23, 1860-July 1, 1862*, p. 15. The vote was taken April 27, 1861.

the Boulder County Clerk or Recorder have anything to do with their books.[26] But the need for the protection which a mining district afforded was past and gradually the miners themselves showed preference for the backing of the authority of the United States government to that of their own organization.

The Fruit Utopia of the North Fork of the Gunnison

WILSON M. ROCKWELL*

Those few pioneers who visioned fruit trees among the sagebrush and chico of the North Fork of the Gunnison were very much in the minority. However, they had faith in their dreams and immediately set out to subdue the hitherto unconquered domain of the Indian as soon as it was thrown open for settlement in the fall of 1881. This region had long been the home of the Utes who had roamed unmolested for hundreds of years on its unexploited resources, little realizing that their summer hunting grounds would some day be miraculously transformed from a rugged wilderness into a land of blooming orchards and fertile farms.

The virgin country welcomed her new settlers with one of the mildest winters ever remembered in North Fork history. Loaded wagons crossed the picturesque Black Mesa during the entire winter of 1881-82 with no difficulty, but in the spring a howling blizzard on the mesa closed travel to all except the most hardy.

Samuel Wade, his sons, Frank and Arthur, and Ernest Yoakum made the journey over from Gunnison through the deep snow. They put sled-runners on their wagon and drove their tandem mule team over the frozen snow in the early mornings, stopping when it became too soft for traveling. In an old trunk Samuel Wade carried a large variety of young fruit trees, and fires were built each night to prevent them from freezing. It took the group nearly two weeks to reach their destination, near the present site of Paonia, but fortunately the trees were unimpaired. They were set out on Samuel Wade's ranch, where some still stand—the last of the fruit-tree pioneers.

Enos Hotchkiss, noted pathfinder and founder of the town of Hotchkiss, also set out a few fruit trees in the spring of 1882, and William Shepherd experimented with some peach-pits. He told W. S. Coburn, most experienced fruitman in the valley, that he had planted them in his spare time out of curiosity, with no expectation of ever eating fruit from them.

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[26] *Ibid.*, 22.

*Mr. Rockwell contributed an article on "Cowland Aristocrats of the North Fork," to the September, 1937, issue of this magazine.—Ed.

"Let's hope you've guessed wrong," commented Coburn. "The climate and elevation here are about the same as in the great fruit country in the Salt Lake valley, and if the soil proves anywhere near as fertile, the North Fork should become nationally known for its fruit."

The soil exceeded expectations. By fall Shepherd's seedling peach trees had broken all records in rapidity of growth, evidencing that perhaps the ambitious expectations of the fruit prophets were not, after all, beyond the realm of possibility.

The next year Samuel Wade, Enos Hotchkiss, and W. S. Coburn shipped several thousand root-grafts into the country and

Courtesy *The Paonian*

SCENE AT THE PAONIA FAIR

established nurseries which gave birth to the North Fork fruit industry. By 1885 the region began to demonstrate its prolificness, surpassing the wildest hopes of the frontier dreamers. In October of that year the first fruit and vegetable show was held under the auspices of the recently organized Delta County Board of the State Horticultural Society. At this exhibition the newly plowed soil of the North Fork valley gave one of the most unusual displays ever witnessed.

Spectators gazed in awed amazement at the rich array of nature's handiwork. Squashes weighing 150 pounds each and pumpkins only slightly smaller lay on the burdened tables beside two-and-one-half-pound onions, thirty-pound beets, and potatoes measuring fourteen inches in length and weighing four pounds

apiece.[1] The numerous varieties of apples, peaches, and small fruits were entirely free from pests of any kind. The North Fork valley seemed destined for fame as an agricultural Utopia.

The fertile, uncorrupted soil and young trees were at their best. Apple trees commonly bore from twenty to thirty bushels of apples in one season, many bearing forty boxes. One acre of pear trees at the average price netted the grower $1,000.[2] Peach trees began producing at the early age of two years and in three years were carrying a full crop, nowhere excelled in flavor or quantity. Charles H. Underwood of Paonia, Civil War veteran, raised 945 bushels of potatoes on one acre of land, six selected potatoes weighing sixty pounds[3] and one of these establishing an official world's record of eleven pounds.[4]

At the State Horticultural Fair of 1890 the North Fork won statewide recognition for its remarkable productiveness, duplicating the extraordinary local exhibit of five years before.[5] No aphis or worms had yet penetrated into this half-civilized land, causing a decided contrast between the North Fork fruit and the pest-bothered specimens from the eastern slope of Colorado. However, the aspirations and dreams of those ambitious pioneers who were staging a victorious battle against the Uncompahgre frontier were not finally realized until Samuel Wade and W. S. Coburn catapulted this region's reputation across the national headlines by winning six first places at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 on fruits grown in the virgin soil of the North Fork.[6]

After this leap into the national limelight, fruit culture began rivaling cattle production as the leading occupation of the section. Professor H. E. Van Deman, United States pomologist, noted this rapid development in his 1893 report to the Department of Agriculture:

"The fruit interest here is beginning to override all others, and orchards are being planted in every direction. The tablelands or mesas are entirely free from alkali properties and seem to be best for fruit. They are extremely well adapted to all kinds of deciduous fruits. The peach, apricot, and all the deciduous fruits were bearing profusely. No insect enemies were seen or heard of in this vicinity."[7]

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[1] W. S. Coburn (President of the State Board of Horticulture), "History of the North Fork Fruit Industry," in the *North Fork Times*, May 21, 1897. Mrs. W. A. Clarke, North Fork pioneer, remarked twenty years ago, before the Paonia Woman's Club, that she knew of one North Fork pumpkin which weighed 180 pounds.

[2] *North Fork Times*, Special Edition, August, 1899.

[3] Mrs. W. A. Clarke, "History of the North Fork Valley," original manuscript, 1918, read before the Paonia Woman's Club.

[4] The potato was molded in wax and placed in the Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C. The Secretary of Agriculture sent Captain Underwood a personal letter saying that it was the largest potato ever grown so far as any record showed.

[5] W. S. Coburn, *op. cit.*

[6] *North Fork Times*, Special Edition, August, 1899.

[7] *Ibid.*

Encouraged by success at the World's Fair, North Fork fruit was entered in competition at the Transmississippi Exposition of 1898 in Omaha, and again the large, highly colored, perfect specimens from this region won gold medal awards against the largest and most varied array of horticultural displays since the World's Fair five years before.

Experienced agriculturists started traveling to this highly proclaimed, little known land of the colored fruits, curious to view the country about which so many improbable stories were told. However, the fondest expectations of the astonished visitors were surpassed at the sights they saw in the quiet, unpretentious little valley. H. M. Stringfellow, horticulturist expert from Galveston, Texas, reflected the consensus of opinion when, in 1898, he made an official statement to the *North Fork Times* of Hotchkiss, only newspaper in the North Fork at the time:

"I can only express myself with wonder at the North Fork country. I have never seen anything like it in my life and believe that it will become the wonderland of the fruit industry. As much as I have traveled and as familiar as I am with horticultural sections of our country and results attained by them in quantity and quality, no section that I am acquainted with can make such a showing."[8]

Lady Fortune continued to smile on the newly settled area. During the late '90s many fruit districts throughout Colorado and the nation were severely impaired by frosts and drouths, but the North Fork had its most prolific growth in the face of the surrounding disasters. As a result, representatives from the leading commercial houses of Chicago, St. Louis, Omaha, and numerous other mercantile centers came to the North Fork to compete for its fruit products, especially the late varieties of peaches and apples. The Jonathan and Winesap apples had replaced in popularity the Ben Davis, which up until this time had been the grower's bank account.[9] The Elberta peach predominated its field, with the Crawford and Mt. Rose close seconds, while the Bartlett pear outclassed all rivals in its species.[10]

The frontier fruit raisers originally sold most of their produce to peddlers, who sold their tasty wares in surrounding mining towns, particularly the booming San Juan silver and gold camps of Ouray, Telluride, Rico, Red Mountain, Silverton, Lake City, Ophir, and Saw Pit. The local men, engaged in other types of work, also provided a market. After the fertile North Fork had demonstrated its superiority as a fruit country, orchards began

[8] *Ibid.*
[9] In a letter to W. S. Coburn, W. N. White & Co., New York exporters of fruit, wrote: "Your Jonathans and Winesaps are without exception the finest in the United States."
[10] Board of Trade of North Fork Valley, *Paonia Fruit* (W. F. Robinson Printing Co., Denver, Colo., 1904), 17.

increasing rapidly, and before long the supply of fruit exceeded the local and peddling demands. Since the nearest railroad was thirty-five miles away at Delta, a real problem arose as to the best means of disposing of the surplus.

When commission men from various western commercial houses began soliciting North Fork fruit, the ranchers started hauling their excess goods to Delta, where they sold them to the competing buyers. Since no packing houses were then available, the fruit was boxed for shipment by crews in the orchards where picked. At first there had been hesitation about packing and transporting peaches by wagon to Delta, since the common supposition prevailed that so soft a fruit could not endure the jolting trip and still be salable. But a venturesome farmer, who particularly disliked seeing his fine-looking peaches wasted, made the effort, and, much to his and everyone's surprise, his peaches reached Delta in good condition.

From 1899 to 1902 as many as sixty-five fruit-laden wagons in a row came to be a common sight along the bumpy road to Delta, men, horses, and wagons transformed to the same white color by the alkali dust which hung in the air so thickly that the road could be traced all the way across the barren adobes. The anxious buyers often met the incoming vendors ten or twelve miles from Delta in the hope of consummating a bargain before the competition became too strenuous as they approached town. During this so-called "wagon era" the supply of fruit was small in the West and the resultant demand so great that the producers could practically name their own prices. The expense of production was much less than today, due to the absence of worm and insect enemies which had not as yet become a problem in the North Fork. This, coupled with the large western fruit market, made for the unusually high net returns during these gala years. At the turn of the century, 1900 and 1901, thousands of additional acres were planted to fruit upon the expectation that a branch railroad would be constructed from Delta to the Utopian fruit district up the valley. The approaching boom was rapidly gathering momentum.

The first North Fork settlers had staked out their claims along the river and creek bottoms and dug little irrigating ditches from the nearby streams to their ranches. After the choice lowlands were settled, longing eyes began looking up at the fertile but waterless mesas. When the fruit industry started prospering, the feeling became more and more prevalent that the higher lands must be conquered.

Ed Hanson began the canal-digging epoch by financing the Farmers' Ditch in the late eighties to bring water over a twelve-mile course along the north side of the river to what is now known

as Hanson Mesa, situated a few miles above Hotchkiss. However, it was not until the North Fork won national recognition at the Chicago's World Fair of 1893 that canal construction really commenced in earnest. Early in September, 1894, one of the greatest enterprises in western Colorado ditch building was initiated by George Stewart and his father, D. J. Stewart, newcomers from Webb City, Missouri.

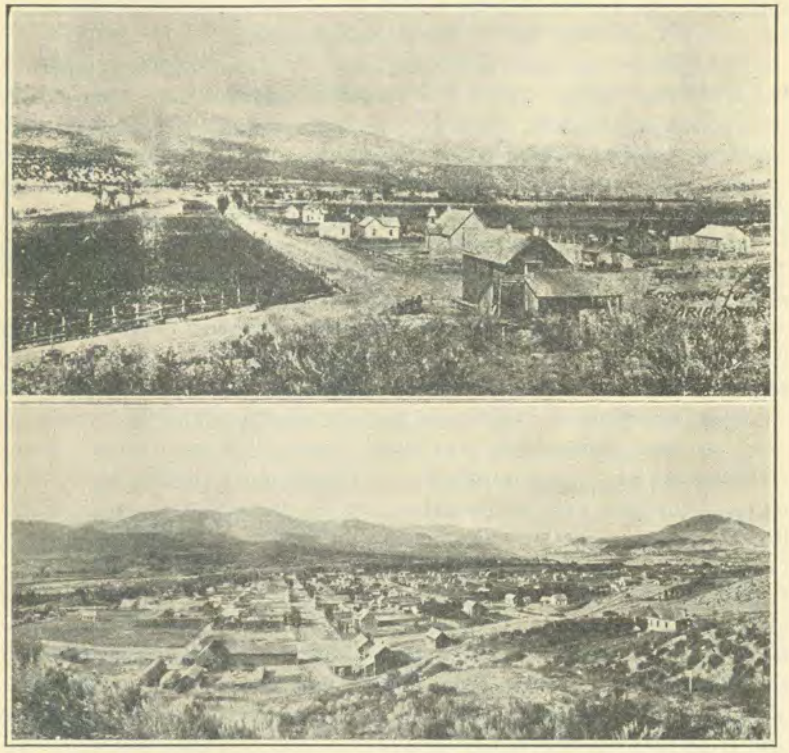
Seeing that there was insufficient water to suitably irrigate the property that they contemplated buying, the two promoters made surveys in order to determine the feasibility of a large irrigation project. Having ascertained that such a plan was practicable, they set out to bring life-producing water to 2,200 acres of unimproved land lying south of the North Fork River. The headgate of this canal was placed four miles above Paonia, where it received its water supply from the winding North Fork. When completed in 1896, The Stewart Ditch, appropriately named in honor of its founders, extended a length of ten miles with a 4½-foot fall to the mile. It passed over 11,000 feet of fluming, had a capacity of 1,000 cubic feet per second, and measured ten feet across the bed.[11]

Small green patches were developed here and there along the highlands above and beyond the Farmers' Ditch, by directing the water from a few mountain streams on to the dry, unproductive soil. Roger's Mesa, wide plateau a mile west of Hotchkiss, for example, derived a small supply from Leroux Creek. As its population increased, the lack of sufficient water became more and more noticeable. The residents dug numerous reservoirs in the hills above to help replenish the annual shortage, but they continued to run short. The exceptionally dry year of 1896 made it imperative that more drastic measures be taken.[12] Notices were posted around Hotchkiss requesting that all those interested in obtaining more water for Roger's Mesa meet at the school house. This sparsely attended meeting was the modest beginning of an even larger undertaking than the Stewart Ditch, which was nearing completion.

No development in the region took more courage and stamina than the building of the Fire Mountain Canal.[13] It was one big ditch that was constructed entirely by the local people, who furnished both the capital and labor. Contributions were made by the bankers and merchants, the returns from their investments being stock in the ditch. The work was done by ranchmen, who left their farms during the winter months when their orchards and fields did not need attention, to dig through the frozen ground. Wages were low, most of which were payable in stock. At the

[11] *North Fork Times*, Oct. 1, 1897.
[12] *Delta Independent*, Dec. 31, 1896.
[13] So named because it is cut through Fire Mountain, in whose troubled interior vast quantities of hidden coal have been burning for thousands of years.

company's yearly gathering in 1897 the secretary's report stated that of the 10,463 shares of capital stock that had been issued, 9,620 were for labor. No eight-hour day laws were then in vogue, and the men willingly worked from daybreak to sunset, averaging ten hours a day, even though, so it has been said, the impoverished treasury was not always able to keep the workers furnished with enough to eat. The contributions and assessments were just suffi-



PAONIA, COLORADO
Upper view, 1895; lower, 1903.

cient to keep the plows sharpened, settle blacksmith bills, and pay a minimum salary. Not a stick of dynamite was used on the entire length of the canal, through formations of cement, boulders, shale, and hillsides. The rocks had to be pried out by hand and rolled away with teams. However, the North Fork ranchers were not afraid of toil and hardships, and at one time the laborers numbered sixty men with teams, the line reaching a mile long. Ed Duke superintended the job for the first four miles, riding back and forth among the workers on horseback.

Ground was first broken in September, 1896, and it took five strenuous years to complete the Fire Mountain Canal. When finished it wound thirty-two miles along the north side of the North Fork River, from which stream the canal's water supply was obtained, about ten miles above Paonia. This ditch carried the valuable, life-giving liquid to Roger's, Sunnyside, and Pitkin mesas, redeeming nearly 10,000 acres of thirsty highlands a mile or more above the level of the Farmers' Ditch. Blooming orchards and green fields stand today as living monuments to the Spartanic sacrifices of the Fire Mountain Canal builders.

The Duke brothers of Hotchkiss were the chief promoters of the Overland Ditch, which was begun about the same time as the Fire Mountain Canal. Most of the dark, sandy loam on Redlands Mesa, six miles northwest of Hotchkiss, was filed on under the Desert Land Act by those who had faith in the completion of the project, including the Redlands Orchard Company, which planned to set out a large commercial orchard of apples, peaches, and pears. When the twenty-one-mile ditch was finished, approximately 9,000 acres of mesa land were ready for cultivation.

At the beginning of the present century a reservoir was dug in Onion Valley, about twenty-five miles south of Paonia, near Maher, Colorado. This reservoir was constructed so as to have a storage capacity of 8,000 acre feet behind a sixty-foot dam. A ditch twenty miles long was built from it to rejuvenate about 10,000 acres of barren land which lay just south of the Smith Fork of the Gunnison and extended ten miles down the creek from the nearby town of Crawford. This tableland was labeled Fruitland Mesa, evidencing the early belief that the North Fork boom would transform this plateau into a fruit section. However, the soil and altitude did not prove suitable for ideal orchard growth, and many local wits now refer to the mesa, which produces hay and grain, by the more appropriate title of Fruitless Mesa.[14]

The rapidly developing fruit industry, the livestock trade, and the recently purchased coal mine at the present town of Somerset, ten miles above Paonia, resulted in the building of the North Fork's first railroad. Fay R. Rockwell, who later made his home in Paonia, was superintendent of this division of the Denver and Rio Grande and personally supervised construction of the road from Delta through Hotchkiss and Paonia to Somerset. The train reached Hotchkiss September 18, 1902, and that momentous date has gone down in local history as Railroad Day. There was a big demonstration of band playing, races, bucking horses, and, of

[14]Although the North Fork mesas are now green with their newly-found life, the local water question is still a problem. By the first of July, 85 per cent of the water is gone, while 50 per cent of the need remains thereafter. After July only 10 per cent of the total annual flow of streams can be used. If reservoirs were built to save this now wasted spring and early summer surplus, North Fork production would be greatly increased.

course, speeches to welcome the future carrier of civilization into the North Fork. Benches were set up from which to view the rodeo after the too-hastily-built grandstand succumbed to the morning breezes. The only casualty occurred when a bronco pitched into the open pavilion and threw its Mexican "twister" off amid the startled crowd.

Railroad commission houses were ready to handle the North Fork fruit when the train first pulled into Hotchkiss and Paonia, ending forever the long lines of wagon shipments to Delta. The coming of iron rails was the real beginning of Paonia's boom, which lasted until about 1911, when Robert Curtis sold ten acres of peach land for $3,500 an acre.[15] During this period it was not unusual to buy ranches at $1,000 an acre and in two weeks sell them for $1,200 an acre.[16] One orchard consisting of twenty-two acres of apples and five acres of peaches returned $27,000 in the three years of 1904, 1905, and 1906.[17]

This golden prosperity was not only due to the new railroad, mild climate, the soaring reputation of the North Fork fruit country, and the splendid market, but also to insistent advertising. Real estate men hired the publisher of the Paonian newspaper alone to print 480,000 six-page folders to publicize the valley.[18] These were printed in red and blue ink with an optimistic write-up of the region. Each pamphlet was just large enough to fit into a big envelope, and they were circulated freely not only by the real estate men but by all citizens of the valley, who enclosed them with their correspondence. This widespread advertising played a major part in the rapid rise of land values.

From 1904 to 1909 nearly everyone was planting fruit, and the mesas as well as the bottom lands soon became one continuous garden of blooming orchards. Paonia grew swiftly, developing in population from about 250 at the beginning of the boom period to over four times that size by 1909, surpassing its rival town of Hotchkiss, which had grown from about 300 to 650 inhabitants. During 1904 to 1907 three weekly newspapers ran in Paonia at the same time, their enthusiastic publishers believing, like many others, that the rapidly growing town would soon develop into a metropolis. In 1912 Arthur L. Craig, the present editor, purchased the *Paonia Booster* and changed its name to *The Paonian*. A few

[15]Interview in 1936 with C. T. Rawalt, editor of the old Paonia newspaper.
[16]*Ibid.*
[17]E. E. Hufty (Secretary of the Paonia Commercial Association), "On the Productive North Fork," in *Rocky Mountain Resources*, December, 1907, p. 10.
[18]Rawalt interview, 1936.

months later the *Paonia Newspaper,* only other remaining news sheet, was suspended, and *The Paonian* alone continued.[19]

Fickle Fortune does not usually long remain faithful to those on whom she lavishes her much-courted good graces. As if expecting the seclusive mountain valley of the North Fork to become the long-sought-after-but-never-discovered Shangra-la of humanity, she protected it for a while from the ravages of life and time. Then, apparently deciding suddenly that the ideal Utopia which she visualized could never be completely attained, she turned away to let rough nature take its normal course.

The inherent laws of economics and climatic conditions did not continue to be so kind to the North Fork. Any business which prospers, soon has too many competitors entering its lucrative fields. The great fruit country of the Northwest was occupied during the fore part of the twentieth century, and before long surpluses were thrown on the western fruit market, lessening the demand for North Fork products. Until 1905 this section had never known anything in the way of a general failure, and everyone raised a full crop. As more and more orchards were planted, the North Fork produced more than the railroad could carry, and much fruit was lost through delay in shipping. A freeze occurred in 1912 which devastated the entire region and killed most of the peach trees. This calamity hastened the fall in real estate values. Fruit-destroying pests had gradually become a serious problem, greatly increasing the costs of production. As prices continued to drop in the face of rising expenses, many fruitmen sold out and left the country. Thousands of fruit trees were pulled out and the land used for general farming. Retired businessmen and farmers who had come to the North Fork and invested their savings in orchards, hoping to spend the rest of their lives in security and comfort, lost nearly everything they owned.

By 1913 the North Fork had passed through the visionary mists of paradise into a severe depression. Although the valley subsequently recovered from the panic, the production of fruit today is only from a quarter to a third as much as it was from 1906 to 1909, height of the boom epoch. The Utopian days have passed, but the North Fork still has the climate, water, and soil to rank it even yet among the champion fruit districts.

[19]Interview in 1936 with Arthur L. Craig, editor of *The Paonian.*

A Pictograph on a Silver Ornament

VICTOR F. LOTRICH

The ornament illustrated herewith was found in the vicinity of Craig, Colorado. The father of Glen O. Lampert of Fort Collins, while raking debris, uncovered it beneath a juniper tree. The family, because of the incised engravings, made a keepsake of the ornament for several years. Recently it has been called to the

OBVERSE AND REVERSE OF THE SILVER ORNAMENT
(Reduced one-half in size)

attention of the writer, and with the kind permission of the owners (whose intention it is to donate it to the State Historical Society) we are permitted to bring it to the attention of the public.

The plaque is of coin silver, coated with copper, made by the white man, and evidently sold to the Navajos. The one side has a conventional Navajo design, scratched with a file, and a circle of dots punched with the same tool.[1] There is some tooling of the same nature on the other side. This tooling is visible at the bottom portion, on either side of the hole, and at the right beneath the bird with outspread wings. The central figure, head, arms and body, is also tooled.

The pictograph, with the exception of the above, is scratched with light lines into the plaque. This is not in keeping with the conventionalized design, and apparently the ornament changed hands. It may have become the property of the Utes, or of one of the plains tribes.

The scene depicted seems to be a skirmish of some sort. Several interesting items appear in the portrayal of the event. We see a mixture of guns and spears, white man and Indian, mounted and unmounted figures, and a group of realistic birds. The four small figures along the bottom are arranged with varying equipment. We see, in turn, a shield, an empty hand, a lance, and a branch of some sort. The Indian at the left appears to be holding up his horse. The upper figure is mounted on a striped horse and carries a quiver, a probable parfleche, and from his neck flows a scarf; while the weapon he is using has the appearance of a submachine gun, which, of course, could not have been intended. The birds are problematical as to their actual meaning in connection with the scene shown.

Whether the pictograph is an actual portrayal of an event or merely an artist's conception of one, we would not venture to guess. The artistic work speaks for itself, in composition, in form, and in draftsmanship.

It may be well to mention, in passing, the two historical engagements known to have taken place in the vicinity where the ornament was found. One occurred in the valley of Little Snake, a branch of the Yampa River, where Fraeb with his white hunters and Snake Indian allies were menaced by a large party of Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and Sioux.[2] The other engagement occurred with the Utes on Milk Creek, and is well known as the Thornburgh Battle.[3] These, of course, may not have any connection with our drawing. However, various tribes passed through this region, any one of which might have dropped the ornament.

[1]Frederic H. Douglas, *Navajo Silversmithing*, Denver Art Museum Leaflet No. 15 (1930).
[2]LeRoy R. Hafen, "Fraeb's Last Fight and How Battle Creek Got Its Name," in *Colorado Magazine*, VII, 97-101.
[3]Elmer R. Burkey, "The Thornburgh Battle with the Utes on Milk Creek," in *Colorado Magazine*, XIII, 90-110.

Cherokee Goldseekers in Colorado, 1849-50

LeRoy R. Hafen

There has been much loose writing about discoveries of gold in Colorado by Cherokees, with the dates of such discoveries usually ranging from 1848 to 1852. There is no question but that the early Cherokee find led to the coming of the Russell-Cherokee party of 1858, which was the outstanding pioneer prospecting expedition to the Colorado region and the one that resulted in the Pike's Peak Gold Rush of 1859 and the permanent settlement of this state. Hence the importance of the early Cherokee discovery.

An examination of contemporary records, some of which have but recently come to light, enables us to determine beyond reasonable doubt the facts in the case.

News of the discovery of gold at Sutter's mill in 1848 made a special appeal to those Cherokees then living in Indian Territory who had had mining experience in their old home among the gold fields of north Georgia. Early in 1849, some of these Indians, well advanced in white civilization, decided to join other hopeful argonauts and seek the golden fleece in the new Eldorado on the Pacific Coast.

The company of which these Cherokees formed a part is usually known as the Cherokee Company, the Washington County Company or the Evans Company. A number of reports of its organization and early progress are available.[1] On February 3, 1849, a group of Cherokees met at the courthouse in Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation, and drew up and adopted a set of resolutions pertaining to the organization of a company to go to California.[2] During the same month a company of white men was formed at Fayetteville, Arkansas.[3] A place of rendezvous for these two companies and for other interested persons was appointed at the Grand Saline on April 21st.[4]

In a communication signed by "Oochaloota" and written from "Grand Prairie, on the Cherokee Perpetual Outlet, April 29, 1849," we learn of the organization and start of the company:

"Mr. Editor:—For the gratifications of those citizens of your country who have friends in this company, on their way to the land of 'Gold,' I have snatched a few moments from *camp* duties to announce the safe progress for ninety miles from Tahlequah.

"The company met, according to notification, on the 21st, but did no business until the 23rd. The company are officered by very excellent men, though the Cherokees did not participate in the

[1] R. P. Bieber (Ed.), *Southern Trails to California in 1849*, 325-37.
[2] *Cherokee Advocate*, Feb. 12, 1849.
[3] Bieber, *op. cit.*, 329, citing the *Fort Smith Herald* of Feb. 21, 1849.
[4] *Cherokee Advocate*, April 16, 1849.

choice of the same—they not having arrived at the rendezvous until Monday. Lewis Evans, of Evansville, was elected Captain; Thomas Tyner, of Washington county, 1st Lieutenant; P. Mankin, 2nd do.; Jas. S. Vann, Secretary; Martin Scrimpsher, Commissary.

"The company left the rendezvous on the 24th. The first day's travel was (owing to the heavy fall of rain a few days previous) very difficult. * * *

"The Cherokee portion of the company are thrown into a division together, and that hereditary disposition of clanishness, derived from their ancestry, is distinctly shown now.

"They are determined to 'stick together' through weal or woe. Although they have left their country for a few months, nevertheless the fire of patriotic love burns with continued intensity of fervour for the future welfare, progress, and onward destiny of their country."[5]

A list is then given of the membership of the company (comprising 124 persons) and the places whence they came. The largest number were from Washington County, Arkansas, with smaller contingents from Benton and Madison counties of the same state. Three women and five negroes were listed. The fourteen from the Cherokee Nation were: "M. M. Schrimpsher, Walt. J. B. Smith, O. W. Lipe, Sam. Potter, James S. Vann, R. L. Coleman, Daniel M. Gunter, J. C. McMaster, Geo. W. Keys, Rich. N. Keys, Josiah N. Battlinguard, N. R. N. Harlin, Jos. H. Sturdevant and Robt. Williams."

A detailed record of the early part of the journey is preserved for us in a letter from a member of the party, but is too long for reproduction here.[6] The party, with their forty wagons, broke a new trail, traveling between the two branches of the Verdigris in nearly a due northwest course. Upon reaching the Santa Fe Trail on May 13, the company debated whether to continue their northwest course and open a new road to the Oregon Trail or to turn west along the Santa Fe road. They chose the latter course.[7]

Unfortunately, no diary of the route through the Colorado region has been found. But a number of letters give some light on the course and fortunes of the company through this territory.

On the Arkansas River the company was joined by other parties California bound. Upon reaching Pueblo four wagons turned back. The editor of the *Cherokee Advocate* writes:

"I received a letter from my brother, dated Pueblo, June 22. He says [that] it is one of the very best of ways for a road. They

[5] *Arkansas Intelligencer*, May 19, 1849. This was apparently copied from the *Cherokee Advocate* of May 7, 1849.

[6] *Arkansas Intelligencer*, July 28, 1849. This letter was found by E. R. Burkey while working for the State Historical Society.

[7] Letter in the *Cherokee Advocate* of July 30, 1849, quoted in Bieber, *op. cit.*, 338. See also the *Little Rock Gazette* of July 26, 1849. This last reference is from Grant Foreman, Oklahoma historian.

met with no obstructions worth relating, except digging a few banks down. They lost forty oxen, and saw but four Indians after leaving the Osage until they got to Bent's Fort. When they arrived at Pueblo, some trappers told them that it was impossible for them to cross the mountains with their wagons, which caused thirty men to dispose of their wagons and what provisions they could not carry, to some trappers at a place by the name of Greenhorn, twenty-five miles south of Pueblo. Some of them disposed of their wagons at a great sacrifice, one wagon selling as low as five dollars. Brother says one offered him one mule and seven packsaddles for his wagon and team; but he says he did not take it. These men (trappers) say it is impossible for wagons to cross the mountains, so they can sell their mules at a very high price and get their wagons and provisions that they could not take, for nothing. The packing part of the company, including the former editor of the *Advocate* and several other Cherokee, employ a guide by the name of Owens,[8] a man that was once in Fremont's company. They pay him seven dollars per day, and he is to take them to the diggings in sixty days. The balance of the company, including nine men and thirty wagons, are going to attempt to cross with their wagons, and had employed a guide, part Osage, to take them by the Salt Lake. They will endeavor to go the Mormon route. The Salt Lake is four hundred miles from Pueblo, but the way they were going, about six [hundred]."[9]

The part of the company (including some of the Cherokees) that resorted to pack horses at Pueblo reached Salt Lake City on July 24, just as the Mormons were celebrating the second anniversary of their arrival in the Salt Lake Valley. From this place George W. Keys wrote the following letter:

"City of the Salt Lake, July 15 [25], 1849.

"Dear Brother.—I avail myself of the present opportunity of writing you a few lines to let you know that we are all well at present. We got here yesterday about 10 o'clock where we found five or six thousand Mormon inhabitants assembled at a feast, or celebration, where they had met to celebrate the day of their arrival in the valley of the Great Salt Lake, two years ago. This performance was very much like one of our temperance meetings. They marched around their shed several times—the band of music in front, then 24 young men in white uniform, with swords in their hands, then came 14 young ladies in white, followed by 24 old men

[8] Richard Owens, with J. C. Fremont on his expedition of 1845.

[9] Bieber, *op. cit.*, 340-41. Joseph A. Sturdivant, one of the Cherokees, wrote from Sacramento, California, Nov. 20, 1849: "* * * I sent you a trunk and buffalo rug from Pueblo, by Mr. Tiner (that lives up near Fayetteville); but have since learned that they were all killed by the Indians."—Bieber, *op. cit.*, 350. Permission to quote the article cited in this note was kindly given by The Arthur H. Clark Co., publisher of Dr. Bieber's volume.

bearing flags or banners. After speaking, singing and parading around, firing cannon, &c., they sat down to as fine a dinner as you would find anywhere—which to us was not bad to take. They have lots of beans, and peas, and potatoes, &c. We have been about one month coming from Pueblo to this place, a distance of about 100 [600] miles over one of the worst roads in the west, with several large rivers to cross; we had them to swim and raft. In crossing Green river, there was one of the company drowned. His name was Garvin—he was from Benton. Some of the party lost their guns, provision, money, and saddles—which placed them in rather an awkward situation—100 miles from any settlement with neither provisions, saddles nor guns. After getting to Bridges port [Bridger's Fort], they fixed themselves up and have got to this place, where we intend to rest ourselves and recruit our animals, &c. We have passed a great many emigrants since we struck the Northern road, besides what have gone ahead and are still behind. A great many of them have died with the cholera. We have heard that the company of Cherokees that came by the way of Independence have lost several of their men from the Cholera, &c. Flower and bacon is worth 15 cents per lb., here, and scarce at that. The news from California is very encouraging. The Mormons tell us that any man that will work can make from one to three hundred dollars per day.

"From this place to California, is about 800 miles; we expect to get there about the first of September. I must stop as the mail is about to leave. I remain your affectionate brother until death.

"To L. H. Keys. G. W. Keys."[10]

One of the Cherokees, O. W. Lipe, who remained with the wagon train, gives the route traveled by the main body from Pueblo to Salt Lake:

"Mormon City, Salt Lake, Wednesday, August 15, 1849.

"We have got this far, a distance from home of 1,420 miles. We arrived here on Monday and expect to leave this evening. We traveled from Pueblo by the following route: Fort St. Vrain's on South Platte; crossed South Platte at the mouth Cache la Poudre; up said stream through the mountains, to Laramie Plains; thence crossed Laramie river near the mountains; crossed Medicine Bow river; passed Medicine Bow mountains; crossed the North Park and North Platte [and] Green river south of the South pass; and intersected the Independence road on Blacks Fork, about fourteen miles west of Green river. You have probably heard of the fate of those Cherokee with Doctor Thompson; out of fifteen, nine died with cholera on the Platte. Among the dead are Samuel Bell, Brice

[10] *Arkansas Intelligencer*, Dec. 8, 1849, apparently copied from the *Cherokee Advocate*.

Martin, William Parks, and others. We have had one death in our company, a man by the name of Thorp, from White river. He died from an old disease. Since we crossed the North Platte, there has been much sickness in our company; the disease is mountain fever. Of us Cherokee, Daniel, myself, and Schrimsher have been sick but are well again. When we arrived at the Independence road, we Indians quit the company and went ahead. Since I commenced writing this, the others have come in, but in two separate companies; so we have put off starting until morning. We go with one of the companies; so our train will be twelve wagons. On this road we often see one wagon traveling by itself. The wagons on this road are so numerous that it seems like one continuous train."[11]

We note from the above quotation that Captain Evans' wagon train crossed the South Platte at the mouth of the Cache la Poudre and hence did not cross Clear Creek and Ralston Creek, which figure so prominently in the story of the Cherokee discovery of gold in Colorado. It is of course possible that the packing party, which included some Cherokees, might have crossed the South Platte at the Denver site, but even if they did, no evidence has been found indicating that they discovered gold in the Ralston Creek vicinity. None of the letters mention any prospecting in the Colorado region by Cherokees in 1849.

On the other hand, primary historical sources give 1850 as the year of the significant discovery. From two members of the Russell-Cherokee prospecting party of 1858 we have contemporary accounts that throw light on the earlier discovery. One of these men, William McKimens, writes that the Russell-Cherokee party came down Cherry Creek and reached the South Platte on June 23, 1858. He continues:

"Crossing said river we proceeded to our particular point of destination, which was seven miles north of said river, on the creek known as Ralston Creek where a Mr. Beck,[12] a Cherokee Indian, said he panned $5 worth of the gold dust to a pan full of gravel. This was done, or rather said to be done, in the spring of 1850.

"But I think Mr. Beck was somewhat mistaken in regard to the amount; as, after prospecting until the 6th of July, our best panning amounted to about one cent's worth of the dust to the pan full of gravel."[13]

Luke Tierney, another member of the Russell party of 1858, tells of crossing the South Platte at the mouth of Cherry Creek on

[11] *Cherokee Advocate*, Jan. 21, 1850, in Bieber, *op. cit.*, 345-47. Permission to quote given by The Arthur H. Clark Co.

[12] John Beck was the promoter and a leader of the Cherokee contingent of the Russell-Cherokee Party of 1858. See also reference to him below.

[13] Letter written from Auraria City, Nov. 11, 1858. Found in the *Leavenworth Times* of Dec. 18, 1858, and re-published in the *Colorado Magazine*, XIII, 169.

June 24, 1858, and says: "We continued our march over high rolling prairie, and down some most stupendous banks a distance of about five miles, at the end of which we came to a large creek, known as Long's creek [Clear Creek], where we found great difficulty in effecting a crossing. The water was about five feet deep, very wide, and the current unusually swift. However, we crossed over in safety and continued our march reaching our destination—RALSTON'S CREEK [capitalized in the original] about 6 o'clock P. M. Here, according to the statements of the returned Californians, we were in the immediate vicinity of the gold mines."[14]

From these and other accounts[15] it is clear that the destination of the Russell-Cherokee expedition of 1858 was Ralston Creek, near present Arvada. This but emphasizes the importance of the diary extract that is to follow, which gives an account of the gold discovery and the naming of Ralston Creek.

This Cherokee party of 1850 was led by Capt. Clement Vann McNair. It set out from near present Stillwell, Oklahoma, on April 20 and reached California on September 28. The route to and through Colorado was in general along the "Cherokee Trail," blazed by Captain Evans' expedition of the previous year. The extract is from the diary of John Lowery Brown, a young Cherokee, and is published here with the kind permission of the *Chronicles of Oklahoma,* in which publication the entire journal appeared with a foreword and notes by Muriel H. Wright in June, 1934. Unfortunately, the members of this party of 1850 are not named. We take up the diary on the Arkansas River near Pueblo:

"June 13 today snow toped mountains in view plainly.

Camp 37 Traveled 12 miles and at noon reached Peueblo found J. H. Woolfs company there preparing to "Pack"—

" 14 Lay Bye all day. The ox Train consisting of 33 waggons came up and camped near. at night had a big Dance—

June 15 Traveled North along the north Bank of a large Creek[16] which emptys into Ark R. Below Peueblo. Left the Pack company preparing for Packing. Made 15 miles. Camp 38—

[14]Luke Tierney, *History of the Gold Discoveries on the South Platte River* (Pacific City, Iowa, 1859).
[15]J. C. Smiley, *History of Denver,* 179-187; J. H. Pierce, "With the Green Russell Party," in *The Trail,* XIII, No. 12.
[16]Fountain Creek.

" 16 today J. J. May of Cane Hill, Arks quitt the pack Co—and joined my mess Traveled along the creek 15 miles. Camp 39—No buffalo since the 30th of May. Bear sign Plenty. one killed today

June 17 Traveled north, leaving the Creek. Traveled over Sand hills, pine Timber. passed Pikes Peak which is covered with snow. camped at cold spring of water—made today about 20 miles Camp 40th—

" 18 today we crossed the dividing ridge between the Arks & Platt Traveled 25 miles. Camped on a Bold Running, Clear stream of water.[17] waters of the Platt. Good grass & wood Camp 41

" 19 very hard storm this evening hale from the size of a Birds to a hens egg Continued down the above mentioned Creek 20 miles Good Grass, water & timber Camp 42—

June 20th ten miles today Took a left hand trail down the Creek, which was made by Capt Edmonson[18] about two weeks ago. about 10 oclock came to the South fork of Platt River. Made a Raft and commenced crossing the waggons. camped on the Bank of Platt. Camp 43—[19]

[Notes on reverse pages of the diary.]

Sayings of the Boys while wrafting the Platt—No one speak but the Captain—Will you hold your tongue you scoundrel—hold on, pitch on to that raft fellows a dozen or two of you—push it off—now she rides—Let her swing—hold to the rope to the right you Rogues—Run out to the right with the rope—Cordelle there on the Left Rope. pitch ashore

[17]Cherry Creek.
[18]Capt. Edmonson's company was one of several that traveled the Cherokee Trail through Colorado in 1850.
[19]This was the site of future Denver.

my lads—all Right—Let her come—now she Rides —Get off the Rope there Behind—I cant pull the Raft and you on the Rope. Get away Bill from behind, you'r so short, you pull down instead of along—who did that? There now the rope is Broke —Back she goes—pull her up—stop that fellows mouth and hear what the Captain says—I'll spill you into the River the first thing you know—Look out I'll see if I can throw a rock over. who saw a Kan Kaven—he did? who killed a deer with a Black tail—oh it was a sheep—no it was a Goat— No it was a Donkey—That was a good one by Gum —George pull my finger why didn't they marry. now is the time to hold your tater—Into it Dugan— &c &c

June 21 we called this Ralstons Creek[20] because a man of that name found gold here — finished crossing at 2 oclock left the Platt and traveled 6 miles to Creek Good water grass & timber Camp 44—

" 22 — Lay Bye. Gold found.

" 23 — this morning all except 3 messes who traveled on concluded to stay and examine the Gold. Bell, Dobkins & R. J. Meigs traveled on

June 24th only 14 waggons — Left Ralstons Creek and made 26 miles. Rainy & very mudy. Camped on creek plenty water, wood, & grass Camp 45—"[21]

An important letter recently found refers to Mr. Beck and the gold discovery on an affluent of the Platte in 1850. It also forecasts the important prospecting expedition of 1858:

"Tahlequah, C. N. Oct. 31, 1857.

"Editor Southwest Democrat:—In a late number of your paper I see a letter from Richard Coody, referring to the gold

[20]According to Dr. L. J. Russell, of the Russell-Cherokee party of 1858, this Ralston was a white man connected to the Cherokees by marriage.—J. C. Smiley, *History of Denver*, 180. James H. Pierce, another member of the Russell party of 1858, gives, in his recollections written in 1885, Ralston's first name: "Beck, in company with Louis Ralston in crossing the plains in the year 1849, going to California, had found gold on Cherry Creek, and also on Ralston Creek in small quantities."—J. H. Pierce, "With the Green Russell Party," in *The Trail*, XIII, No. 12, p. 1. From the other evidence presented in this article, it would appear that Mr. Pierce in his reminiscences made a mistake as to the year and that it should be 1850 instead of 1849.

[21]*Chronicles of Oklahoma*, XII, 188-90.

region of the South Platte. As it may be of interest to some of your readers to know who some of the returned gold-hunters are, and what they say in reference to this country, I will give you the statement of Mr. Beck, a citizen of this nation and a member of the National Legislature. He is a worthy man and considered to be reliable in the strictest sense. He was raised in the gold regions of North Georgia, and thoroughly understands digging for the precious metal. He says that in the spring of 1850, he, in company with several others, started to California, and when they had reached the mountains, he and a few others commenced prospecting in a tributary of the South Platte. One of the company waded into the creek, from the bottom of which he obtained a panful of sand which yielded two or three dollars' worth of gold, with which they returned to camp and proposed remaining, but being overruled by a large portion of their companions who had heard such marvelous tales of California, they were obliged to yield and keep on their way. Mr. Beck, while in California, made from twelve to twenty dollars per day. Since his return from California he has been anxious to return to the South Platte, but has not been able to raise a company sufficiently strong to protect them from hostile Indians several tribes of which range in the immediate neighborhood * * *.

"Mr. Beck and a large company speak of returning to the [South Platte] mines in the spring. He says it will not be safe for a small company to go.

Geo. Butler."[22]

The Denver High School, 1876-1880

MARTHA A. MORRISON*

While there are a few left who "knew her when" these memories of the first few years of the High School may be of interest. They have been reinforced by reference to early reports of the Board of Education.

There had been a system of schools with grades from ninth to first (numbered then in reverse order from the present), and the beginnings of a high school. The Arapahoe School had been built and occupied and the necessity for more room evident when Aaron Gove was appointed Superintendent of Schools in 1875. He guided their development for many years and put Denver on the scholastic map. He re-graded the elementary schools, first to fourth, primary; fifth to eighth, grammar.

[22]*Herald of Freedom*, Dec. 5, 1857, copied from the *Southwest Democrat* of Nov. 12, 1857. Mr. Butler was the U. S. Indian Agent with the Cherokees. This letter was found by E. R. Burkey.

*Miss Morrison lives in Denver today.—Ed.

In the spring of 1876, James H. Baker became principal of the High School, with Robert Givens, M. Adele Overton and Nannie O. Smith as assistants. Madame Henrioud taught French. There was plenty of room at the top, so pupils in the upper grades were pushed up, or induced to enter the High School. At the examination held in June, 1876, there were fifty applicants, of whom forty passed.

By some hook or crook, I know it was not intentional on my part, I had passed from the third to the first grade that year and took the examination for the High School. My grade teachers were Mrs. Garbutt, Mrs. Anna Palmer, later principal of Wolfe Hall for many years, a Miss Kelcey, remembered by her very golden hair, and Miss Freeman. Mr. Gove told mother they had not intended to let me pass, but my grades were just too high. I was the youngest one even though not small. My grades were never remarkable, but just far enough from the "red" to keep me with the class without any injury from overstudy. A couple of years later when studies were more carefully adjusted, I might not have been so fortunate.

In September, 1876, the senior class numbered seven. Three names stand out: Robert W. Steele, Chief Justice of Colorado; General Irving Hale, and Mrs. Seraphina Eppstein Pisko, who has been so identified with the National Jewish Hospital.

Of the five members of the junior class, the only boy, H. L. Baldwin, now has the honor of being the oldest living man graduate of the High School, now the East High.

The most outstanding man in the sophomore class did not graduate. He had to finance his own college course, so went to Deer Trail as telegraph operator. When he entered Sheffield Scientific School he thought he had enough money to keep him one year. His work secured scholarships and tutoring, while his vacations were spent in railroad shops. When he graduated he had more money than when he entered college. Edwin M. Herr is now remembered as President of the Westinghouse Co. Miss Alice Eastwood had to work her way through high school. A brilliant scholar, she became specially interested in botany. After teaching in the High School for several years, she became Curator of the Herbarium at the Academy of Science in San Francisco. She was valedictorian of the class of 1879.

The whole third floor of the Arapahoe Building was used by the High School. The large assembly room occupied the front of the building. There were two large class rooms and a small one partitioned from the hall—originally the boys' coatroom. Classes in Greek and French were heard here. The chemical laboratory was in the basement. The teacher performed the experiments

while the class looked on. Grade pupils were often interested and peered through the windows, but sufficiently nauseous results sent them flying.

Paul H. Hanus, who has been connected with Harvard for many years, succeeded Mr. Givens. He had been a Denver boy before going east to college and it irked the ones who had known him familiarly to have him for a teacher. Charles J. Harris was also a teacher. He was reputed to have a fine mind, but evidently hated to disturb it.

In those days School District No. 1 comprised only that part of Denver lying east of Cherry Creek and south of the Platte. Pupils from other parts of town paid tuition.

The High School Lyceum was the chief interest of the pupils. This met on Friday evenings twice a month. Practical experience in parliamentary proceedings, debates and politics was acquired, together with acquaintance with Cushing's Manual and Roberts' Rules of Order. The girls added grace to the meetings with music and elocution—now we have tempered it down to "readings."

During our freshman year, American History was discussed during the General Exercises. One day the admission of Kansas to the Union and the misfortunes of "Bleeding Kansas" brought out the indignant remark from one of the senior class, "Well, my father was a border ruffian."

Changes had taken place gradually, members of the class dropping out and new ones entering. Our latest recruit was a graduate of the Malden High School near Boston, who felt that a diploma from the Denver High School would be of value to her. We have always been proud of Celia Osgood Peterson.

Our most illustrious member had never attended school until he came to Denver, a boy in his early 'teens. Mr. Gove examined him and said, "I am sorry; you will have to start with the babies, but you do not have to stay there." In the next two years he had passed through the grades and entered the High School. The Denver High School and the High School Lyceum were the alma mater of Ex-Governor Elias M. Ammons.

Mr. R. W. Woodbury offered a five dollar gold piece to the winning orator. How often we heard Webster's "Reply to Hayne," "Spartacus" and other time-honored examples for oratory.

According to the School Report, passes were secured for the first two classes to go to Morrison for Geology. By the spring of 1880, it was a regular school picnic, with the geologists following Prof. Baker over the Red Rocks, and the botanists with Miss Overton taking the trail up Bear Creek, close to the water, for no road had been built as yet.

At the graduation of the first class Dr. Steele had the pleasure of handing his diploma to his son, Robert W. Steele, and when the class of 1879 graduated, Mr. K. G. Cooper gave her diploma to his daughter Jessie.

Mr. Baker was really very young when he came to Denver and was afraid it might be known and his discipline made to suffer. Miss Overton later married Mr. J. S. Brown and Miss Smith married Col. D. C. Dodge.

THE ARAPAHOE SCHOOL, HOME OF THE FIRST DENVER HIGH SCHOOL

Not many of us have risen to prominence. We have been just good average citizens, teachers predominating; but of the nine living members of the Class of 1880, only three have been teachers.

It is a far cry from that high school to the five large ones that are now needed; from the teachers who knew all their pupils, to the present when such a need is evident and the manner of accomplishing it is being sought. New times and new problems will keep the schools alive.

The Denver High School, 1874-78

HARRY L. BALDWIN

I have had the privilege of reading the very interesting account of the "early days" as recorded by Martha A. Morrison and have been asked to add a little of my own remembrances, which go back as far as 1873.

The Arapahoe Street building had just been completed and I was entered in the first grade, along with several who later became members of the classes of '77 and '79 respectively, perhaps thirty in all, and who were taught by Miss Fisher, in what were designated as classes A, B and C. At the country school I had attended in Kansas and where all grades were represented, my teacher, in conversation with my father, decided that I should omit Grammar until I was fourteen years old then take it up and finish it quickly, not because I was an outstanding student but because those with whom I was associated were most unusually slow and that this would hold me back unnecessarily. Therefore, upon reaching Denver in 1873, when I was thirteen years old, instead of placing me in what was to be the class of 1877, for which I was qualified, excepting only Grammar, I was placed in what was to be the class of 1878, which had nearly finished it. Thus I reviewed most of my old subjects for the entire year and took a new one for about three months only. Clarence Darrow once stated that teaching grammar should be made a penal offense and teaching Latin should be made a capital offense without a recommendation for mercy. Both these ideas of his have been my belief also, and I have suffered from both.

Not over half of our class returned as high school students in 1874, mostly I think for the same reason as given me by one of them more than fifty years later, and the son of a member of the School Board, that his father "thought it would be better for him to quit school and learn business methods." After I was regularly in the High School, 1874 and later, our class each year would have many new accessions and lose many of the old ones, but the five who finally graduated were with us for the entire period.

School hours during 1873 and 1874 were the same as for the rest of the grades, 9 A. M. to 4 P. M., with one and one-half hour noon period. In January, 1875, came a storm which probably, for severity, has not since been equaled. All grades were discontinued for two weeks, excepting the High School, which was dismissed each day at 2:30 P. M. After the blizzard had passed, Mr. Gove came in one day and remarked that "five continuous days of snow, with the thermometer 10° below zero, was very unusual." When the weather had moderated, he asked our opinion about continuing

the new hours for the High School or returning to the old and a vote was taken, which showed a nearly unanimous desire for the new arrangement. This was accepted and for many years remained unchanged. I obtained recently, from the Weather Bureau, the date of this disturbance, which was given as January 5 to January 18, with 29° below on January 9, but with a very light snowfall. My memory is of flying snow for five days as noted above. A very important fact for the City Water Department was that the water mains in the entire city were frozen solid, and more particularly that all had to be dug up from the old level of three feet below the surface and relaid at five feet below, and that took many months to complete. Fortunately at that time, Denver was mainly included between Welton and Wazee streets and Cherry Creek and 21st Street. As nearly every home had a well, little suffering from water shortage was felt.

Our final class consisted of only five members, four-fifths of whom were girls, or what I may very properly say, "Four feminine brains with locomotive powers," none of which averaged below 92.2 and one masculine substitute for a brain which trailed along nearly ten points below the feminine average. One of our earliest deserters, Cynthia Westover, became a very celebrated magazine writer, but I cannot recall her married name. Ada Lockwood, our valedictorian, with a four-year grade average of over 96, made a mark for later valedictorians to shoot at that I think has not been equaled, and Adella Condit, less than a point lower, made a notable record as a public school teacher for more than fifty years. That could have almost been predicted many years ago, when she established a continuous record of never absent or tardy for seven years.

I could relate a good many anecdotes pertaining to Irving Hale, for I was very closely associated with him from 1873 to 1880 and occasionally thereafter, both in school and daily life. All thought it a little strange when the diplomas were handed out, that his came last, but I will never forget the exact words of the President of the Board of Education as he said, "Of you, Irving Hale, valedictorian of this class, we have reason to feel especially proud, knowing as we do that your entire education has been received in the schools of Colorado." Knowing Mrs. Hale and Prof. Hale as I did I suspect they also had a considerable finger in that pie and I am glad to be able to contribute here my belief to that effect.

School athletics were practically nil and were individual only as far as the boys were concerned and were confined largely to "Marbles," "Tops," "Foot and a half," and "Jacks." Later, the girls stole the latter. I don't remember Martha, or "Mattie" as we all knew her, as ever indulging in "Hop Scotch," nor do I know if it had then been invented. Probably she and her associates were limited to such athletics as "Charm String," "Autograph Albums," and "Bean Bags."

The High School boys formed an athletic club, in which the activities were 100-yard runs, standing and running high and broad jumps; hop, skip and jump; and pole vault. These seven activities required seven medals, each having the name of the event stamped on a German silver blank, with the words FIRST PRIZE. These would be contended for each alternate Saturday. Irving Hale, by the second or third meet, had them all and, as no one succeeded in taking them away from him the club soon languished and died. No real competition existed. Later, a ball club was formed. Frank Woodbury and I were candidates for captain. I won. Then somebody thought a moment and asked the question, "How long shall the term be?" Frank shouted "Two weeks" and the assembly hilariously adopted it. Some sandlot club challenged us. One dollar was put up by each side. We lost. We at once raised, with a little trouble, another dollar and immediately challenged for another dollar per side. This quickly went the way of the first. "The Modocs," we called ourselves. If we had formed our club ten years later, we would likely have called ourselves "Apaches." Under that name, we might have won, for Geronimo was a far greater man than poor old Chief Jack of the Modocs. This about winds up athletics at that time. Football, the Rugby type, was just beginning in the East but did not spread westward until ten years or so later.

I chanced to be the first registrant of Denver University, which opened October 1, 1880. John Hipp joined a few days later and became their first graduate. While there we kicked around a round black football, but not until I entered Princeton a year later did I ever see or even know about the present widespread football game.

Another member of the "third class," later a member of the "fourth class" of 1880, deserves to rank alongside the worthy members already noted by Miss Morrison. Desperately harassed by lack of funds and woefully handicapped by facial scars received when an infant, he worked for years to put himself through the High School and Denver University. He has told me that at times while attending the former, he thought he would "starve to death chopping or splitting cordwood at twenty-five cents per cord" at a wood yard immediately opposite the High School to support and finance his education. A cord per day was, with his school work, a monumental achievement. Therefore, I feel justified in adding to her list of illustrious names that of John Hipp. Taking up the

cudgel for temperance at a time when it had few friends, he did more than his share to bring Prohibition to the front, and was later mentioned by the chief newspaper organ of the Prohibition Party as a worthy candidate for Vice-President of the United States. He failed to do all he tried to do, but this is not failure!

Will Nichols was a member of our class in 1874 but later went to Colorado Springs to live. In 1882 he, with Edwin M. Herr, met me by appointment in New York City at a football game of our respective colleges. At that time Herr was first in his class, seventy in number, and Nichols was second in the same class in the "Sheffield Scientific School" of Yale. That was about fifty-five years ago and I have not seen or heard of or from him since then.

The memory of Mr. Gove is revered by every member of the High School. His methods of teaching were often unique. Once, when he entered at the rear of the big east room where were seated all members of the four classes, supposedly busy at a morning study hour, he dropped a blackboard eraser on the floor. Three seconds later he said, "All but three turned around to see what was going on." The lesson has remained with me sixty years.

During the year or more preceding the advent of Miss Smith, the morning exercise included forty minutes in congregational singing. He taught the four classes. While vocal music was not a subject in which he might be considered an expert, or a subject in which a Superintendent of Schools might be required to excel, I am confident we all profited by his instructions. Many of us, otherwise, might never have received such.

I think we early members all feel those were good old days. We were real pioneers. Would we willingly change those memories for the later ones our children have received from their later and more efficient instructors? Here is one vote in the negative.