

# THE COLORADO MAGAZINE

Published bi-monthly by  
The State Historical Society of Colorado

Vol. XXII

Denver, Colorado, March, 1945

No. 2

## John Franklin Spalding, Bishop of Colorado, 1874-1902

An Autobiographical Sketch, with Introduction and Notes by  
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[As we are urged by historians to keep in remembrance those who have helped to develop different parts of the country, I am presenting the story of a man who did a great deal to develop Colorado and the West in the early days; that is, from 1874 to 1902. He had begun to write this himself and among his papers I have found a manuscript of his early life which we shall use for the first part of the story.

In 1828 a boy was born on a farm in Belgrade, Maine. This boy eventually became a Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Colorado and Wyoming and what the West owes to him the following pages will, at least in a small measure, show. The autobiography now begins:]

My purpose is—should time be allowed me—to write out some reminiscences of my Episcopate. But first should come a chapter concerning my early life. I am of the seventh generation from Edward Spalding, who is believed to have come with his brother Edmund in the company of Sir George Yeardley, first to Virginia in 1619, and after Edmund had joined Lord Baltimore's colony in Maryland, to Massachusetts Bay before 1640. He settled first in Braintree and later, in 1654, he and his oldest son became, with others, the proprietors of the town of Chelmsford. Both served for some years as "selectmen" and consequently must have been members of the Established Church. He died in 1670, leaving a will which is still extant. The descent is as follows: Edward, Lieut. John, Joseph, Lieut. John, Jesse, John, John Franklin. The first John served in King Philip's War. The second was in Lovell's War and was for the rest of his life Lieutenant in the Militia. Both he and Jesse are believed to have been for short periods in the War of the Revolution. Joseph, a second cousin (cousin of father's) fired the first shot and killed the first man at Bunker Hill.

\*Miss Spalding, youngest daughter of the late Bishop Spalding, lives in Denver today.—Ed.



My mother was a Coombs. The Coombs family are supposed to be of French (Huguenot) descent. They first settled at Cape Cod, and some of them later, 18th century, at Pemaquid in the District of Maine. Anthony Coombs, my great-grandfather, came before the Revolution to Vinal Haven in Penobscot Bay, and acquired a large farm house, which is still standing. He married Anne Stinson of the same town, daughter of James Stinson. Grandfather Anthony Coombs built and carried on a grist mill and a saw mill, utilizing the ebb and flow of the tides in a narrow creek for water power. One of his sons, Sylvanus, my grandfather, was a ship builder as well as farmer. The Coombs people were industrious and thrifty and had considerable mechanical genius.

My father was a farmer and after his marriage to Lydia Coombs in 1827 in Vinal Haven, where he was quarrying granite for the State Capitol in Augusta, bought a farm and settled in Belgrade, Kennebec County. He came from Chelmsford, Massachusetts, where the Spaldings had lived from its first settlement in 1659. Mother was the school teacher of the place, Carver's Harbour, at the southern end of the island, Vinal Haven. The farm where I was born was a hard one of good soil, but requiring much cultivation. The prospect from it in every direction was magnificent. It is now, the result chiefly of father's work, one of the best farms and certainly the most beautiful in all that country.

My father, like all his family before him, was a man of great physical strength and endurance, and of remarkable persistence in all his undertakings. He usually employed in the summer seasons one or more "hired men," but did most of the work himself, always planning for the future. His became the model farm in that region. I remember when he built the large barn in 1853 and also when probably a little later the wing or ell to the house in the end of which the carriage house was erected. One of the improvements of the place, I always thought of with astonishment. In clearing off the rocks and stones from the west field, they were laid up in a wall at the lower side of it, probably a third of a mile in length, which was at the bottom some sixteen feet wide, and on the lower side eight feet in height, involving through several years an extraordinary amount of labor. The cost was more than the value. It seemed ill-judged and unnecessary, for there was ample land below the fields to the east, comparatively free from stones and of a better quality. But that was a convenient pasture for the cows, a lane from the barn leading to it; the beauty and symmetry of the place required the extension of the western field a quarter of a mile westward. It was the dictate of a high artistic sense. It was to make the place beautiful. The house was on a hill which sloped off in every direction. The Long Pond was two miles distant westward, the Great

Pond, three or four miles across to the north and Snow Pond as far east; a narrow stream connects all these. Ponds elsewhere were called lakes. Due west, Mount Washington, on clear days, shows its white crest, ninety miles away. The horizon all around ten to fifty miles distant, is mountainous. The scenery is grand and beautiful. I once tried to draw it in pencil.<sup>1</sup>

Mother died when I was seven years old. I remember her well, her prayers for her children, her instructions and example, her deathbed which was happy, her faith triumphing in Christ. Father had to go to Augusta that day. We children were about her bed. She had been ill and consumptive but the end came unexpectedly. She was an earnest and devout member of the Methodist Church. She left four children, of whom I was the eldest. Father married again after a year, a young woman who had been in his employ. He could but choose one who would be a good housekeeper. She was a step-mother. She never won the love of the children and never by any of them was called mother. The house as remembered was cheerless. Childhood in the home was without joy. No kiss or caress is remembered. Kindness there doubtless was, but the absence of outward evidence and tokens of affection. It was much the same in the families about us, the result largely of Puritan ancestry and habits of self-repression perpetuated. Sliding down hill was our great sport. Grandfather Sylvanus Coombs came up from Vinal Haven, two miles from Camden, and made us sleds. We lived on top of a hill, so it was fine coasting, rather dangerous, but great fun. We thought a great deal of grandfather. He told us stories. I never saw Grandfather Spalding. He lived in Chelmsford, Massachusetts.

Our house was a double house, a story and a half, painted white, hall in the middle, stairs going up, rooms on each side. We lived mostly in the back. Four rooms, two on each side, hall going past the stairs into the back room. Then the wing had a big kitchen with large fire place. All downstairs rooms were warmed with big log fires. The long ell extended beyond the kitchen. The two rooms in the front of the house were seldom used, blinds were shut. I think one was a guest room. All the houses about were alike. Outside was a covered pump. My uncle lived next door; the school teacher boarded there. He used to make us feel at home, gave us things to eat. He was my mother's brother. The view from our house was most beautiful, ponds and lakes and hills. It was one of the best houses in town, but there were many inconveniences.

<sup>1</sup>He always had an eye for beauty. He was interested in his eldest daughter's being an artist and quite proud of two pictures he had made by some special process using India ink washes. They always hung in the dining-room, and have been given to the State Historical museum, as it was thought that this process might be of historical interest.



Our small frame school house, holding forty to fifty children, long seats and desks on either side, a big fireplace at one end and the "master's" desk at the other, was a mile away to the north in the open country. The road was bleak and windy. The drifting snow in winter was often so deep as to cover the stone fences on either side of the road. It was only in winter that we could attend school. Boys had to be kept at home in the summer to help in the



BISHOP JOHN FRANKLIN SPALDING (about 1875)

work of the farm. So we had but eight or ten weeks in the year of schooling, unless, as was sometimes the case, we could attend the school more than a mile distant in the district south of us after our school term had closed.

Father had a most excellent common school education and took an interest in his children's progress in study. He would help us do our sums and encourage us as much as possible. Besides doing the chores, no small labor at a farm house with many cattle, horses, etc., to feed and take care of, wood to be hauled, chopped and split and stored in the wood house, we did some study mornings and evenings.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>In after years at his mountain home in Colorado, he loved to chop the wood and pile it up ready for use. He did this with his left hand, but as far as is remembered was not left-handed otherwise. He had a very bad scar from a cut, chopping wood in boyhood, which prevented his opening straight his fingers of that hand.

But the school was one of the worst in the town. Almost any winter the big boys would put the master out if they did not choose to like him, or act so disorderly that he had to be turned out for not keeping good discipline. I suppose I must have been about thirteen years old when a young man, John Craig, who was fitting for college at Kent's Hill Seminary, Readfield, was engaged as teacher. He was a pale-faced youth, of slight build, but of some athletic training. It was soon found that he could handle boys of twice his size. By joining in their sports, not disdaining to wrestle or box with them, and taking the greatest interest in their progress in study, inviting them to his rooms of evenings, helping them and interesting them socially, he soon acquired ascendancy over them. I was one of the smaller boys and could learn quickly if interested. It was he who first stimulated me to study and be ambitious to learn. Arithmetic, when made to understand the processes, and even English grammar, were under him "delightful studies." He taught me to declaim, or "speak pieces." We had an exhibition which was repeated in the next hamlet. My part was the funeral oration of Mark Antony over the dead body of Caesar. With a boy of my age in the next school house to the south, I gained applause in the scene of Brutus and Cassius. We had a night grammar school here, parsing words and analyzing sentences from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in which the better scholars of the two districts joined, meeting once a week. We had spelling schools, the champions choosing sides and everyone who missed a word sitting down until one on each side was left standing till one or the other was discomfited and the victor stood triumphant.

This master, John Craig, taught our school for two successive winters and then went to Waterville College, now Colby University. After graduation he made teaching his profession and became general superintendent of schools in Maine. Following him, fully one-half of the teachers of our district were failures from lack of adaptability and power to interest young people. The other one-half succeeded fairly well. We had only the common branches, not much more than the three "R's." We had no books at home but the Bible, an abridged Josephus, William Jones' *Church History* and a few others. The Bible was chiefly read—a large Bible with the Apocrypha had a special interest.

Father was in manners a Puritan and a stoic. His life was absorbed in work. At times, but not often, he would unbend and indulge in physical games and exercises in which he excelled, and would sing songs. When Uncle Parker would visit us, they would of an evening bring out the Psalm Book with notes and sing hymns together; he tenor, father bass. Generally he was silent and unemonstrative. He had only time for work, work, work. Carlyle's



life of his father reminded me of him. They were much alike in stern, unbending integrity, in thrift, in economy of time, in unremitting industry. He stood high as a man in all respects among his neighbors. Though often solicited, he never held a town office.

Many an evening do I remember studying by the light of a bright wood fire in the kitchen. Craig had incited some love of study and an ambition to be in some small way a scholar and a man. A desire to be sent away to the Academy might sometimes arise and find expression. The candle lectures overheard are well remembered against such extravagance.

There were no religious influences except Freewill Baptists and Methodists, and coming in after revivalism had spent its force, Universalism. Father, usually dressed up on Sunday mornings in his black go-to-meeting clothes with tall silk hat, would go to the Baptist meeting house three miles distant and sing in the choir. He and the children always walked to meeting. Sometimes we went to other meetings in the neighboring school houses, Methodist, Freewill Baptist or others. Once in a great while a woman would preach with a very loud voice and much enthusiasm. Universalism was an argumentative religion on the one topic which was its platform.

Father died in May, 1845. The result was the almost immediate breaking up of the family. There was no will. The wife was made administrator of the estate. Myself and next younger brother were engaged at \$8.00 a week to carry on the farm. The next two younger children, Sam and Rebecca, twelve and ten years old, were allowed to go out to seek and find such homes as they could. Having worked the farm for nearly four months and harvested most of the crops and earned about thirty dollars, I proceeded in the fall to the Academy on Belgrade Hill. The farm was sold. It was bid in at a low price by the widow. A year or two later it was sold by her at an advanced price and passed into other hands. Brother Sam, after several years, bought it back, but only held it some ten or fifteen years.

After three months' study at the Academy, being seventeen years old, I secured the position of teacher for eight weeks of the small school in Uncle Parker's district. I got along well and the town superintendent commended me. In the spring, having but the winter's earnings of fifteen or twenty dollars, my guardian thinking it best that I should try to earn more money, I went to my grandfather's in Camden, Maine, about fifty miles. After a visit of a few weeks I found a place to work on the farm of Abraham Ogier, near Camden Village. Mr. Ogier was a strong Universalist, who usually took me with himself and his family to the Universalist Meeting at Rockford. In the fall of 1864, working for my board at Mr. Ogier's four hours a day, I attended the high school of Rev. Edward Free-

man, M.A., in Camden. It was held in the basement of the Baptist meeting house. Here good progress was made. Here I formed the acquaintance of a few boys or young men, who went on from school to college. Here there were influences to stimulate ambition. The principal of the school was especially enthusiastic and inspiring with young people at all disposed to be studious.

The winter following, I "kept" a large school in the Barrett District in Hope. Well do I remember starting off, a youth of eighteen, to travel through the contiguous towns on foot, soliciting a position as district school master. How so shy and bashful a youth could succeed in getting a school or keeping it when employed I do not understand, for never did a young man suffer more from bashfulness, a lifelong disability. But I was engaged for the first school I applied for. It must have numbered sixty pupils and continued for ten or twelve weeks. I had fair success, gaining some confidence and making some lifelong friends.

In the spring I returned for a visit to the old neighbors in my former home in Belgrade and went with my brother Sylvanus, who had been there the autumn previous, to the Kent Hill Seminary. Here I began to study Latin. We had Higher Arithmetic, Algebra, Chemistry, etc. An original oration was assigned me for Commencement.

The summer vacation of two months afforded opportunity to work out in Belgrade at haying. I did as others did, earning, at \$20.00 a month, about \$30.00. Brother and myself went back to Kent Hill the first of September, 1847. We rented rooms and took into partnership T. R. Simonton, afterwards a classmate a Bowdoin, and Albert Smith, son of Seba Smith, the celebrated "Jack Downing" who became years later a great lawyer in New York City. We boarded ourselves. The staple articles of food were baker's bread, corn meal mush, and milk or molasses. Brother was taken sick of typhoid fever and died in three weeks. I always felt his life could have been saved with a better doctor. Returning from his burial, I was taken down with the same disease, but secured a good physician and a special nurse, and so by God's good providence, my life was saved, though for a time despaired of. Practically the whole fall term was lost. At Uncle Parker's I recovered a measure of strength. He was very fond of Pope's *Essay on Man*, which he knew by heart. This I read with pleasure and also Combe, *On the Constitution of Man*, which he gave me. My health was so far restored that I took the mastership of the winter's school in my native district for eight or ten weeks. My sickness had cost nearly all the money from father's estate, which was but little, as the widow had her "thirds" and there were six children. In the spring I solicited pupils and taught a select school in the Belgrade Academy



building and then in April returned to Camden. Grandfather Coombs, having a job of ship building at Castine, engaged me to carry on his farm in his absence for the summer, 1848. This I did and found some time for reading as well. The first book I bought was Rollins' Ancient History, in eight volumes. This I had read through in the winter of 1846. I now invested eighty-five cents in Shakespeare in one volume and the first play read was the *Tempest*.<sup>3</sup>

Besides working the farm I remember hauling with a yoke of oxen two kilns of lime rock from Grandfather's lime quarry to Camden village two miles, loading and unloading the "rock" which had been blasted and broken into small pieces. I was able to make this trip each day. This was done at odd times when there was no farm work at hand. Many a weary day was thus voluntarily employed, as I was my own master and planned for myself the work, which was by no means easy.

In the fall I attended another select school of "Elder" Edward Freeman at Hope Corner. Here myself and several others who afterwards entered Bowdoin College, pursued our studies in Latin, Greek and mathematics. The school must have numbered sixty or more and there was no assistant teacher.

Next winter and spring I secured a school to teach in Thomaston, half a mile out of the village. It numbered eighty or ninety scholars of all ages from four to twenty-one. After the twelve weeks term I got a chance to finish out a school five or six weeks, of which the master had failed and been put out. Then Elder Freeman moved his select school and engaged me to assist him, while under him pursuing my studies in the higher branches required in fitting for college. I received in recompense my tuition fee, and if I mistake not, paid my own board. We studied under great difficulties and learned self-reliance. Determined to complete my preparation for entering Bowdoin, I went on June 1st to North Yarmouth Classical Academy for the summer term, 1849. I was put into the Middle Class that had a year longer to study, and was able by hard work to take some of the senior studies. This class of eight men at the end of the summer session went down to Bowdoin—it is twenty-five miles—and were examined. All were admitted to the Fresh-

<sup>3</sup>This was the beginning of his splendid library, for he bought books where others would have spent money carelessly. There is extant a catalogue of the books which he had in 1860 when he was at Lee, Massachusetts, as rector of the church there. At that time he already had 1,472 books, not counting volumes of sets covering poetry, history, biography and of course theological books; in London his son describes going to meet him in an old book store and finding him "settled there apparently for all day," comfortably reading; and when they were leaving on the boat for home he arrived with a trunk full of books to take with him.

He also had excellent taste in buying engravings, three of which are still hanging in his daughters' home, one a Holbein drawing of Erasmus, one of Albrecht Dürer and one of the Lord's Prayer in French, all large and simply framed. His big rocking chair and very large flat-topped desk went with him from college finally to Erie and to Denver and are still in the daughters' home.

man Class, but several were heavily conditioned. I liked these men and determined, if possible, to join their class. And so after a week only of vigorous recreation, I completed my bit, studying alone all through vacation time, night and day, reading the last six books of the *Aeneid* and the *Georgics*, Sallust, and some of the long, hard orations of Cicero and what was necessary of Homer (*Iliad*) and the *Anabasis*. About the third week of the fall term of the college had opened, I went down to Brunswick, was examined alone and admitted without conditions. Melville Fuller, now Chief Justice of the United States, was one of my classmates. [He was a lifelong friend.] I taught school winters and two autumns. I graduated in the class of 1853 with good rank, standing third in a class of over thirty.<sup>4</sup>

After graduation I taught a large select school three months in the fall at East Pittston, and then for six months the Dennysville Academy. It was here my religious convictions became settled. I was in correspondence with classmate Southgate on the question of the Church. Bishop Burgess drove out from Eastport twenty miles to see me. The surroundings were all Congregationalist. But I remembered a striking sermon by Professor Goodwin on the Christian Ministry, in two parts for morning and afternoon. It was a sermon I never forgot. The Congregationalist minister lent me Bishop Jeremy Taylor's sermons, among which there is a learned and able sermon on the Apostolic threefold ministry. Southgate sent me Onderdonk's "Episcopacy Tested by Scripture," an essay as good as ever. The best work on the Congregationalist side that I could get hold of was by Dr. Francis Wayland, President of Brown University. Later I read Kip, Richardson, Chapman, etc.

In college I was not religious. I was naturally, as I still am, skeptical. I had never yielded myself to the prevailing revivalist excitements about us—Methodist, Millerite, Baptist—never was "rising for prayer," "speaking in meeting," or "getting converted," like so many of my companions. Invariably in my experience the converts of revivalism would soon "backslide" and after a number of conversions in successive winters relapsed into indifference, and often to scoffing and opposition to "going to meeting." Then I read the very able works of Whittmore (*History of Universalism*), of Balfour, who reprinted Leslie's short and easy method, and Hosea Ballou, not without being much affected by their arguments. Afterwards came Tom Paine and like works a

<sup>4</sup>He once told his daughter that the great event of his college course was being elected Class Orator. Mel Fuller was Class President. Politics ran high. In this connection it is interesting to read his letters in which he more than once remarked that his experience in learning to give pieces and orations at school and college helped him to preach extempore. He was also very much interested in his children doing the same and they remember going into his study to recite pieces they had learned, or in the case of his sons, to debate some subject before him.



freshman in college might be influenced by. However, Paley and Butler in my senior year helped to convince me intellectually that there was much more in Christianity than I had dreamed of, and so gradually, after I had learned to pray as in childhood, I became in belief and purpose a Christian. For one term, influenced by Southgate, and possibly the Fosters, I attended by permission the Episcopal Church in the senior year when I heard Prof. Goodwin's great sermon. Trains of thought thence resulted of great consequence to the after life. The fitness and chaste beauty of the services greatly impressed me, and the doctrine of the Church on baptism and Christian nurture following made me a convert. In fact, like so many in New England, I had been a churchman without knowing it. Seeking when at Pittston the acquaintance of Bishop Burgess at Gardiner, I found in him a pastor of real kindness and sympathy. He advised me after I had returned from Dennysville to Camden, to visit the Reverend George Slattery at Rockland, with whom I spent some time, assisting him here and at Rockland and Camden as I was able. He baptized me in St. Peter's Church, Rockland, June 17th and presented me for Confirmation on July 10th the following year, 1854. I did not owe more than \$100 on leaving college and soon paid it. I entered the General Theological Seminary with Southgate the first of October and graduated in June, 1857.

During my three years Seminary course I failed to get any remunerative employment. I was for a year or more a teacher in St. Peter's Sunday School in 20th Street near the Seminary. Thus I was brought into social relations with some of St. Peter's congregation. In association with others I helped in the continuance of a Sunday School of children gathered in from the streets. For six months or more I taught English to a bright young German, a jeweler, who was grateful but was able to pay but little. During the Middle Year, I was employed by the Rector of St. Peter's, Dr. Beach, as visitor in the poorer parts of his parish. The district assigned to me was 20th Street and down to 16th and from 7th Avenue westward to the Hudson River. I took those streets one by one on Saturdays, calling at every house and soliciting children for the Sunday School and persons and families for the congregation, calling the Rector's attention to special cases. For this work he gave me some small compensation. Probably I did not accomplish much but I at least gained some valuable experience. There were two sessions of the Sunday School, at 9:30 a. m. and in the afternoon. This was, I believe, the general custom in New York. At the afternoon session the exercises were more general, with reviews, catechising and addresses, the teachers in turn or some of them would sit with the children that were induced to attend church, in the gallery, I suppose to keep order.

It must have been in the last half of the Middle Year that I was sent for by Dr. Stephen A. Tyng, who had been applied to by a layman to aid him in starting a Sunday School and Mission at the lower end of the Bowery. I visited diligently through all the neighborhood, the Bowery, Chatham Street and even down to Henry Street, Centre Street and west towards Broadway, finding many children and some good and well-disposed people and families, and not a little squalor and misery. We built up a Sunday School of 150 or 200 children. I held Morning Prayer as lay reader and catechist for two or three months in the Eastertide and later, 1857. The Mission seemed to be quite flourishing and to bid fair to be permanent and to accomplish much good in a vast poor district where it was greatly needed.

Gradually I began to open my eyes to the apparent fact that all was not quite right. Evidence began to come to me and to accumulate that the lay head of this work was immoral and particularly that he was corrupting boys. After an unpleasant experience including his arrest for slander, when he succeeded in being released in order to take his examinations for graduation from the Seminary, the case was finally dismissed; the accused man, finding charges too serious, hastily fled the country. This experience was very hard at the time, but he wrote, "it was for my good, and was to prepare me for like experiences in after life and particularly in my Episcopate."<sup>5</sup>

[Here, unfortunately, the reminiscences end and this story must go on as those who knew him remembered it.]

(To be continued.)

<sup>5</sup>Years after when he wrote his two books, one of them on *The Church and Its Apostolic Ministry*, and the other, *Jesus Christ the Proof of Christianity*, he must have had very much in his mind the sermons he had heard in his senior year at college which had had such a profound influence on his life, and in his book, *The Best Mode of Working a Parish*, he must often have thought of his first experience when a student at the Seminary in building up this Sunday School and Mission.



## An Authentic Form of Folk Music in Colorado

J. LESLIE KITTLE\*

Colorado is the northern home of a form of folk music which is practically unknown to the outside world today, and yet a type of music which represents the purest form of musical expression by the common people. This music is the song form known as the *alabado*, sung by the Hispanic people of the New World for hundreds of years with good evidence of a direct link with Spain, going back to the earliest exploratory days of the Spanish adventurers.

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This form of music is not the sole property of the Spanish-American residents of Colorado, for the *alabado* is sung in most Central and South American countries as well as in the United States Southwest, but we can claim distinction in the fact that we represent the northern boundaries of a culture which claims this form of music as its own. This culture extends from Cape Horn on the south to the upper Rio Grande Valley on the north, and generally speaking, the San Luis Valley is the northern home of this type of folk music.

The *alabado* is actually a hymn and serves the same purpose in life as does the hymn in all cultures and in practically all religious creeds—that of the expression of religious devotion through song. While not actually a part of the Catholic service, due to the fact that it is sung in Spanish and does not fit into the Latin ritual of the church, it was brought to this country by the Catholic priests of early times. There is little written material dealing with the *alabado*, but that which is available very definitely connects this musical form with the Catholic missionaries of Spain who developed it in order to bring the story of Christ to the primitive people of South and Central America.

These early Padres were extremely devout people and used every available means to spread the story of their religion through this new country. Discovering early that music appealed to the primitive Indians, they developed the *alabados* as a means of telling their story in song, and they achieved great results with it. One interesting story is told by Alfred Maudsley in "A Glimpse of Guatemala," when he tells of the four priests who taught several *alabados*, composed by them in the Quiche language, to some traders who were setting out on trips into the hinterlands. These traders sang the *alabados* for the cacique of this new tribe at the close of the trading period, and aroused his interest in this new music. The chants became so popular that the cacique sent his younger brother to the four brethren so that he might learn more of the music and learn of the true nature of these priests. Upon his return to his home town, the younger brother brought one of the priests with him and opened a way for the conversion of the tribe. Other historical references show the wide popularity and use of the *alabado* in these new lands.

Apparently the use of the *alabado* as an expression of religious devotion through the use of music was so successful that the priests permitted, and perhaps encouraged its use by the Spanish settlers who followed them, as well as by the Indians. At present its use in New Mexico and southern Colorado centers around the group known as the Penitentes, although it is not considered as their exclusive

property. Most Hispanic residents of the San Luis Valley are well acquainted with the *alabado* as a form of music, and they usually know the tunes of many of these songs, although some of them refer to them as "Penitente music."

So much has been written and told about the Penitentes that little explanation of this order is needed, but for those who know nothing of them, it should be explained that the Penitente brothers are members of a secret religious cult which still flourishes in many portions of this country, although not now recognized by the Catholic Church. Their belief centers around the value of a reenactment of the sufferings of Our Lord during His last week on earth as a means of personal spiritual redemption. We need not inquire further into their creed, for we are concerned only with their use of the *alabado*. Misguided they may be, but no one can question their sincerity, and there are many who will testify to their leadership in the little villages and the good that they have done for others.

A large part of the ritual of the Penitentes centers around the use of the *alabados*, both in their *moradas*, or meeting places, and in their processions during Holy Week. Usually sung unaccompanied, they do sometimes use a little home-made flute, or *pito*, of simple construction which plays the melody in sweet, wavering tones. Most of us will never have the opportunity to hear a group of Penitentes sing their *alabados* while on the processional to their Calvary or in their *moradas*, but those who have heard them say that there is a religious intensity to this music when sung on a dark night on a mountain hillside that is unearthly and so filled with intensity that words fail to describe the reaction.

The *alabados* themselves are not secret, however, as they usually deal with a story which is the common property of all Christians. These songs can be called ballads if you wish, for they usually tell the story of the life of Christ and His resurrection. They are in Spanish and are usually in rather simple poetic form, the stanzas most often being four lines in length, with music which is simple in form and often colored by the music of the Catholic Church, although not actually in the mode of the early church music. It is not possible to define the music exactly, for the tune is never written down, but is passed on from one singer to another by the process of repetition. This process is not accurate and we can assume that the tunes have been changed many times through the generations. We find also that new tunes are either being composed or adapted from other forms of music. Another difficulty in definition of the melody comes from the fact that the *alabado* is usually sung by an untrained singer without accompaniment, and the melody may waver so that it approaches the original tune only faintly.



The general nature of the words of the *alabados* can be shown by giving some of the titles translated into English:

"Within His Breast, St. Joseph Suffers"

"What Grief Can Equal That Which Lies in My Breast"

"The Innocent Lamb Comes Forth"

"Weep, Ye Sinners"

"Come Forth, Come Forth, Ye Sorrowing Souls"

"Come, Sinners"

"Christ Gave Us His Body"

"What Pain Can Equal"

"Through the Trail of Blood"

Some of these titles are significant when one remembers that the Penitente rites include self-flagellation and reenactment of the procession to the Crucifixion.

The most important use of the *alabado* at the present time is during the wake, or *velorio*, which is an age-old custom of the Spanish people of any country. While the term "wake" is commonly used only in connection with the death of some person; the people of the San Luis Valley use it also to describe the ceremony which pays homage to the patron saint of a small village, or to the patron saint of a family. These wakes often start in the village church, but usually center around a home where the ceremony may run all through a night. The principal feature will be the singing of *alabados*.

A single *alabado* may have twenty or thirty, or more, verses, and there are hundreds of them. The tunes are never transcribed except by folk-lorists, but the words are almost always written. I have never seen a printed *alabado* book, although I know that there are such. I have seen several of the typical books used in the San Luis Valley, a simple pocket note book in which the words are carefully copied in long hand and used until the paper becomes torn and dog-eared. Then another five- or ten-cent note book will be purchased and the words copied again.

There are other forms of folk music which exist in the San Luis Valley, some retaining their original popularity and some fading out through lack of interest on the part of the younger generation, but it is doubtful if there exists any type of folk music of greater significance than the Spanish *alabado*. It is regrettable that practically nothing has been written about the *alabado*, for it has escaped the attention of the musical folk-lorists in general. It is valuable evidence of the importance of music in the life of common people. Dr. Juan Rael, of Stanford University and a former resident of the San Luis Valley, has recorded over sixty *alabados* for the American

Archives of Folk Songs in the Library of Congress and has done a valuable piece of work in his research dealing with the language of these songs. It was my good fortune to work with Dr. Rael on his recording project, and I plan further recording for the American Archives when recorders are again available. We now have duplicate copies of the present AAFS recordings in the library at Adams State College which are available for the use of any interested persons. They may also be purchased through the Library of Congress.

The value of the *alabado* comes from the fact that we have here an honest folk expression in music, absolutely unadulterated by outside influence, and carried on for hundreds of years by people who knew absolutely nothing about the theory of music. Practically none of the singers of *alabados* could tell you what a music staff looked like, or the effect of a sharp or flat upon a written note, but they know the most important thing about music—that it is an expression of something inside, something that can seldom be put in words but must be sung for external expression. Their love for music is deep, sincere, and lasting—a natural evidence of true respect for an art.



## My Grandmother, Mrs. Marcellin St. Vrain

W. R. SOPRIS\*

My grandfather, Marcellin St. Vrain, was born October 14, 1815, at Spanish Lake, St. Louis County, Missouri. At the age of fifteen he entered St. Louis University. From all I have been able to learn he spent only two years at the university, when he joined his brother Ceran in the West. That would place his residence in the West from 1833 to 1848.

In 1840 he married "Red," a sister of the Sioux Chief Red Cloud. To that marriage three children were born: Felix, June 17, 1842; Charles, October 17, 1844; and Mary Louise (my mother), March 9, 1848, at Fort St. Vrain, present Colorado. It was the summer of 1848 that Marcellin left for Missouri, after, as the story goes, his accidental killing of an Indian. My only source for that story was General E. B. Sopris (my stepfather).

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\*Mr. Sopris, who now lives in Los Angeles, California, was born November 18, 1869, at Trinidad, Colorado. He was educated in the Trinidad schools and at the Colorado Agricultural College, Denver University, and Columbia University Law School. He served a term in the Colorado legislature at the age of twenty-five. In 1898 he entered Government service and in Cuba and Puerto Rico served in the Postal and Justice Departments for about thirty years.

The St. Vrains were very important in the Colorado of fur days, but information about them has been very confused, especially as regards Marcellin St. Vrain. The research of W. R. Sopris has been very helpful in getting the record straight. Paul Augustus St. Vrain, a son by Marcellin's second marriage, has performed a distinct service in preparing the *Genealogy of the Family of De Lassus and Saint Vrain* (published in 1944). P. A. St. Vrain lives in Kirksville, Missouri, today.—Ed.



In 1849 Marcellin married Elizabeth Jane Murphy of Florissant, Missouri.<sup>1</sup> About 1851 or 1852 he returned to Mora, New Mexico, where his first wife (Red) and their three children were living with Colonel Ceran St. Vrain (brother of Marcellin). He took back with him the two boys, Felix and Charles. My mother remained with her mother in Mora. Marcellin never again visited the West. He died in Ralls County, Missouri, March 4, 1871. The son Felix died a prisoner of the Union Army in 1864. Charles remained in Missouri until 1901, and died at Hastings, Colorado, in 1934.

My mother married John R. Skelley. I have been able to learn very little about him, although I have corresponded far and wide. He was born somewhere in New York state, probably in Amsterdam. He died in Las Vegas, New Mexico, where he went for the hot baths, in March, 1879, and his age was stated to be forty-nine. He came to Trinidad in the early '50s. During his lifetime in Colorado he accumulated considerable town, ranch, and land property. Two brothers followed him to Colorado; they were the only relatives of his whom I recall. I have found no record of his parents. I was nine years old at the time of his death, but my life between the ages of four and eight was spent with my maternal grandmother on their ranch fifteen miles out from town, so that I have very little of recollections concerning him. My outstanding memory is of his kindness to me, his effervescent humor and good nature. Some years later (1889) mother was married to E. B. Sopris, who had been appointed guardian for my sister and myself. At his request and my mother's we had our name changed from Skelley to Sopris.

My outstanding recollection of my mother is that she took under her wing step-brothers, step-nieces and nephews, giving them a home with us. She was not only generous but kind to them, which lasted until her death, February 14, 1916.

The most interesting of my recollections relate to my grandmother, Red. From her I listened to my first and only bedtime stories. These had to do with dogs, horses, and birds. She called me Partner, took me on expeditions picking choke cherries, wild plums, and fishing. As I grew older and was able to ride a horse, we climbed the foothills and the top of the range south of the ranch. From there I got my first lessons in geography. The old Santa Fe Trail was pointed out to me. "Over here, this way is Fort Bent, built by your grandfather's brother, Ceran St. Vrain, and the Bent brothers, Charles and William. Farther away is Westport, from which the long trains of covered wagons started on their way to Santa Fe and Old Mexico. Back of us and to the right is Texas, whence come those great herds of long-horned cattle."

<sup>1</sup>The ten children of this marriage are listed in the *Genealogy of the Family of De Lassus and Saint Vrain*.—Ed.

I was on the ranch one day when there came a visitor, Colonel Cody (Buffalo Bill), an old acquaintance from early Fort St. Vrain and Wyoming days when she was a little Indian girl. An Indian uprising was reported—Utes, Apaches, Comanches from the south were said to be working north for a juncture with Cheyennes. Col. Cody was stationed at Fort Lyon, where a regiment of soldiers was said to be ready to come to Trinidad. Because grandmother had known many Utes during her residence in Taos, and Cheyennes while at Fort St. Vrain and Wyoming, she was sought as an ambassador to go out and meet them. A Ute boy, employed on the ranch, who had been raised by her, was to accompany her. The juncture was made, the invasion vanished. I do not recall how.



MRS. MARCELLIN ST. VRAIN

But a few days later, while grandmother's second husband, William A. Bransford,<sup>2</sup> was visiting at the ranch from town, where he was County Judge, he saw Indians far to the east approaching. He excitedly called, "Red, Red, the Indians are coming." She and the Ute boy were mounted on horses to ride out to meet them. It was then very early in the morning. At noon grandmother and the

<sup>2</sup>The seven children of the Bransfords are listed in the *Genealogy* cited above.—Ed.



chiefs, wearing their feathered headgear, riding beautiful pinto ponies, rode up to the ranch. They were leaders of a band of Comanches who had camped a mile from the ranch in a grove of trees. They remained there about a week, putting on a show—racing and dancing. I was very young at the time, but the scene as I saw it one night is as vivid as if I had seen it last night.

In later years grandmother moved to town to live with us. On winter evenings grandfather Bransford and sister Cora played casino against grandmother and myself as partner "for the apples," the losers to pay for them. It was funny to see grandmother "build up." Grandfather would say, "Hold on, Red, you can't do that." She would appeal to me, refusing to take his word that what she was doing was not permitted.

When we lost, as we frequently did, Mr. Bransford would say, "Jinks and I won; pay up." Grandmother would reach her hand deep into the deep pocket of her dress and bring up the two bits. Oftentimes during the game grandmother would start talking, taking up the thread of a story she had started on some previous evening. The three of us had forgotten about it, and Mr. Bransford would interrupt with, "What in the world are you talking about, Red?"

The one thing in my relations with grandmother that worried me was her partiality for me. Candy we seldom saw on the ranch. When grandfather visited us he brought her a small supply of stick candy. This she would hoard to give me on the sly, but none to her sons, the youngest of whom was only two years older than myself. Since they were kind to me, I felt sorry for them. One rainy day, when we boys were kept close to the house, we were lined up against the wall under the eaves. Grandmother, in passing out of the room, slipped something into my hand. As she passed on I opened my hand and found a stick of candy. The other boys saw it too. We maneuvered around to the rear of the house where I asked the eldest boy to break it. I divided the four pieces between us, on which we started to suck—candy was too rare a treat to chew it. We were caught in the act and grandmother berated her boys for taking some of my candy. Perhaps if I hadn't been so careless as to allow the boys to see what I held in my hand I might not have shared it with them.

One evening grandmother said to me, "You are going to bed early so that we can get up early. We are going to town, you and I." We left the ranch early in an ox-drawn wagon. Her eldest son and a man helper on the ranch occupied the spring seat, while grandma and I rode in the wagon bed. There were a few goat, sheep and cow pelts underneath the seat. The pelts were grandma's graft, which she sold, bought stick candy, gum drops, heart-shaped mints

and some ginger snaps, most of which I received later while out with her on our expeditions. The distribution was small and slow, for the supply was intended to last three or four months.

We had gone a mile away from the ranch and were half way up a short but steep hill when a big black bear appeared at the crest of the hill. Immediately the brake was put on the wagon, stones placed behind the rear wheels, the men picked up their guns, and ran to two horses that were picketed near by. The bear scooted along the hill's ridge, then up the canyon. Our men followed and other ranch owners joined in the chase. At the head of the canyon lived Col. Snyder. The bear passed the rear of his cabin and his dogs gave loud howls. Col. Snyder grabbed a gun. The bear was cornered and killed. The Colonel captured two young cubs, which he gave to Dr. Michael Beshoar. They were chained and staked in a vacant lot adjoining his office, where they grew up to good size, to become Trinidad's first zoo. Grown too large, they were sacrificed to furnish "b'ar meat" for several of the doctor's friends.

Meanwhile grandma remained in the wagon until our defeated nimrods returned several hours later. We did not reach town that night; we camped (without camping utensils and provisions) at the half-way point, the foot of a long, steep hill.

When news of the battle in which General Custer was killed reached her, she worried, kept to herself for days and wept. As the wife of a French-Indian trader she met and knew many Americans, among them General Fremont, Francis Parkman (the historian), William Cody, and many others. Later, as the wife of William Bransford, a Virginian, she met numerous Americans, one of whom her daughter married. As a young girl born and reared among the Sioux she knew many of the chiefs and tribesmen. She realized and saw the hopelessness of the struggle against the whites. Her judgment, if not her sympathy at that time, while she may have recalled the treaties broken by the whites, must have told her that the end had come in the fight to avoid being taken onto the reservations. She had long mistrusted and disliked Sitting Bull; she expressed no regret that her wild and ungovernable nephew, Crazy Horse, had also been killed.

One week end Mr. Bransford rode out to the ranch from Trinidad, where he was County Judge. He brought with him fishing lines, hooks, and sinkers. He rounded up his three young sons and myself and made us a speech. "Young fellows, parties of men have been out here at the head of the canyon and gone back with a good catch of fish." He told of the streams being alive with trout. "I have brought you hooks and line, you are to furnish the poles. I want you all to start out tomorrow early and bring back a good mess of trout; there will be a prize for the one with the largest



catch." Being the youngest (seven years), I was not the leader, instead it was the eldest boy (thirteen). He took the rest of us down stream, where the ranches were few and fishermen were less likely to be encountered. We were gone all day, traveled three miles down stream and came home empty handed. We were ridiculed and made to feel uncomfortable. We huddled together in the rear of the house bewailing our bad luck.

When supper was called we seated ourselves at the table with the rest of the family. Then a platter of fair-sized trout were brought in. "Did you go fishing, grandpa?" I piped up. "No, your grandma caught these, and she had no fishing pole, line or hooks. She caught them with her hands."

I speculated on how that could be done. A few days later, while out with grandmother on one of our treks, she explained: "In the stream where a small ravine joined, a back water was formed. When the water receded a number of fish were trapped. I reached in and gathered them up."

After the death (December 26, 1881) of Judge Bransford, grandmother preferred to be much alone and was much less communicative, even to mother and me. She would wander away from the house early, walk to the foothills and remain there most of the day. Otherwise she was in good health, and busy with her household chores. She attended the Catholic Church regularly up to her last illness. She passed away some time between 1885 and '86. She had been living in Trinidad, in a house close to my family home, with her sons, William and Charles Bransford.

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## Historical Sketch of the Bonanza Mining District

DR. S. E. KORTRIGHT\*

Had I conceived the idea twenty years ago to write an article on the early-day history of Bonanza and the Kerber Creek Mining District, I could have written a much more interesting narrative than this which I am submitting. Within the past five or ten years the last of the old pioneer prospectors and miners who could have given us much valuable information have passed to the Great Beyond. We must now rely upon our memory to recall events which they told us, and on the other hand, search such records as are available for authentic information.

I came to Colorado and located in Bonanza in the fall of 1899, and lived there until the spring of 1939—forty years.

\*Dr. Kortright is a practicing physician and assayer at Saguache today.  
—Ed.

The town of Bonanza is situated in the northeast portion of Saguache County, which was a portion of Costilla County previous to the year 1867. This town is located due north from the town of Saguache, within Township 46 N., Range 7 E., and nestled within the Cochetopa Hills, that vary in altitude from 9,000 to 12,000 feet. The general topography of this section comprises a main gulch running north and south through which runs a small stream, called Kerber Creek. This creek heads a short distance above Bonanza and empties into the San Luis Creek near Villa Grove, covering a distance of about seventeen miles.

In the center of the town of Bonanza is a gulch running east, called Copper Gulch, through which runs a small stream named Copper Creek, which empties into Kerber Creek. About one mile



BONANZA, COLORADO

above town is another gulch running eastward, called Rawley Gulch, which also has a small stream named Rawley Creek, which empties into Kerber Creek, and within 600 feet of this junction, Squirrel Creek, from Squirrel Gulch, also unites with the main creek. All of these gulches have very good roads leading to the several mines. Since very few of the various mines are located in the corporate limits of town, the mineralized section is designated as being within a mining district. Our district is known as Kerber Creek Mining District, in honor to Captain Kerber, who named Kerber Creek. Our district can boast of four prominent peaks, Antero, Flagstaff, Sheep and Hayden.

The crest of the watershed usually limits the boundary of the district, therefore it comprises many square miles. In searching the records of this mining district I cannot find where any location certificate for a mining claim was filed before the year 1880, when several were made.

Wishing to learn if any mining activity existed previous to this date, I interviewed Mr. Dannie Slane of Saguache, who is 82 years



of age and has lived in the county since birth. He informed me that back in the late '70s he assisted a man by the name of Eli Durfay do some mining in this section. He could not remember the name of the claim, and said it never was recorded, as the values "petered out," so they abandoned the claim. This is but one of the many old forgotten claims discovered by the early-day prospector that never was recorded.

Prospectors and miners passing through this country on their way to the Gunnison gold rush, discovered surface croppings of silver-bearing lead ore and went no farther. The news spread rapidly and in a short time men came pouring in from all directions with pack animals, and afoot, until in the fall of 1880 this had become quite a good sized mining camp. There were two ways to get into the mining camp from the main highway that runs through San Luis Valley. The first was a very rough and tortuous wagon road which followed Kerber Creek for a distance of sixteen miles from Villa Grove. The other was to follow an eight-mile burro trail over a steep range from the town of Alder.

This trail probably accounts for the discovery of the first recorded mining claim, as it was located not far from the crest of this range. I am told that Mr. Nels Cole came up this Alder trail and discovered the lode, but failed to make a location, consequently a short time after, parties came and made a valid location under the name of Rawley Lode or claim. It was located on May 21, 1880, by James Downman, James Kenny, and William Applebee. I never met Mr. Downman, but was personally acquainted with the other two. Mr. Kenny was of Irish descent, which was plainly discernible when he spoke, was well educated and formerly was a soldier in General Custer's detachment of regulars. He told me that owing to so much dissension among the men and those in charge, that he resigned from the service a short time before the terrible massacre. During my time he was Mayor of the town and later was elected Justice of the Peace. As age crept on he lost his sight, but in spite of this infirmity he was active in political affairs, both local and national. He must have been around eighty when he died in an old soldiers' home.

Mr. Applebee was a respected citizen, raised a large family and was a first class miner. Both worked their claim in a small way until about 1902, when they leased the property to a New York mining company. Mr. David G. Weems, a mining engineer for this company, came West and acted as general manager. He mapped out large workings, installed a plant of machinery, air drills, etc. Later he built a large concentrating mill in close proximity to the mine. After working several months the plant closed down, claiming the reason was inadequate supply of water.

Some time after this another New York company, known as Simmons, Burns and Wainwrite, took over the property for the purpose of development, not the extraction of ore. Their plan was to develop the mine in order to expose the ore bodies to their best advantage and place the mine on an economic working basis. From the 300-foot working tunnel they sank a shaft and in order to cut this shaft at the 1200-foot level they drove in a large working tunnel from Squirrel Gulch 6200 feet. The supervision of this work was under the direction of the late mining engineer, Mr. William C. Russell, of Denver, who accomplished the task in seventeen months. This was a record breaker for this type of work. This company also planned an aerial tram seven and a half miles long, over some



SOUTH MAIN STREET, BONANZA

very rough country, to transport ore to a place called Sherly, where it could be loaded into railroad cars. In 1923 the Metals Exploration Company took over this property under a lease and bond that ran into the millions, I was told. It was operated under the supervision of three men, Major Louis Saunders, Mr. Charles Bell and Mr. James James, who operated the property in a big way. In order to electrify the workings it was necessary for the Public Service Company to erect a new ninety-mile power line from Alamosa.

Under contract they had Stearns-Rogers Company of Denver build a 300-ton concentrating mill under the supervision of Mr. G. O. Anderson. The aerial tram was completed under the supervision of Mr. A. G. Hill. Both of these men were experts in their line. Boarding and bunk houses were built, electric locomotives were installed for tunnel transportation, and they employed in the neighborhood of 300 men. In a short time there were so many



families in camp with children of school age that it became necessary to have a school. After operating the plant several months they met up with financial difficulties and the American Smelting & Refining Company came to their rescue and took over the property. Mr. A. E. Ring was general manager and Mr. Arthur Sweet was local manager up to the time it closed. This plant produced 2,500 tons of silver- and copper-bearing lead concentrates a month. It is claimed that over five million dollars' worth of ore was shipped to the smelter before it closed down. Money was spent lavishly, and in my opinion had they been more conservative, they would have been working today, as leasers now are working the property.

Bonanza, that Spanish word denoting a rich ore body, was given to a mineral location made on July 9, 1880, by C. W. Kelly, I. J. Jenny, P. C. Jenny, A. C. Babcock, W. T. Ford, Geo. W. Cline and Charles Taylor. On February 16, 1881, an amended location was made, signed by the first four only. Just what bearing this amendment had in explaining the story told me several years ago by an old-time teamster, I must leave to your imagination. This is what he told me.

"Two of these partners could not get along together; they quarreled, the outcome of which was a killing." An old timer here in Saguache says the killer was arrested, tried and convicted, but never executed.

The Bonanza Mine was the nucleus of future mining activities, and the stimulus which brought the town of Bonanza into being. Again I am handicapped in not being able to find anyone who could give me any information regarding activities of this mine prior to 1899, other than to say it was occasionally worked in a small way by leasers. In 1899 Mr. Mark Bidell leased this property and employed several miners, who extracted low grade silver-bearing lead ore for his concentrating mill situated at the lower part of town. It was through this enterprise that I came West from New York City to assay for Mr. Bidell, and became physician for the camp in general.

After being in camp a few days one of the old pioneers told me that in the "boom" days Bonanza could boast of having twenty thousand inhabitants and forty saloons to quench their thirst. The town was wild and wooly and required a United States Deputy Marshal in conjunction with the local police to keep order. I asked him if they had any churches. He replied, "We never had one," then quoted the following:

We have no churches there to confine  
The God that's with us all the time,  
The mystery of these hills, you see,  
Are evidence of a Divinity.

He continued by saying that people from all parts of the world came pouring in with hope of making a fortune. Almost over night, rough log houses, frame houses, shacks and even tents were erected to accommodate the people.

The camp was visited by many newspaper men and other celebrities. One of the most prominent was President U. S. Grant, who came on the invitation of Mr. S. F. Rathvon, owner of the Exchequer Mine, which was famous for its wonderful body of silver-copper ore. I never learned if he invested in the proposition or not. The ever-increasing population made it necessary to incorporate the town. It was incorporated under the name, "Town of Bonanza City," which is its legal name today. The city limit east and west is about half a mile, while the north and south boundary is in the neighborhood of a mile and a half.

Owing to increased activity, a town known as Exchequer was founded north of town. Likewise, another town by the name of Sedgwick came into being, south of town. All three of these towns were thickly populated, as evidenced by old foundations existing today. The town of Sedgwick had the distinction of having the only brewery in this part of the country. It was located in a little gulch north of town, through which runs a little stream that flows into Kerber Creek. This gulch and creek are known as Brewery Gulch and Brewery Creek.

Each of these towns has a cemetery, and in the Exchequer cemetery lie the ashes of Mrs. Anne Ellis, author of the book, *Life of An Ordinary Woman*, which describes her early-day life in Bonanza. In 1923 the National Lead Company of St. Louis, Missouri, took over the Bonanza and Cocomongo Mines and worked them extensively. They built and operated a fifty-ton concentrating mill and produced a high grade lead and zinc product. The value of the ore shipped to the smelter was in excess of one million dollars. This output in conjunction with the Rawley placed Bonanza on the map again, as we had a voting population of over 600. We had electric lights, moving picture show, telephones, two schools and three teachers, four stores, two pool halls and an unknown number of bootleggers. It was said there was a still up every gulch, and the owners wore badges so as not to solicit sales from each other. I do not remember the year, but we had the good fortune to possess a weekly newspaper known as *The Bonanza Bee*. It was printed at the *Saguache Crescent* office and furnished us considerable honey, with very few stings. During 1923-24 the camp was lively, everyone had money, nearly everyone owned a car and kept the road hot traveling to Salida, which they called "going to town." Vast sums of money were spent in surrounding towns, and believe me, they felt the loss when the mines closed down. I will give a brief de-



scription of a few of the principal mines, and their owners or operators, so far as I know them.

In the early days, Mr. N. C. Creede, who became famous by having the town of Creede named after him, located the Twin Lode, which produced some very rich gold and silver ore. About this time he lived in Saguache and built two or three houses, two of which are occupied today. One of the old timers here told me he had several burros, and the kids would ride them around town.

The Empress Josephine Mine was located in 1880 and in later years was owned by Col. S. T. Evert of Cincinnati, Ohio. He spent half a million dollars in development of this mine. It has shipped some of the highest grade gold ore that the camp has produced. It



PARTY OF HUNTERS FROM BONANZA

At right side, David G. Weems, owner of Rawley Mine; beside him, in buckskin shirt, Dall Deweese.

is the only mine in camp that has tellurium ore in the form of sylvanite. The St. Louis Mine is considered an extension of the Empress Josephine, and has shipped ore in carload lots that assayed twenty ounces of gold to the ton. This was done under the supervision of the late John E. Ashley, who has done more to keep Bonanza on the map during depressions than any other one man. He may truthfully be called the father of the town. He also managed the Antero and Cliff Mines and employed a large number of miners.

The present operators of the St. Louis Mine are the Pratt Mining and Milling Co. Mr. Eli Weddington located this mine, also the

Columbia Mine at Parkville, which was also a gold producer. The Eagle Mine, situated near the old town of Sedgwick, has been a wonderful producer of silver. The ore often appears as a metallic thread of silver curled or embedded in a matrix of beautiful rose-pink manganese carbonate, technically known as rhodochrosite. In the early 1900s, a Colorado Springs company operating under the name of the Lucrative Consolidated Mining Syndicate, shipped many carloads of ore that assayed over 150 ounces of silver to the ton. The mine is owned by the D. I. Whiteman Estate and at present is idle. About one mile south of this mine is a large body or deposit of manganese. It was discovered by the late John McKenzy, Sr. It has been worked by several, but they seem to find it a hard task to keep the assay value up to the smelter requirement. If some genius would invent a process to eliminate the waste material from this manganese oxide, his fortune would be made.

Space will not permit description of many other good mines, such as the Shawmet, Wheel of Fortune, Erie, Hanover, Whale, Baltimore, and many others too numerous to mention. In addition to the Rawley and Bonanza concentrating mills, Mr. C. C. Anderson built at Sedgwick a fifty-ton flotation plant about two years ago. This mining district has had three smelters. Back in the early '80s, Bonanza had a smelter known as the Kelly Smelter. They closed for lack of proper flux. Mr. David G. Weems erected for a New York company a smelter at Parkville. The process not being adaptable to the ore, was forced to close. In 1939 a matte smelter was built at Sedgwick, but could not find suitable copper for the process.

I must not overlook saying a few words about two of our old-time pioneers. That grand old man, Mr. Otto Mears, the indefatigable road builder, repaired and improved the road between Villa Grove and Bonanza. He did such a good job the authorities allowed him to establish it as a toll road. Just how long it was used as such I do not know, but to my knowledge it has been an open road for forty-four years. This same man built a road from Bonanza to Sherley, a distance of about nine miles, over a very rough range, parts of which were better than 12,000 feet in elevation. The road proved impractical, and was abandoned. Almost everyone in the county knew Mr. Hubert Pool. He was born in England, and was an Oxford College graduate. After coming to this country he sought employment as an expert accountant. His kind and pleasing manner made him popular with all. For years he was Justice of the Peace and married many couples. When anyone had legal papers to be made out, they would go to him for assistance. He was not an attorney, but would often give legal advice when asked his opinion. During the flu epidemic of 1917-1918 he died, and his remains rest



in Exchequer cemetery. Bonanza lost a valuable man when he died.

On June 24, 1937, a great calamity visited Bonanza in the form of a fire which destroyed the whole business section and a number of dwelling houses. In all, there were thirty buildings burned to the ground. None of the buildings has been replaced.

We are looking forward to a revival of mining activities in this camp, as when the mines and mills are working, everyone has money and is happy.

To summarize the future of Bonanza Mining District, I would say that in those hills there are vast bodies of low grade ore, which on further development may uncover rich bodies of shipping ore. In my opinion they require a mill sufficiently flexible to treat the several types of ore on an economical basis.

I wish to thank my many friends who have so graciously assisted me in collecting the facts set forth in this article.

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## The Great Prairie Cattle Company, Ltd.

ALBERT W. THOMPSON\*

The story of the Prairie Cattle Company, Ltd., of Edinburgh, Scotland, "one of the most colossal livestock ventures ever launched in America during the free range days of the West," has never been told in its broad scope and entirety. It probably never will be, for in 1918, so I am informed, after the liquidator had presented and the stockholders had accepted, his final statement, the books and records of the corporation were destroyed. The main facts of this once largest cattle company to operate in the United States must be gleaned from those who participated in its affairs.

It is impossible, therefore, to embrace in this short sketch more than a cursory analysis of the company's once vigorous and extended activities. I was acquainted with the Prairie's American managers, W. J. Tod, Murdo McKenzie, and J. C. Johnson. I also, so far as the Cross L, or Cimarron River, Division was concerned, knew its range foremen, wagon bosses, cowboys, and one or two of its chuck wagon cooks—masters in their profession—whose excellent dutch-oven meals I have enjoyed.

The foundation of the Cross L Division of the Prairie Cattle Company finds appropriate place in this story. In the fall of 1871, three brothers, Jim, Nathan, and William Hall turned loose in the virgin valley of the long Cimarron river, fifty miles north of the

future town of Clayton, their 2,500 head of footsore cows and calves, which they had driven from Richland Springs, Texas. For these longhorns they paid, according to W. F. Hudson, whose sister married Jim Hall, seven dollars for the grown cattle, calves thrown in. Next year the calves as yearlings sold for \$14.00 per head.

The late George F. Robinson of Kansas City, a lad from New England, was dumped off the railroad in Colorado in 1876 and made his way to northeastern New Mexico, where he went to work on the Halls' ranch.

"I drove two steer herds of 1,200 each to Granada, Colorado, in 1881 for the Halls," he said. "I had one train of big steers wrecked near Garden City, Kansas, then only a watering tank and station-house."

A deed on record in Colfax County, New Mexico, gives insight into the organization of the Prairie Cattle Company. This instrument recites in part that John Guthrie Smith and James Duncan Smith, solicitors before the Supreme Court, Scotland, and William A. Clark, Muscatine, Iowa, were trustees of The Prairie Cattle Company, Ltd.

By September 7, 1882, the Prairie Cattle Company had made purchases of cattle and lands, and in order to pay for the same had increased its normal capital to 500,000 pounds sterling. In 1881-82, no less than 700,000 pounds sterling (\$3,500,000) had been voted and raised for investment in the United States. The Scotch were launching a colossal enterprise. Its general managers, one excepted, were natives of the British Isles. The purchase of several great ranches in Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas was, however, left to the discretion of Americans, either Underwood, Clark & Company of Muscatine, Iowa, and Kansas City, or their agents.

Late in 1881 a deal was closed by Underwood, Clark & Company, and William and Nathan Hall through which the former acquired lands and livestock of the Halls. The amount paid to the two Hall brothers (Jim Hall having dropped out of the concern before then) was \$450,000. How many head of cattle the Halls then had was conjectural. George Robinson seemed to think that in 1881 they branded 9,000 calves.

Not content with their initial purchase of the Cross L's, Underwood & Clark soon acquired the so-called JJ, or Jones Brothers ranch and livestock, sixty-five miles due north of the Hall interests on the Cimarron River. The JJ ranch was situated on the Picketwire, or Purgatoire, a few miles upstream from "eighteen mile bottoms," and some twenty-five miles from Las Animas, Colorado. Pete, Jim, and Steve Jones were early southern Colorado ranchmen. In 1873, when the railroad from Kit Carson reached the Arkansas River close to the mouth of the Picketwire, where the new town of

\*Mr. Thompson went on his first cattle roundup in 1886. He has written numerous articles on the open-range cattle business. He lives in Denver today.—Ed.



Las Animas was laid out, the Jones's came to buy provisions at Van Horn's store. Reports were current that the Jones's branded 4,000 calves annually, their range extending from the Arkansas to the Cimarron rivers. Probably 18,000 head of cattle, and lands along the Muddy, Carrizo, and Tecolote were added to the Prairie Company holdings through this deal. No authentic information was obtainable by outsiders as to the amount of money paid the Jones's.<sup>1</sup>

A third purchase of extensive ranch interests and cattle was consummated by the Prairie Cattle Company in 1881-82. This embraced property of Major Littlefield, prominent Texan. It included 14,000 head of cattle, 250 saddle horses, and headquarters ranch, five miles down stream on the Canadian from Tascosa, Texas, the price paid being reported as \$240,000. To Willard R. Green, mem-



PRAIRIE CATTLE COMPANY CHUCK WAGON  
Mail carrier with his two-wheeled cart has stopped for dinner.

ber of the Underwood firm, or its trusted lieutenant, acquisition of these interests was delegated. It was Green who was driven from Trinidad to the Cross L ranch in an ambulance and four, sent to town by the Halls when the former desired to look over the prospects of the latter. After Gus Johnson, the great company's first range manager, was killed by lightning, Green succeeded him in like capacity.

For some time after its organization, the affairs of the Prairie Cattle Company ran smoothly. In 1883 a dividend of 20½ per cent was declared, which astonished and delighted its across-sea shareholders. How were funds for this disbursement obtained? Not through legitimate channels, but from the sale of 21,000 head of

<sup>1</sup>Information to the writer from the late George J. Pace, Denver, who in the 1870s conducted a store in Las Animas, knew all the Jones brothers, and occasionally visited their ranch.

cattle, many of them young cows. Green and the American interests desired to make a good showing.

From December till May, life on great cattle ranches of the West was attended with more or less monotony. After the last beef delivery had been made at the railroad, generally some time in November, roundup wagons returned to headquarters, saddle horses were turned out in pasture, and most of the men discharged. The manager and family (if he had one) occupied the White House. Cowboys had their bunkhouse, near which was kitchen and dining room. The hands "pulled bog" (pulled out bogged-down cattle), rode to the nearest postoffice for mail, and performed other work. An occasional dance at some "neighbor's" ranch, perhaps fifty miles away, relieved the want of variety. Hunting trips were planned. Deer and topknot quail abounded, and antelope scampered off at the approach of strangers. Life was pleasant on a New Mexico cattle ranch, to the accompaniment generally of mild weather.

To promote friendliness, Green conceived a brilliant idea which in its lavishness should outdo anything the district had ever known. Christmas was approaching. He proposed a housewarming and dance to be staged at the Cross L ranch on Christmas eve. No picayunish affair should it be, but one deserving of the largest company in America. Music? Of course, but no fiddle and guitar outfit would be countenanced. A six-piece orchestra in Colorado was engaged. Freight wagons were dispatched to town to bring enough food and drink for a small army. Invitations to the dance, to which the countryside was asked, met hearty acceptance.

There came into my possession some years ago a souvenir of this early Cross L housewarming. It is a neatly printed, or perhaps engraved, Order of Dances, given out to guests, Christmas eve, 1881. At the top of the title page appears the quite appropriate symbol of old Scotland, motto adopted by the Prairie Company. It reads, *Nemo me impune lacessit* (nobody attacks me with impunity). Then follows the dances, fragrant in nomenclature of the district.

Roundup March	down river]
Cross L Waltz	Tenderfoot Quadrille
JJ Waltz	Lonesome Waltz
Standoff Quadrille	LIT Quadrille [Prairie Co.'s ranch
OZ Waltz [OZ, a local brand]	near Tascosa]
Loco Dance	Cimarron Polka
Bronco Gallop	Quien Sabe Waltz
Mesa March	Yule Log Quadrille
Prairie Waltz	Virginia Reel
Muscatine Waltz [Muscatine ranch,	Vamos Waltz

Spring has come. The prospect changes. About the first of May horses are gathered up from the pastures where they have run all winter. Cowboys looking for jobs visit the ranch. The wagon,



in the hind end of which is placed its chuck box, is soon made ready. The *remuda* is bunched up near camp.

"All set," someone calls.

"Let's go," commands the wagon boss.

Riders climb into stirrups and saddles. Some of the horses walk off quietly. Others refuse to move until rowelled, when they are likely to unseat their riders. The cook mounts his high seat in the front end of the chuck wagon, picks up the lines, yells at the leaders. One of the Prairie's outfits is off toward the muddy Canadian, 150 miles south, where spring roundup work will soon begin.

This meeting place was not far from the present town of Logan, New Mexico, on the Rock Island railroad. To it came crews of large cattle owners from the upper Cimarron River, Pitchforks, XYZ's, a "pool wagon" (made up by several small cattlemen, pooling their



J J WAGON, PRAIRIE CATTLE COMPANY IN THE 1880s

interests) or two, and others having ranges between Springer and Ute Creek, a wagon from Senator S. W. Dorsey's Triangle-dot ranch, another from the Cross Diamonds near Raton. The Alley Cattle Company, whose headquarters were ten miles west of Dorsey's, owned by John B. Alley, opulent Massachusetts shoe manufacturer, was represented at this gathering.

Slowly these rough crews, each comprising ten men, supplemented by "outside" hands and their *remudas* of 150 horses, moved south. They traveled twenty-five or thirty miles per day until the Canadian was reached, when camps were made. Here they waited for another "hunt" to come up from the Tascosa district, 100 miles down river.

The days of waiting passed slowly. With no work to perform, cowboys pitched horse shoes, played cards, ran horse races, and

staged mock court trials. Tenderfeet, youngsters from far-away eastern states, were the targets of more experienced hands, who stole their campbed pillows, put dead rattlesnakes in their beds, and practiced other villainous quirks. One of these consisted of "rim firing" the horse a beginner was riding. Two men, holding opposite ends of a thirty-foot lariat, would dash up behind their victim, pull the rope taught under the tail of the "new one's" pony, which promptly began pitching, unseating the rider who, generally unhurt, picked himself up amidst laughter and yells of "stay with him, kid."

Another prank still lingers in memory. In the sand hills bordering the Canadian River, the summer sun beat down mercilessly, blistering lips and noses of men unused to such stations.

"I'll tell yer what will sure cure you," an older and apparently guileless hand volunteered. "Rub yer lips good with Frazier's axle grease." This we carried along to lubricate the chuck wagon's wheels. One hundred miles from the nearest drug store, with no other unguent procurable in camp, I tried it, to be months recovering from its effects.

The largest aggregation of range cattle I ever saw was in 1888. It stretched north from Leon Creek, twenty-five miles south of present Clayton, for five or six miles. It was accompanied by two crews of the Prairie Cattle Company. It consisted of stock found while working up from the Canadian River. It numbered not less than 15,000 head, fresh branded calves, young and older steers, and cows. At night the herd was loosely guarded. It was too bulky to close up. Within it was stock belonging in the Cimarron River district, Cross L's. Hundred and One's, ZH's and others.

Year after year from 1884, about which time the ranching bubble in the West broke, lower prices for western cattle prevailed. In 1885 the Prairie's yearling steers sold for \$17.50. In 1888 they brought \$9.00. Large foreign companies passed dividends. After 1885 the Prairie Company had done with American management. It sent Scotchmen to look after its affairs: W. J. Tod, Murdo McKenzie, J. C. Johnson, Howard Glassbrook.

By 1912, the Prairie Cattle Company's days were numbered. Sales of cattle and horses that year amounted to 143,756 pounds sterling, nearly \$650,000. The great company was selling its lands, those lying along streams bringing \$2.50 per acre. It had very few cows left, evidenced by its calf brandings. Dry farmers were cutting deep into the once unbroken prairies. Foreign capitalized cattle companies unwillingly bowed before the handwriting on the wall.

It was a striking and never-to-be-forgotten sight, which with the disappearance of the free range cannot be visualized. Herds



of four- and five-year-old steers, sleek and fat from off summer ranges, strung out in the fall of the year on their slow, careful trek toward the railroad at Las Animas and Granada, Colorado.

A steer herd consisted of 1,600 to 2,000 head. Utmost care was exercised, both day and night, that the animals were properly handled. At sunset they were swung onto the bedground. A few of the largest steers stood motionless, sentinel like, about their smaller brothers which, as darkness drew on, lay down to rest.

The final roundup had been made. The few steers, all the Prairie Company could gather, had reached the railroad. Tomorrow they would be shipped to Kansas City. One roundup wagon only accompanied this remnant of ownership once comparable in



HEADQUARTERS, CROSS L RANCH ON THE CIMARRON

numbers to the combined holdings of Abraham and Lot, and about which in the starlit night, cowboys stood their last guard. The men rolled yellow cigarettes and with legs hanging over horns of saddles, jogged around and around the kine. Presently one of them started a prairie lyric. His voice was high pitched, unmusical:

Hush-a-by longhorns, yer pards are all sleepin',  
 Stop yer darn millin' an' tossin' yer head,  
 Wavin' yer horns so unrestful an' sweepin',  
 All of the beef herd, with eyes big an' red.  
 Maybe yer know when yer pawin' the dust up,  
 Bellerin' ugly an' switchin' yer tail,  
 Maybe yer know that you're nearin' the bust up,  
 Nearin' the quittin' place, end of the trail.

It was indeed the end of the trail, the climax of the once great Prairie Cattle Company, Ltd., whose story will go down in history as one of the greatest enterprises launched, and finally abandoned, on America's western frontier.