

Mining Camps: Myth vs. Reality

BY DUANE ALLAN SMITH

Hidden in the vastness of the Rocky Mountains survive skeletal remains of what once were live, restless mining camps. People lived, worked, played, and died in some as early as 1859 and in others even later than the turn of the century. Mark Twain, in his delightful book *Roughing It*, has left a vigorous account of what life was like then. Although the topic of his examination, Virginia City, Nevada, was slightly west of the Rocky Mountains, the description he gave holds true for all camps going through "flush times."

Virginia had grown to be the "liveliest" town, for its age and population, that America had ever produced. The sidewalks swarmed with people. . . . The streets themselves were just as crowded with quartz wagons, freight teams and other vehicles. The procession was endless. . . . Joy sat on every countenance, and there was a glad, almost fierce intensity in every eye, that told of the money-getting schemes that were seething in every brain and the high hope that held sway in every heart.¹

Money was plentiful, Twain noted, and every individual considered himself potentially a mining nabob. Street fights, wide-open gambling palaces, saloons, theaters, and hurdy-gurdy houses enlivened the scene, and there was even "some talk of building a church." These were people busily engaged in that most popular of all American vocations, making a fortune, but they were also participating in the joy of spending it with relish. Life here had the quality of a frontier adventure alloyed with the gambling excitement of mining.

Gone now are the people, who gave these communities such vitality, as are most of the buildings, which gave them their substance. The wealth—it is gone, too—long since squandered or invested elsewhere. For the camps, what fire did not consume

¹ Mark Twain [Samuel Clemens], *Roughing It* (Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1872), pp. 302-03.

or plundering visitors tear down, nature herself has destroyed. Obliterated from modern maps, the sites are often hard to spot, even when searched for by jeep or by foot; yet there persists a fascination for them which has not died but has actually increased in recent years.

This very fascination, this allure, gave the camps a romantic glow that produced a mythical mold to measure all such communities. Nor is this phenomenon solely the product of the twentieth century, for one needs only to turn to nineteenth-century sources to find its roots. Among those who visited the camps was the well-known (in that day) Mrs. Sara Jane Lippincott (Grace Greenwood to her readers), who toured the West in 1871. She stopped at Black Hawk, Central City, and Caribou, Colorado. An acute awareness of reality clashes with a romantic vision and pen in her observations:

Narrow and dingy as is this mining town [Black Hawk] its people are making a brave effort to give it a look of comfort, in pleasant private dwellings, neat churches and fine school-buildings, perched up against the mountain-side, where it would seem no building larger than a miner's hut could find lodgement. Scarcely a tree or shrub is to be seen, or even a flower,



except it be in some parlor window: but, as we drove up into Central, we came upon a very pretty conservatory, attached to a neat cottage. It was something strangely cheering, yet touching, in the universal dreariness. It was like a stray leaf out of "Paradise Lost."

Going on to Caribou, Mrs. Lippincott allowed her romanticism to color reality:



Young as it is,—scarcely a year old,—there are evidences here of prevailing ideas of comfort and taste. . . . Beside almost every miner's cabin stands a tall pine, like a sentinel; and all the way up the valley, on the ground not built over, are lovely clumps of those steadfast comforters of a wintry climate and a "weary land." The whole place looked to me marvellously cheerful. . . .

That evening we sat down to supper with a goodly company of "honest miners," men in rough clothes and heavy boots, with hard hands and with faces well bronzed, but strong, earnest, intelligent. It was to me a communion with the bravest humanity of the age,—the vanguard of civilization and honorable enterprise.²

To be sure, not everyone found the camps enchanting. The world traveler and writer, Bayard Taylor, on a lecture tour in Colorado in 1866, was decidedly unimpressed with the best to be seen. With an experienced eye, he wrote: "I am already tired of these bald, clumsy shaped, pock-marked mountains; this one long windy, dusty street, with its perpetual menace of

² Grace Greenwood [Sara Lippincott], *New Life in New Lands* (New York: J. B. Ford and Co., 1873), pp. 76-77, 80-81.

fire; and this never-ending production of 'specimens' and offer of 'feet,' and shall joyfully say good-by tomorrow morning."³ And the Earl of Dunraven (Windham Thomas Wyndham-Quin) visited Virginia City, Montana, while on a hunting tour; expecting to find, apparently, a lap of luxury and haven of rest, he exclaimed:

Virginia City. Good Lord! There might have been laps, but there was no luxury. A street of straggling shanties, a bank, a blacksmith's shop, a few dry goods stores, and bar-rooms, constitute the main attractions of the "city." A gentleman had informed me that Virginia City contained brownstone front houses and paved streets, equal he guessed, to any eastern town. How that man did lie in his Wellingtons! The whole place was a delusion and a snare.⁴

In the years that followed, more and more tourists were able to reach the mining West as the railroads spread an increasing network of tracks to as many camps as possible. Most came only briefly to gape and to sample the flavor and then returned to civilization. Some were amazed or amused by what they witnessed; others were simply shocked. "An awful spectacle of low vice," tersely commented Charles Francis Adams, Jr., on the Leadville he saw in the 1880's.⁵ But in whatever way, a decided impression remained with the viewers.

By the turn of the century, the "old" mining West was disappearing rapidly from the scene. It left behind a certain image which did not die but lived on, growing to assume the posture of the "real" mining camp. "Wild," "sensual," "romantic," "adventuresome" are but a few of the adjectives used to express the feelings of so many pulp writers and pseudo-historians. The camp found itself placed in the never-never land of the legendary West. To recapture, to relive this spirit, the modern tourist need only visit the few reconstructed or refurbished camps in the Rocky Mountain states and interview the natives who have a wealth of stories about the good old days.

In recent years a revival of interest and study in the mining frontier has occurred, spearheaded by scholars of the stature of Rodman Paul, Clark Spence, and W. Turrentine Jackson. Those who are serious in their examination of this phase of the American frontier should go to the works of these men.⁶ But

³ Bayard Taylor, *Colorado: A Summer Trip* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1867), p. 69; see also numerous other comments throughout the rest of the book.

⁴ Earl of Dunraven (W. T. Wyndham-Quin), *Hunting in the Yellowstone* (New York: Macmillan, 1925), p. 63.

⁵ Quoted in Robert G. Athearn, *Rebel of the Rockies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 157.

⁶ See Rodman Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West 1848-1880* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963) and *California Gold: The Beginning of*

despite this encouraging trend the mining camp still receives a poor press in a host of books published each year to trap the unwary, the uninitiated, and those who simply believe that this was the way it happened. Numerous records exist, if only the researcher would utilize them. Like mining, however, it is long and arduous work with perhaps nothing but the experience as a reward.

A point from which to start in one's examination should be the realization that the mining camp was something different in the history of the trans-Mississippi West; it was an urban frontier. The "rugged individualist," braving unknown dangers to open the wilderness, was replaced by a rush of people who did not scatter but congregated around the mineral sites. Almost instantaneously a settlement was born and became the cutting edge of the frontier. This, in turn, changed the tempo, spirit, and direction of the usual pattern, producing a blending of the new with the old. Horace Greeley, on his overland journey to San Francisco in 1859, stopped at the recently opened Gregory Diggings in Colorado. It was June and the old timers had been there but a couple of months at most. Still, Greeley reported that the population could not number less than four thousand, although most of the settlers had not yet had time to build cabins but were still living in tents or under crude shelters.⁷

In several obvious ways the older pattern was altered on the mining frontier. Instead of moving steadily along a line of settlement built upon the foundations of a contiguous area, the miners leaped over a vast territory when they crossed the Missouri River. California is perhaps the best example of non-contiguous settlement, but the same thing happened in Colorado and in the entire Rocky Mountain tier of states. Only in the movement to Oregon in the 1830's and 1840's was there anything in American frontier history to match the scale of the mining advance in this respect, for here also thousands of Americans moved over a large unsettled region to reach their new homes.

Mining in the Far West (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947); Clark Spence, *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier 1860-1901* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Published for the American Historical Association; Cornell University Press, 1958); and W. Turrentine Jackson, *Treasure Hill: Portrait of a Silver Mining Camp* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1963). Frederick Jackson Turner, the pioneer frontier historian, has little to say about the mining West, which does not fit his concept of the steadily advancing, individualistic frontier. His much-maligned safety valve hypothesis has some validity in the camps, however, especially within the Rocky Mountain area.

⁷ Horace Greeley, *An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859* (New York: C. M. Saxon, Barker and Co., 1860), pp. 121-22.

Non-contiguous and transitory—these were the primary characteristics of the mining frontier. Once the lure of gold or silver infected a miner's blood a promising new strike lured him to another area. The editor of the *Silver Reef Miner* was only one of many who realized this phenomenon and decried it.

There seems to be something inherent in the nature of the American miner which impels him to stampede wherever opportunity offers. The more remote is the new Eldorado and the less the stampede know about it the more intense is their desire to go. . . . Let our miners stay where they are while they can get work. A rolling stone gathers no moss.⁸

Like others, however, he could not stem the tide. Another aspect of the same question was the miner's desire to return home with a fortune and not to make the camp a permanent abode. George Parsons, the observant diarist of life in Tombstone, wrote on his thirty-first birthday: "I am longing strongly though for a life in more congenial surroundings. . . . I certainly will investigate changes there [South and Florida] after acquiring some capital."⁹ This comment was written in 1881 when the land was becoming generally quite civilized.

The urbanization thus developed forced immediately upon the pioneer a series of problems which his ranching or farming contemporary did not have to face seriously for a decade, possibly longer. Municipal government and sanitation both required awareness and discussion, if not resolute action. The fear of burdensome taxes and the transitory nature of the population hurt the formation of the former. Still, many camps founded some type of city administration. Once organized, the city fathers were expected to do wonders with their community, from maintaining the streets to controlling crime. Unfortunately, despite good intentions, a lack of civic support undermined the best efforts. The city council of Rico, Colorado, for example, met regularly once a month, often twice, had standing committees, appointed special ones when the need arose, and passed sixty ordinances in three years. But a reading of the minutes of these sessions reveals the problems they faced, ranging from local indifference to strong objections to infringement of private rights. It mattered not that the community as a whole would benefit. Nonetheless, these councilmen worked actively to protect the individual, to the point of passing ordinances against selling impure milk and peddling oleomargarine without a

license.¹⁰ Nor should this camp be considered an exception.

Perhaps the most potentially serious question to be faced was that of sanitation. Generally, no real attempt was made to resolve it until the situation got out of hand or until lives had been lost. The councilmen often passed ordinances relating to nuisances. For instance, Deadwood was quite specific about dumping offal, rubbish, and the like on the streets or alleys, about maintaining a lot or house in such condition as to be offensive and a nuisance, failing to remove the carcasses of dead animals, or failing to report contagious or infectious diseases. In each case fines supplemented the decrees and the marshal or city health officer was delegated to enforce the law.¹¹ Enforcement, however, was exactly where the system failed—until a crisis arose. Municipal finances, along with public indifference, played a major role in this failure.

Problems of a less critical nature also plagued local governments. Street maintenance probably caused the city fathers more distress than any other issue, because it repeatedly aroused the ire of the citizenry as did few other subjects. Even such a

Main Street in Deadwood



⁸ *Silver Reef Miner* (Utah), April 12, 1879.

⁹ George W. Parsons, *The Private Journal of George Whitwell Parsons* (Phoenix: Arizona Statewide Archival and Records Project, 1939), p. 250.

trivial matter as an overabundance of dogs produced from irate residents demands for relief. The crux of the matter, according to a Deadwood newspaper editor, seemed to be that: "We are slow to invest our hard earned money, unless we are compelled to, in any public good, simply because of the disposition on [the] part of many to head off any enterprise unless *they* can see an individual benefit arising from it, and there are those who will throw every obstacle in the way to defeat great undertakings."¹² The uncertain future and the fluctuating cycle of mining provided further barriers which hindered the public-spirited who sought an equitable and, more importantly, a collectable tax system.

The question of law and order was intensified by the urbanization. As people crowded together, the opportunities for criminals widened. The lure for this element was greater when money flowed freely, particularly in the larger and wealthier camps. The red-light district, with its multitude of vices, set the pace. Of a less grave nature were the problems of drunkenness and general rowdiness. Opportunity knocked for more serious endeavors, however, whether it be running a crooked card game or robbing a stage. Particularly unfortunate was the example set for the younger generation. Following a disgustingly bad outbreak of window smashing and other mischief by a number of boys who seemed "as naturally inclined to evil as water is to run down hill," the *Pinal Drill* (Pinal, Arizona) warned: "If the parents of these young candidates for Yuma [the territorial prison] don't take them in hand, it is more probable that some of our indignant citizens may do so."¹³

The oft-expressed idea that the camp existed only as a temporary home until a fortune was found handicapped those who tried to arouse interest in controlling the criminal element. Indeed, the sheer newness and the lack of social cohesion hurt in the same way. Yet organize they did and, legally or extralegally, moved to stop lawlessness. The formation of vigilantes remains perhaps the best known example of the latter method. It was used especially in early California and in Montana in the 1860's, but the practice died out by the 1870's. What the people really wanted were legal courts and officials. As an Idaho paper reminded its readers as early as 1863, vigilante

¹⁰ Minutes of the Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Rico, 1886-1889, in the possession of the town clerk, Rico, Colorado.

¹¹ Harry Anderson (ed.), "An Account of Deadwood and the Northern Black Hills," *South Dakota Department of History Collections*, XXXI (1962), 342-50.

¹² *Black Hills Weekly Times* (Deadwood), September 9, 1877.

¹³ *Pinal Drill* (Arizona), November 5, 1881.

committees left no redress and sometimes tended to accumulate evils to which there was "apparently no termination."¹⁴

A step in the direction of legality was taken with the formation of the quasi-legal miners' courts which appeared throughout the West, generally in the earlier years. Justice here was dispensed by a jury selected from local residents, with a presiding judge who might or might not have had legal training. If any lawyers lived in the camp, the court hoped to benefit from their experience. Decisions could be just or unjust, perhaps one of the strangest being the acquittal of Jack McCall for shooting "Wild Bill" Hickok in the back of the head. McCall pleaded self-defense on the grounds that Hickok had sworn to kill him and that he felt he could not face such a noted gunman. Aware of no other recourse, McCall took this way out of his dilemma.

Progress was a key word in mining camps. No community wanted to remain indefinitely merely a rough-hewn, frontier settlement; each sought to acquire for itself the refinements of civilization as quickly as possible. The availability of money drew the trappings, but the substantial factors, such as churches, schools, theaters, and improved transportation facilities, were wanting. Brick or stone construction, trees—anything which might lend a more refined atmosphere—were advocated by the community boosters. The editor of the *Aspen Times*, in 1885, wanted his readers to plant shade trees around their homes so that their city might become decorated like other civilized towns. It would cost but little, he advised, and trees would in a few years become ornaments of utility, pleasure, and beauty.¹⁵



This would improve the camp's image, which was essential to growth and to the attraction of outside capital, the lifeblood of mining. Few clung to the old way of life as the push for progress continued.

Progress alone was not enough, however; a community needed to advertise. For example, the residents of Silver City, New Mexico, organized a committee to praise the climate, agricultural possibilities, healthful nature of the region, mining interests, and business potential of the area. Their objective, which was to get a railroad into the region, would enable the "great commercial centers of the Union"¹⁴ to profit from all these budding attractions. Bitter rivalries developed between mining camps. Older communities particularly resented the inroads of new upstarts and feared the economic intrusion of another into their domain. In the cycle of the mining frontier the new continually replaced the old, and little could be done to change the course of events without broadening the economic base of the settlement.

The mining camp has been called transitory, perhaps justifiably so when one contemplates a disintegrating site; however, the urbanization of the movement had a much broader significance. The very essence of the mining frontier forbade that it be self-sufficient or even near this ideal. The miners rushed to the new discovery with one thought in mind—to find the hidden bonanza. Time was of the essence, for the first-comers had the greatest opportunity. Food, clothing, and equipment could be purchased when one made a strike, or grubstaked if bad luck befell; therefore, on the heels of the miners came the merchants and tradesmen to serve their needs.

The camp acted as the center, the magnet for a widening economic unit. In the community were the businessmen who depended on outside sources for their merchandise and who in turn had to rely upon the transportation arteries leading into the district to secure their stock. This situation created a demand for better roads and then railroads, the ultimate in transportation for that day.

What could a railroad do for the mining community? If one had been a resident of Butte, Montana, in the fall of 1876, he could have read a whole series of editorials in the *Miner* describing the anticipated advantages.¹⁷ These included cheaper and

faster transportation, expanded markets for ores, improved contact with the outer world, new industry, a higher value for real estate, increased immigration, and a rapid advance of the comforts of civilization. For the railroad owner the camps held out a definite attraction. William Jackson Palmer, organizer and builder of the Denver and Rio Grande, explained: "A population engaged in mining is by far the most profitable of any to a railway. A hundred miners, from their wandering habits and many wants, are better customers than four times that number of otherwise employed."¹⁸ To gain a real appreciation of the attraction these communities held out to the railroad, one must carefully study the western railroad mileage maps of the later decades of the nineteenth century.

The high prices offered and the availability of "hard cash" in the camps encouraged the farmer to come, and the idea of the Great American Desert disappeared in the wake of profitable trade. Prevalent since the explorations of Zebulon Pike and Stephen Long, this idea had not seriously been challenged except by the Mormons and by persons in scattered smaller settlements. Then came the gold rush to the Rocky Mountains, and, as Matthew Dale wrote from Colorado, farming was decidedly the best business in the country. For not only was there an immediate market, with growing demands, but also mining was hard work and not always profitable, and miners did not have the time to raise crops. In the end the farmers stayed and served as a solid foundation for growth.

Frequently isolated in the mountains, the camps were supplied by trade centers built at the more accessible sites along the range or in the large valleys. Many of these (an outstanding example being Denver) survived to emerge as prominent communities in the twentieth century. Not all camps themselves have disappeared; some, like Helena, Montana, or Silver City, New Mexico, made the adjustment and have grown in importance.

The money to be made in the camps, and especially from the mines, helped build the West. Europeans and Americans sent their savings to be sunk in the earth in hopes of rich returns. In his *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier*, Clark Spence has thoughtfully examined this question in relation to the mines. The profit to be gained from business operations in the camps has not been so carefully studied, but it cannot be denied that high earnings could be gleaned. For

¹⁴ *Idaho World* (Idaho City), September 2, 1865.

¹⁵ *Aspen Times*, April 11, 1885.

¹⁶ *Herald* (Silver City, New Mexico), November 7, 1875.

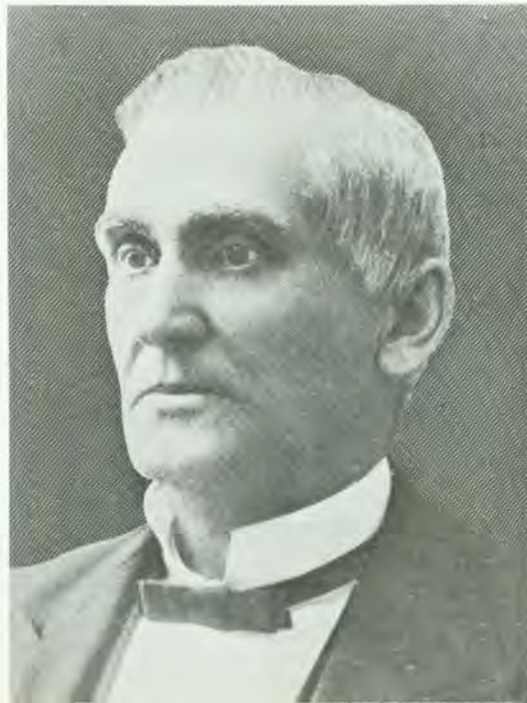
¹⁷ See the *Butte Miner*, September, 1876, through January, 1877.

¹⁸ Athearn, *Rebel of the Rockies*, p. 16.

example, Samuel Leach, a merchant in Helena and Virginia City, Montana, wrote that he and his partner, during the period from December 1, 1867, to September 1, 1868, returned a profit of \$39,000.¹⁹

Much of this money found its way to the East or to Europe and into the hands of the investors, but some stayed in the West and helped develop the region. A city such as Denver benefited from the silver fortune of H. A. W. Tabor, who spent lavishly, if not always wisely, in property and other investments. He built the Tabor Grand Theater, one of the finest west of the Mississippi River, and the Tabor Block, and he invested in such businesses as the First National Bank. Earlier, in Leadville, where he made his fortune, he built an opera house, helped to organize the Bank of Leadville and the Leadville Gas Company, and gave financial support to the fire-fighting Tabor Hose Company. In Montana, mining men such as William Andrews Clark invested in local property and business. Clark was particularly active in Butte. Every Rocky Mountain state has similar examples, although not always on the scale of a Tabor or Clark. Andrew Macky gave money to the University of Colorado to build an auditorium, and the same school received

*Andrew Macky
invested in mining
claims in Golden
City and Leadville
during the
gold rush.*



a new law building from Simon Guggenheim; both men had made money in mining. Profit made on the mining frontier was used to promote varied segments of western development, from coal fields and railroads to industry. Here is almost virgin territory for the scholar but one which will take a great deal of time and examination.

It must not be assumed, however, that success and profit naturally followed the establishment of some form of a business in a mining community. Competition was cutthroat and opportunity limited if the merchant was not capable and, to a degree, lucky. To a new and/or prosperous camp flocked a multitude of would-be entrepreneurs. For example, a partial listing of the business establishments in Aspen, Colorado, in 1885 disclosed sixteen hotels, eight restaurants, ten grocery stores, seven blacksmith shops, and twenty-six saloons. The uncertain future of mining added a further woe to the businessman, who could never be certain when a camp might decline. Despite all his troubles, however, he was the backbone of every community.

Along with the fledgling capitalist the laborer also came to the mining camp; the majority of men, in fact, worked for someone else. Labor conditions in most camps, however, were not such as to produce labor trouble until the 1890's. It was then that the West would gain an unenviable reputation as violence flared in several areas. Generalizations are hard to make, but some salient facts stand out as to why this occurred in such a manner. New camps generally had a shortage of men and relatively higher wages; therefore, the discontented could always move to a new and flourishing district during the three decades from 1860 to 1890. The gap between the owner and worker was not great and, with luck, the latter could advance into the capitalist ranks. As a result, unions made but a small start, nor was one single organization spread over a great region or industry. The lot of the working man, though not easy, was better than that of his eastern counterpart, and, as long as the mining West prospered, offered potential self-betterment.

The miners, the largest single element of the laboring population, represented a major portion of any mining community. Despite long hours, appalling working conditions, and a wage scale varying from two dollars to five dollars per shift, they generally did not unionize, and the only major strike, at Lead-

¹⁹ "Excerpts from the Autobiography of Samuel Leach, 1847-1911," copy in the Montana Historical Society, Helena.

ville in 1880, was crushed. By the end of the eighties, a tense situation indicated coming trouble in the larger corporation-dominated camps but in many smaller, struggling camps the miners faced economic collapse if they turned to radical expedients. In the camp's hey-day, however, much of its life centered around relieving the men of their wages or, as it has been aptly described, "mining the miners."

Less manifest today, but vital nonetheless, was the role these communities played as cultural and social transmitters and amalgamators of foreign and American customs. The fact that a camp might have had the first play or theater in a state is not of real significance, but the fact that it encouraged, nurtured, and passed on a cultural heritage is. To the camps came a conglomeration of peoples who brought with them their own traditions and customs, which, after stirring together, resulted in a changed society. An exciting area of study is opening here for those who care to go beyond the sensational or humorous aspects of mining camp life.

One of the redoubtable misconceptions which has grown over the years concerns the wildness and lawlessness of the mining camps. Too often, if the reader does not find the prerequisite amount of these qualities in his history, he feels deprived. Certainly these things existed. The troubles with the Plummer gang in Montana in the 1860's illustrate to what depths desperadoes could sink; before the vigilantes ended their reign of terror, they had murdered over one hundred people. However, this poses the question of whether such incidents were the exception or the rule. The whole period suffers from the acceptance of these as the norm when indeed they were not.

Three mining camps did more to contribute to this impression than any others: Deadwood, Leadville, and Tombstone. While this is neither the place nor the time to discuss them in detail, certain facts should be noted. For example, they all had their hour after the appearance of the railroad made it easier for visitors and reporters to reach them. One followed another, booming in quick succession in a six-year period from 1876 to 1882. Each received nationwide publicity. In each were found a wide-open gambling-red-light district and a certain amount of lawlessness which lent credence to any story about them.

Deadwood and Tombstone both attracted well-known frontier personalities, including Wild Bill Hickok and Wyatt Earp; yet, neither was a first-ranked mining community. Tombstone,

especially, suffered from a variety of ailments, only one of which was mining fever. The death of Hickok and the episode at the OK Corral have attracted public attention down to the present day; and, since the communities came into existence because of mining, the association was stamped. Leadville, on the other hand, was a mining camp to the core, one of the largest and richest in the West. It gloried in its seamy side and ostensibly enjoyed the oft-used epithet describing it as



the "wildest and wickedest." From these three has emerged, it seems, a yardstick by which to measure all other camps to see if they fit the mold. This comparison is not fair nor does it do justice to the thousands of other camps which passed through a relatively quiet, peaceful existence.

That a certain amount of wildness appeared in every camp cannot be denied. Prostitution, drinking, and gambling were accepted parts of life. In fact, the whole existence of the mining frontier was a gamble. Still, the West held no monopoly on vice. Perhaps the people here were more open or were less sophisticated; or perhaps the westerner was less hypocritical than his eastern neighbor, for these offenses flourished and

attracted considerable attention. They served not only as a release for the local residents, but even the visitor got caught up in them.

It seems "kinder queer" to see the chaps who are known in Denver as staid and sober church members and heads of respectable families, come to Leadville, sail into the boxes at the variety shows, and with an actress on each knee, make love in the most approved and modern fashion. We wouldn't give the boys away for the world, so they needn't quake in their high topped boots and blue shirts.²⁰

Whether a mining camp appeared romantic depended on the observer's experience or length of residence. Some mining camp newspapers could get as carried away with this romanticism as the most starry-eyed eastern writer. The residents themselves, however, knew the reality. Mrs. Emily Meredith, writing in April, 1863, about her experiences in Bannack and Gallatin City, Montana, warned: "I never would advise anyone to come to a new mining country because there is a great deal of risk and a great deal to endure." A person, she concluded, ought to make money pretty fast there to pay him for living in such places. Matthew Dale, discussing life in Colorado three years earlier, commented that things jogged along quietly and monotonously, seldom stirring the miners from a uniform dull routine.

It might seem adventuresome to their descendants in the twentieth century, but life in the camps was a round of work and toil. Nor, unfortunately for many people, did the reward repay the effort, for the majority just managed to make a living—rarely a fortune. Jerry Bryan concluded in his diary: "Everything fluctuates here except Whiskey and Labor. Whiskey is at the top notch and labor at the lowest. Such is life in the Black Hills." Decent living quarters, meals, and other of the common amenities of life were often hard to find in the rush of the mining frontier. For example, on June 19, 1881, George Parsons noted that he had his "first good bath in Arizona";²¹ Parsons had come to the territory in February, 1880. It was cold in the winter, muddy in the spring, dusty in the summer—all against the backdrop of the discomforts caused by

²⁰ *Leadville Eclipse*, quoted in the *Denver Daily Times*, February 27, 1879.

²¹ Sources for the quotes found in this and the preceding paragraph are Clyde McLemore (ed.), "Bannack and Gallatin City in 1862-1863: A Letter by Mrs. Emily R. Meredith," *Sources of Northwest History* ("Montana State University Bulletin Reprint Series," No. 24; Missoula: Montana State University, 1937), pp. 5-6; Robert G. Athearn (ed.), "Life in the Pike's Peak Region: The Letters of Matthew H. Dale," *The Colorado Magazine*, XXXII (April, 1955), 92; Parsons, *Private Journal*, p. 235; and Jerry Bryan, *An Illinois Gold Hunter in the Black Hills* (Springfield: Illinois State Historical Society, 1960), p. 28.

a lack of sanitation facilities. The total situation was no laughing matter, despite a sense of humor which allowed the *Helena Herald* to comment:

One of the most prominent citizens while crossing main street commenced sinking in the deep mud which filled the street like



a river. Preparations were being made by by-standers for pulling him out when happily he struck bottom. Had the mud been a few feet deeper, he would have met with the most horrible death on record.²²

On another occasion, a month later, in January, 1867, a reporter pleaded that "for the sake of suffering humanity" the large hole in the sidewalk, "big enough to serve as a boot jack for a giant and leg breaker for ordinary mortals," be fixed.²³ Many could not endure the strain and left; a few took to the bottle or simply ended it all.

Despite some beautiful natural settings, the camps were crowded together, with waste and refuse scattered about haphazardly. Planning was almost nonexistent; settlements just grew. This evoked a revulsion among visitors and inhabitants alike but proved hard to overcome because of the limited resources and the transitory nature of so many of the residents. Hastily constructed, the buildings left a great deal to be desired

²² *Helena Herald*, December 12, 1867.

²³ *Ibid.*, January 16, 1868.

architecturally and often structurally; soon the camp had the physical appearance of a much older settlement than it really was. James Chisholm, who visited the Sweetwater mining rush in Wyoming in 1868, described homes in South Pass as "humble looking dwellings built of logs or rubble stone." Charles Clark, in Colorado, commented on the awkward and unsettled appearance of the "unpainted, hastily-put-up frame buildings."²⁴ Understandably, with such conditions, the camps were fire traps and frequently burned down, wiping out years of effort. If still prosperous, the camp rebuilt and was quite often better arranged than before, but if the community was declining then a fire simply pushed it further along the path to oblivion. Few camps were spared and some had a regular history of fires.

Isolation, particularly in the 1860's, faced all those who chose to live there, as did the high cost of living. Death and illness were no strangers to the families, and over all hung the fear of a mine disaster. The pace of life might be fast, for a camp could be born and die within a season, leaving behind broken hopes and the heritage of yet another failure. Yet life could be agonizingly slow as a camp lingered on for years in the twilight zone between vigorous permanency and abandonment.

Despite the handicaps, the people persisted in staying and carving a settlement out of the wilderness. A great deal of research needs to be done to comprehend and interpret the story of the mining camp in the West. Far too long overlooked, it has become encrusted with legends which need first to be stripped away; a rich reward then awaits those who care to delve deeply into the subject. As Dale Morgan suggested in a recent issue of *The American West*, it is time for a pioneering spirit to explore new frontiers in the study of the fur trade.²⁵ Even more so is this needed in the study of the mining camp.

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²⁴ Lola Homsher (ed.), *South Pass, 1868: James Chisholm's Journal of the Wyoming Gold Rush* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960), pp. 73-74; Charles M. Clark, *A Trip to Pike's Peak* (San Jose, Calif.: Talisman Press, 1958), p. 95.

²⁵ Dale Morgan, "The Fur Trade and Its Historians," *The American West*, III (Spring, 1966), 28-35, 92-93.

Rural Settlement Patterns in the San Luis Valley: A Comparative Study

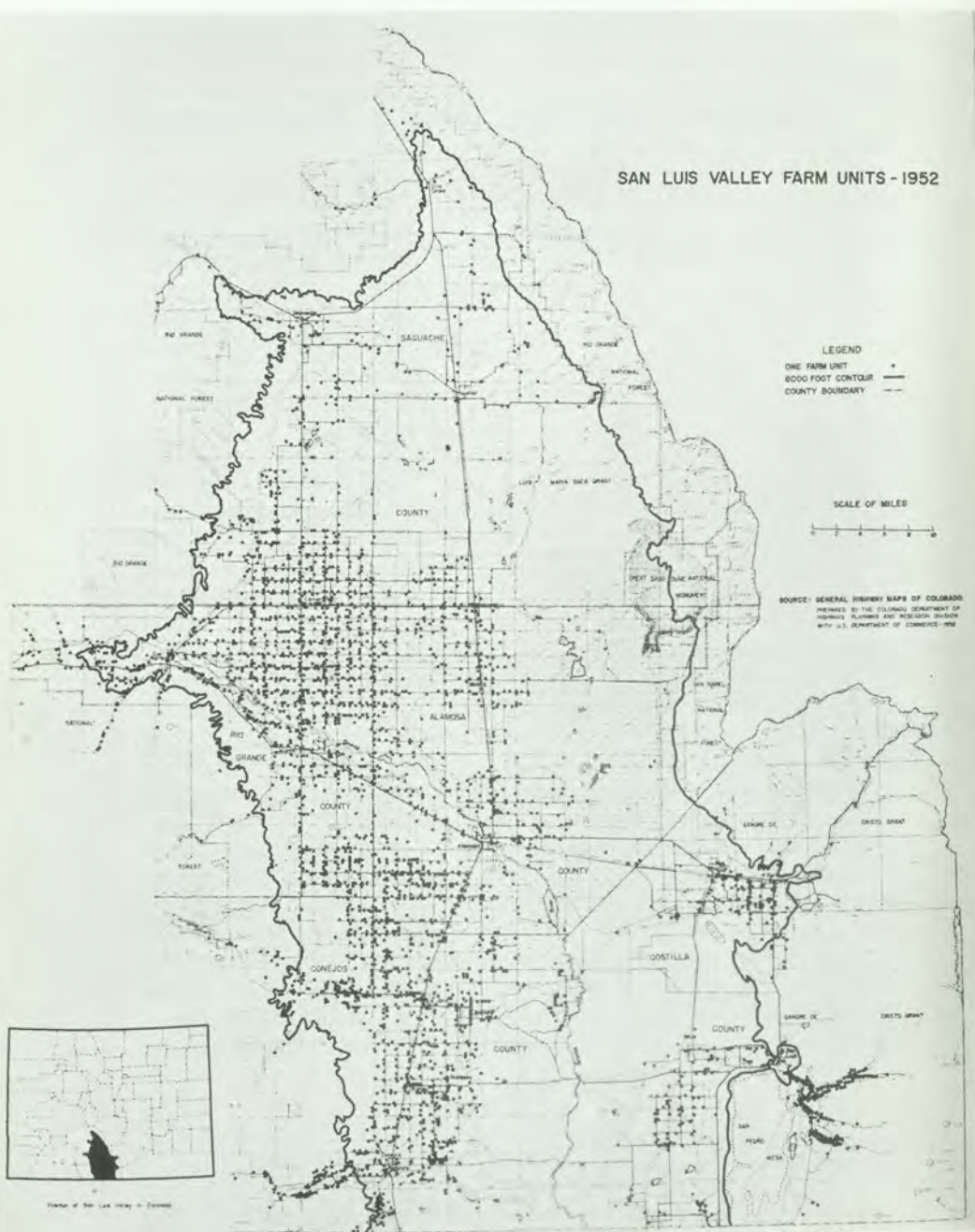
BY ALVAR WARD CARLSON

History plays an important role in understanding the past and present geography of the San Luis Valley. Geography concerns itself not only with the physical aspects of a region, but it also interprets the human imprints left upon an area in terms of time and space. The imprints are essentially settlements and that is where the study of history can be a vital aid in the comprehension of geography. The San Luis Valley of Colorado provides an excellent opportunity to study how distinct groups of agricultural people settled differently within similar natural conditions of a high intermontane basin. The settlements to be studied are those of the Spanish-Americans; Anglo-Americans, with settlement by homesteaders, ranchers, and Mormons; and the Japanese-Americans.¹

The stage that history acted upon is a valley in south-central Colorado between the high Sangre de Cristo Mountains, which reach heights of over 10,000 feet, on the east and the lower San Juan Mountains on the west. The San Luis Valley is approximately 5,000 square miles in area and includes portions of Saguache, Conejos, Costilla, Alamosa, and Rio Grande Counties. In these counties the people settled on the valley floor, which is mostly level and lies between 7,500 and 8,000 feet above sea level.²

¹ Much of the information presented in this article was derived from several weeks of field work in the San Luis Valley. In addition, I sent 200 questionnaires to farmers in the valley; approximately 125 completed forms were returned. The people in the valley were extremely cooperative, and I would like to thank all those who contributed to this study.

² The San Luis Valley and other high valleys in Colorado were commonly referred to as parks in early histories. William A. Bell, writing in 1869, stated that "Park" in Rocky Mountain phraseology has a specific significance



Zebulon Pike labeled the valley a prairie in 1807 because of its relative uniformity and vegetation. The explorer had a panoramic view from a vantage point in the southern part of the valley; he wrote that he "had a view of all the prairie and rivers to the north of us; it was at the same time one of the most sublime and beautiful inland prospects ever presented to the eyes of man . . . the great and lofty mountains covered with eternal snows, seemed to surround the luxuriant vale, crowned with perennial flowers, like a terrestrial paradise, shut out from the view of man."³

Semi-arid conditions prevail throughout the valley, for it is in the rainshadows of the mountain ranges. The mountainous watersheds may receive thirty to forty inches of precipitation annually in contrast to only six to ten inches on the valley floor. Several streams have their headwaters in these mountains and flow onto the floor of semi-desert grasses and shrubs, mostly phreatophytes. These streams became important in the settlement of the region. As the historian William E. Pabor commented in 1883: "Without water, a desert; with water, a Garden of Eden."⁴ This is, briefly, the natural environment in which the Spanish-Americans, Anglo-Americans, and Japanese-Americans established settlements.

Recent distributions of rural population are indicated on the map of San Luis Valley farm units, 1952.⁵ This is the overall settlement pattern after one century of permanent occupancy of the valley by white men. Although considerable intermingling has taken place among the groups, significant concentrations of each type of settlement still exist.

Spanish-Americans occupy fairly large settlements in Conejos and Costilla Counties, especially around the towns of Conejos and San Luis. They comprised approximately seventy per cent (5,900) of Conejos County's rural population and about eighty per cent (3,400) of Costilla County's rural population in 1960.

Spanish-Americans started to migrate to the southern part of the valley in the middle of the nineteenth century and were

and is used exclusively to designate these lofty, well-watered plains, or prairies, to be found all along the 'Summit Plateau,' shut in on all sides by mountains." *New Tracks in North America* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1869), I, xxix.

³ Donald Jackson (ed.), *The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike, with Letters and Related Documents* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), I, 376-77.

⁴ William E. Pabor, *Colorado as an Agricultural State* (New York: Orange Judd Co., 1893), p. 135.

⁵ A farm unit is "a place whose general appearance indicates that the production of crops, livestock, etc. is the principal business." Letter from R. E. Livingston, planning and research engineer, Colorado Department of Highways, Denver, April 29, 1960. The farm units were inventoried in 1952.

the first permanent residents. They came primarily from northern New Mexico where Spanish settlements had been established and maintained by subsistence agriculture along the Rio Grande River since the late sixteenth century. The first permanent settlement in the San Luis Valley was named San Luis de la Culebra in 1851; it is the present site of San Luis. It was followed shortly afterwards by nearby settlements at San Pedro and San Acacio. The villages of Conejos, Guadalupe, Mogote, and Ortiz were founded contemporaneously in the southwestern part of the valley. All of these settlements were founded after the valley became a part of the United States.

Each settlement, however, was on a land grant which had been bestowed earlier by Mexico upon people who had petitioned the government for colony grants. Two of these land grants included territory in the San Luis Valley. The Sangre de Cristo Grant, issued in 1843, was the largest and embraced all of the territory in Costilla County, over 777,000 acres, plus a smaller amount across what is now the New Mexican border. It stretched from north of the Trinchera River in Colorado and from the Rio Grande River in Colorado eastward to the summit of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The Conejos Grant was granted in 1833 and it included the entire area south of the Rio Grande River and east of the San Juan Mountains to approximately the present Colorado-New Mexican border. The Luis Maria Baca Grant, in the northern part of the valley, was awarded by the United States government in 1864.⁶

The Conejos and Sangre de Cristo Grants were colony grants.⁷ Colonization was attempted in the valley during the 1840's on the Conejos Grant, but the marauding Ute Indians were a menace and the settlement was abandoned.⁸ It was not until after Mexican rule had ended that there was permanent settlement. Possession of the land grants by the original peti-

⁶ The land in this grant was chosen by heirs of Luis Maria Cabeza de Baca, who had been awarded land in New Mexico and Arizona by the Spanish king in 1821. Because some of his land in New Mexico was used later in the development of the town of Las Vegas, his heirs were allowed by the United States government to select another tract of land. Consequently, they chose the 100,000 acres in the San Luis Valley.

⁷ A colony grant was to be settled by colonists. Agriculture had to be practiced; a provision of the Conejos Grant stated: "The tract shall be cultivated and never abandoned and he that shall not cultivate his land within two years or that shall not reside upon it will forfeit his rights . . . pastures and watering places shall be in common for all inhabitants; land donated for cultivation and for pasturing of all kinds of livestock. . . ." Quoted in Herbert O. Brayer, *William Blackmore: The Spanish-Mexican Land Grants of New Mexico and Colorado, 1863-1878* (Denver: Bradford-Robinson Publishing Co., 1940), p. 209. See also p. 61.

⁸ LeRoy R. Hafen, "Mexican Land Grants in Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine*, IV (March, 1927), 83-87.

tioners was recognized by the United States in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848). The petitioners encouraged persons to settle in Colorado in order to fulfill the stipulations of the grants and to thwart Indian dominance of the valley. Consequently, a group of eighty-three families migrated to the Conejos Grant and a larger number went to the Sangre de Cristo Grant in the early 1850's.⁹ The Surveyor General's Act of 1854 contained provisions for ascertaining the validity of all property rights and claims prior to that date.¹⁰ Two years later the Conejos Grant was rejected by the United States Congress largely on the grounds that it had been abandoned prior to 1848. However, all settlers on this grant were recognized as legal squatters and obtained titles to their lands.¹¹

Spanish-Americans continued to migrate to the valley, but they tended to remain within small areas of the two grants, mostly near their original settlements on floodplains of small streams and creeks. These pioneer Spanish-Americans did not spread out in the valley for several reasons. They were apprehensive of the agricultural progress of the Anglo-American newcomers and also of the construction of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad which traversed the valley in the late 1870's. At about that time Spanish-Americans abandoned their lands north of the Conejos River on the defunct Conejos Grant and moved further south in the valley where Spanish-American settlements still exist. The historian Hubert H. Bancroft stated in 1889 that "such was the race prejudice of the Mexicans that when the active American population began to invade this region, many abandoned it."¹² And another historian of that time, Pabor, observed that "the approach of the railway—this symbol of the coming of a superior race—has led to . . . abandonment. . . ."¹³

Although the population of the settlements in the San Luis area was more than 1,100 by 1867, the area of Spanish-American settlement was not extended appreciably on the eastern side of the valley. This was probably because a large ranch was established immediately to the north of the settlers' holdings which precluded further settlement in that direction.

The Spanish-Americans implanted one of the most distinc-

⁹ Brayer, *William Blackmore*, pp. 206-09.

¹⁰ U.S., *Statutes at Large*, X, 309.

¹¹ Irene Flom Cox, "Development of Baca Grant Number Four" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of History, Adams State College, 1948), pp. 2-21.

¹² Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming, 1540-1888* (San Francisco: The History Co., 1890), p. 593.

¹³ Pabor, *Colorado as an Agricultural State*, p. 131.

tive types of agricultural settlement in the United States, the long-lot system. This type of settlement is still evident in the agricultural communities near San Luis and Conejos. Each farmstead is oriented to a stream or a cooperative irrigation ditch or canal, resulting in a line village. The density of farmsteads is very high for an agricultural settlement and averages between ten and twenty per mile.

There are several explanations for this type of settlement pattern. Early Spanish-Americans were a very gregarious people and tended to group together in agricultural settlements with families building their houses close together.¹⁴ Protection was probably another factor. Moreover, the availability of water for irrigation and the assurance that every settler would receive the same type of land were extremely important considerations. Water was imperative for raising field crops of corn and wheat and gardens of beans and chilies. With limited arable land on the small floodplains, each settler needed not only frontage on a stream or a major canal, but also irrigable land. Consequently, the procedure was to settle narrow strips of land which



Aerial view of settlement near the town of San Luis. The commons is the dark area shown in the top left corner.

fronted water and included bottomland. Small canals and diversion ditches were built and maintained on a cooperative basis as community enterprises.¹⁵ However, much of each farm consisted of non-irrigable land, including foothills and mountains, if nearby, which were used for pasturage and for the gathering of wood for the household.¹⁶ This land remained unfenced and open to communal use even though it was owned privately. This communal type of pasturage is similar to that

¹⁴ Margaret Mead, *Cultural Patterns and Technical Change* (New York: New American Library, 1955), pp. 151-77. Although Mead discusses the Spanish-Americans of New Mexico, the information applies also to the Spanish-American settlements of the San Luis Valley, which are really the northernmost extension of the settlements along the Rio Grande River.

¹⁵ The grants included this stipulation: "In order to construct and maintain the life-sustaining irrigation system the settlers were obligated to give their labor for a definite number of days each year to maintain the community owned ditches and dams." Brayer, *William Blackmore*, p. 12. The first large ditch was built in 1851 to parallel the Culebra River near San Luis. It was known as *La Acequia San Luis* or the San Luis People's Ditch and is the oldest irrigation ditch in Colorado. It is still being maintained and used.

¹⁶ This method of settlement appears to stem from an idea or practice outlined in Spain's colonization laws. Law III and Ordinance III stated that "lands and adjacent area to be settled should be selected in every way possible for their fertility, abundance of pasture, wood, lumber, materials, fresh water, transportation, entrances and commons, and that no lakes were nearby nor

in early Spain and later Mexico whereby each "always assumed a beneficent attitude to the poor, declaring her mountains, woods and pastures to be free to the common use."¹⁷

These ribbon farms measured from as few as twenty varas to as many as five hundred varas and were normally several miles in length on the unsurveyed grant.¹⁸ Farms near Conejos attained lengths of five to six miles and extended into the San Juan foothills. Many of the farms in the San Luis area extended north toward the Sangre de Cristo Mountains for distances of six to ten miles with some up to fifteen miles. These farms contained from ten to one hundred acres with only a very small portion being irrigable on any farm.

Land was given free at first, but it was settled on different premises, thus explaining the varying farm acreages. Near Conejos, land was divided into farms according to the size of the settler's family. A large family needed more land for subsistence and was allowed to settle on up to two hundred acres. A single person could receive half of that amount. Near San Luis, a settler was given land on the basis of his abilities to cultivate. If he were considered a good cultivator and if he possessed the necessary implements he received a larger tract.¹⁹

Methods of cultivation were primitive and with crude implements a farmer could not cultivate large acreages. Hence, many farmers were satisfied with their small holdings and were content to engage in non-commercial agriculture. Since land was free when the settlements began, many people were happy with their first holdings but anticipated increasing them later. However, the other land was inevitably selected by newcomers, which precluded annexation or acquisition of additional land.²⁰ Later, strips of land were sold to the settlers on the Sangre de Cristo Grant and the size of the farm acquired by a settler depended upon his ability to pay. Some farms decreased in size because of the custom of many Spanish-Americans of subdividing their holdings upon death. Their children received progressively smaller strips of land through inheritance.²¹

swamps in which poisonous animals were bred, nor contamination of the water and air." Quoted in Ralph E. Twitchell, "Spanish Colonization in New Mexico: In the Onate and De Vargas Periods," *Historical Society of New Mexico Publications*, XXII (August, 1919), 6.

¹⁷ Cox, "Development of Baca Grant Number Four," p. 36.

¹⁸ One vara, meaning a man's step in Spanish, is just a little over thirty-three inches. It was a measure in width only, not length.

¹⁹ Olibama Lopez, "The Spanish Heritage in the San Luis Valley" (unpublished Master's thesis, Department of History, University of Denver, 1942), p. 11.

²⁰ Interview with Emilio Lobato, Sr., former public official and lifelong resident of Chama, Colorado, September 9-10, 1960.

²¹ *Ibid.* This practice is recorded in the *Conejos Division, San Luis Valley*

A commons (*ejido*) was set aside near San Luis in 1863 to provide additional pasture for the settlers' livestock. It consisted of nine hundred acres of unfenced open meadows which could not be sold, rented, or taxed.²² Each farmer in the surrounding settlements could graze annually ten head of cattle or horses on the commons.²³ Early settlers decided that sheep should graze the foothills and mountains, and they were therefore banned from the commons.²⁴

Spanish-American farmsteads were small and were characterized mostly by flat, one-story, two- or three-room houses. Mud plaster covered thick adobe walls, which were built upon upright peeled cottonwood or pine logs obtained from the river bottoms or the nearby mountains. In addition to the house, there were usually a small shed and corral. Large barns and machine sheds were not a part of the Spanish-American farmstead.

The Anglo-Americans, the second group to settle in the San Luis Valley, numbered 15,000 in 1960 and constituted the largest segment of the rural population. Their largest concentration is on the alluvial fan of the Rio Grande River in Rio Grande County. Anglo-Americans started to settle in the San Luis Valley during the 1870's, migrating from the Middle West. Some had been attracted to Colorado by the mining industry and later decided to settle on farms. Most, however, came to seek a livelihood by farming or cattle-ranching on land available under the Homestead Act. These peoples were of many nationalities with the preponderance being German and Scandinavian. A considerable number of the Anglo-Americans were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Mormons came to the valley in the late 1870's and 1880's from the Middle West, Utah, and from the Southern States Church of Latter-day Saints Mission. In 1960 there were approximately seventy Mormon families located in the valley, largely in and around the towns of Manassa and Sanford in the Conejos River basin.

Rural settlements established by the Anglo-Americans not only had significant differences from the Spanish-American settlements, but they also differed within their group. Because of varying interests and perceptions, Anglo-Americans will be

Project, Colorado, Supplemental Report (Amarillo, Texas: United States Department of the Interior, 1947), p. 14.

²² Emilia Gallegos Smith, "Reminiscences of Early San Luis," *The Colorado Magazine*, XXIV (January, 1947), 25.

²³ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 15, 1960, p. 32.

²⁴ Interview with Emilio Lobato, Sr.

considered in three groups: unorganized homesteaders, Mormons, and ranchers. Each group established its own type of settlement pattern and therefore these settlements will be discussed separately.

The unorganized homesteaders comprised the largest group. They eventually settled chiefly on the alluvial fan of the Rio Grande River between the towns of Monte Vista and Center. This concentration occurred primarily as a result of a general movement of settlement from the central and northern parts of the valley from the late 1880's through the early 1900's. The first homesteaders had settled during the 1870's and 1880's in the north central part of the valley around the towns of Hooper, Mosca, and Moffat, where the heavier soils were thought to be more suitable for agriculture. There they practiced dry farming, raising wheat for several years.²⁵

Soon thereafter, a change was made to irrigational agriculture in the expectation that it would be more productive and lucrative. Massive applications of diversional water were used on the land, but the land drained poorly. Consequently, the soils became waterlogged and deposits of alkali came to the surface. These conditions were unfavorable for wheat farming. Successive years of low prices, the lack of fertilizer, and soil depletion associated with no crop rotation were additional factors leading to the general abandonment of the area. Farmers, including new homesteaders, subsequently sought the shallow, very pervious, and better-drained soils nearer the apex of the alluvial fan formed by the Rio Grande River. By 1920, over 300,000 acres had been abandoned in the center of the valley and left to the growth of natural grasses and brush.²⁶

All of the homesteaders' farms were large in comparison with the Spanish-American farms and were shaped in a rectilinear grid pattern resembling squares. Settlers received 160-acre parcels under the Homestead Act or later bought tracts

²⁵ Wheat was raised in place of corn. "Because of the high altitude . . . and the resulting short growing season, corn cannot be grown. This was a great disappointment to settlers from the Corn Belt. In the absence of corn, wheat . . . became . . . the chief [crop]." C. Langdon White and Edwin J. Foscutt, *Regional Geography of Anglo-America* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1943), p. 633.

²⁶ This amounted to all of the irrigated acreage in the valley during 1890. The number of irrigated acres in the valley had increased from 100,000 in the 1880's to 300,000 in 1890. This increase was primarily in the Moffat-Mosca area. Franklin Adams and Harlan H. Barrows, *The Rio Grande Joint Investigation in the Upper Rio Grande Basin, 1936-37* ("Regional Planning," Part IV; Washington: National Resources Committee, 1938), p. 69. See also Irvin Thomle, "The Developmental Period in San Luis Agriculture, 1898 to 1930" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, Northwestern University, 1948).

of similar size from land companies which had purchased lands from the state or from other people. All parcels of land were within surveyed sections containing 640 acres each in accordance with the township and range system. Consequently, only four farms per section or square mile were usually developed, and the farmsteads were therefore built much farther apart than they were in the Spanish-American settlements. Farmsteads were spaced along straight township roads which in many cases followed the section lines. As time passed, some farms grew in size to 320 acres, the combination of two homesteads.²⁷

The farmsteads were relatively large, reflecting the operations of the farm. Buildings included the house, livestock barn, warehouses, and machine sheds. The house was the typical two-story frame midwestern house of six or seven rooms. The only structure built of adobe was the potato warehouse.

Farming by these people has always been on a commercial basis, and the farmers have been almost entirely dependent upon large-scale irrigation after moving to the Rio Grande alluvial fan. Every farm had extensive irrigation and drainage facilities, both of which required large investments of capital since nearly the entire farm was irrigated. And because the alluvium had a low capacity for holding water, the practice of subirrigation, which required the use of much water, evolved in the early 1900's.²⁸ Hundreds of miles of canals and laterals were built from the Rio Grande River to divert water. Some canals were individually operated, but most were owned cooperatively by the farmers or by companies which leased water rights to the farmers. Many farmers relied also upon a supplemental source of water, free-flowing artesian wells. Irrigation of large acreages made it possible for the farmers to develop commercial farming with an emphasis upon the production of cash crops, mainly potatoes for eastern markets, which thrived on subirrigation, and stock farming, especially sheep and hogs.²⁹ Field peas,

²⁷ Ralph H. Brown, "Geography of a Portion of the San Luis Valley," *Scientific Monthly*, XXVII (December, 1928), 495.

²⁸ Subirrigation is defined as follows: "Large diversions are made in April and May when the water is available and excess water so diverted, not required for the immediate needs of the plants, is stored in the porous subsoil underlying a large portion of the irrigated area. The ground water level is built up (usually 18 to 20 feet in the area of Monte Vista and Center and forty feet near Del Norte) until contact is made with the root zone of the plants, which enables the plants to draw (by capillary action) upon the ground water supply during the months of July, August, and September when the surface run-off is far below the requirements of the plants." R. J. Tipton, "San Luis Valley Project," A Report to the Board of Directors of the Colorado Water Conservation Board (March, 1939), I, 27.

²⁹ According to Walter Carpenter, manager of the Saguache County Agricultural and Stabilization Board, Center, sheep have saved the San Luis Valley in the lean years. Interview, September 13, 1960.

a substitute for corn, and alfalfa were common fodder crops.³⁰ These commercial farmers depended upon migratory labor and upon the valley's supply of laborers, especially the Spanish-Americans.

The Mormons located chiefly in the agricultural communities of Manassa and Sanford in the southern part of the valley. They established a pattern of settlement which was comparable to the one developed earlier in Utah under similar natural conditions. Church authorities from Utah assisted the 160 newcomers in 1879 in obtaining land, mostly under the Homestead Act and through purchase, and in laying out Manassa.³¹ The town plan followed was similar to that of Salt Lake City:

... [It] provided that all the people should live in the city; that the city should be a mile square; that the blocks should contain 10 acres, cut into half-acre lots, allowing 20 houses (residences of the farmers) to the block; that the streets should be 8 rods wide and intersect each other at right angles and run north and south and east and west; that the middle tier of blocks should be 50% wider than the others [three of these were to be used for schools, churches and public buildings]; that the stables and barns should be outside the city; that farm lands should be laid off north and south of the city; that no lot should contain more than one house; that all houses should be set back 25 feet from the street, and some other specifications.³²

Lowry Nelson has stated that the common explanation given for this type of community enterprise was that: "An arid climate, with localization of water supply and the necessity of cooperating in the distribution of the water, as well as the fact of danger from attack, made the village a useful device."³³ However, he further maintained that such a settlement was laid out to characterize the city of Zion as described in *The Book of Mormon*.³⁴

Thus it was that starting in the summer of 1879 Manassa was laid out and surveyed "into thirty-two blocks of ten acres each, including streets, and each block was divided into four lots of two and one-half acres each. A short time later the west half of this section was surveyed, which made the town of Manassa one mile square."³⁵ Manassa therefore became an

³⁰ Brown, *Scientific Monthly*, XXVII (1928), 497.

³¹ Interview with Fred Christiansen, long-time resident of the San Luis Valley and former public official, La Jara, Colorado, August 26, 1960.

³² Lowry Nelson, *The Mormon Village: A Pattern and Technique of Land Settlements* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1952), p. 38.

³³ Lowry Nelson, *The Mormon Village: A Study in Social Origins* ("Brigham Young University Studies," No. 3, Provo: Brigham Young University, 1930), p. 20.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Nicholas G. Morgan, "Mormon Colonization in the San Luis Valley," *The*

agricultural settlement eight blocks wide and eight blocks in length.

Mormon farmers lived in the farm villages and their houses were similar to those of their contemporaries, the unorganized homesteaders. They preferred to remain in the villages for the convenience of the church and schools in days when modes of transportation were slow.³⁶ Fields surrounded the villages, and only small corrals and sheds for the storage of hay and implements could be seen on these farms of 80 to 160 acres.



Aerial view of Manassa with surrounding farms.

The Mormons were also dependent upon irrigation for farming. Water was diverted from the Conejos and La Jara Rivers, for the settlers had obtained early and adequate riparian rights. The zealous Mormons were the first in the valley to start the extensive construction of large ditches and canals.³⁷ Although they were skillful irrigationists, some had to abandon their fields because of seepage and a high water table caused by continuous irrigation along the bench of the Rio Grande River east of Manassa. There the smaller and later settlements of

Colorado Magazine, XXVII (October, 1950), 287.

³⁶ Interview with Fred Christiansen.

³⁷ David William Lantis, "The San Luis Valley, Colorado: Sequent Rural Occupation in an Intermontane Basin" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Geography, Ohio State University, 1949), p. 214.

Richfield and Ephraim were largely abandoned when the farmers retreated westward toward Manassa and Sanford.

Mormons introduced hardy varieties of grain such as spring wheat, barley, and oats. This fact, plus the building of irrigation facilities, led to the rapid growth of commercial agriculture in the valley. Although the Mormons were originally subsistence farmers, their success suggested lucrative possibilities to the wave of other homesteaders who developed commercial agriculture to its fullest extent.³⁸

Professor F. V. Hayden of the United States Geological Survey wrote about the San Luis Valley in 1868:

As a stock-growing region, it is evident that this district could not be surpassed. The purity and dryness of the atmosphere, and the absence of deep snows permit the rich grasses to dry up gradually in August, and retain all their nutritious matter; and cattle, horses, and sheep thrive all through the winter without special care. No hay is needed for winter use. The valley is protected, as it were, by the proximity of the mountains, and the climate is quite mild and genial all winter. . . . I am confident that the time is not far distant when some of the choicest stock on this continent will be raised in this valley.³⁹

Others likewise forecast the valley's potentialities for ranching when markets for cattle developed in the mining country of the West and the remainder of the United States. Anglo-Americans established large commercial ranches in the northern and eastern sections of the valley (this accounts for the relatively few dots in those areas on the map of San Luis Valley farm units, 1952).

Ranches in the valley have always embraced large parcels of land, the average size being 3,500 acres. However, several consisted of between 50,000 and 160,000 acres. Some people who came to the valley to seek a livelihood by ranching acquired large tracts, usually 1,000 to 2,000 acres, from land companies which had possession of most of the northern part of the valley.⁴⁰ Land companies had acquired abandoned land, mostly from the earliest homesteaders and early mining prospectors, who

³⁸ The success of the Mormons as farmers was well-known. For example, Hubert H. Bancroft stated: "In 1879 a colony of Mormons settled at Manassa, on Conejos creek, and these will probably affect the agricultural output of the county favorably." *History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming, 1540-1888*, p. 593.

³⁹ "Report of Professor F. V. Hayden" [letter to William Blackmore from F. V. Hayden, December 5, 1868], in William Blackmore, *Colorado: Its Resources, Parks, and Prospects as a New Field for Emigration* (London: Privately printed by Rankin and Co., 1869), pp. 36-37.

⁴⁰ People claimed government land by "tree claim, homestead, or preemption." An unhappy settler could obtain a loan from a land company and then abandon the land to the company. Land companies received many parcels in this manner. Lantis, "The San Luis Valley, Colorado," p. 263.

had filed claims. By the 1900's there were approximately sixty ranches, with some having been developed by combining several homesteads.

Ranches increased in number and size by continual acquisition of lands, mostly the abandoned farmlands between Hooper and Moffat which were purchased inexpensively. Anglo-Americans established large ranches on the eastern side of the valley, taking up much of the land originally granted by the Mexican government. The entire Baca Grant was developed as a cattle ranch when the land was sold to Anglo-Americans. Much of the Sangre de Cristo Grant was divided into two parts, excluding the southern part which was settled by the Spanish-Americans. Two large ranches were established, the Trinchera Ranch, containing 160,000 acres, and the Blanca Ranch, containing 80,000 acres. Other large ranches on the eastern side of the valley included the Medano and Zapata Ranches between San Luis Lake and the Great Sand Dunes Monument. They were part of an unconfirmed grant given to two Mexicans in the 1820's and sold by a New Mexico farmer to Anglo-Americans in the 1870's.⁴¹ These large land holdings precluded additional settlement by other groups along much of the eastern side of the valley.⁴²

Ranches had spacious headquarters which were closely related to the magnitude of their operations. Very little land was irrigated in the ranching territory on the eastern side but lands in the northern part of the valley were watered by scattered free-flowing artesian wells. Forage crops from the meadows were the mainstay on all of the ranches. Herds of cattle and large bands of sheep grazed the nonirrigated range land and the surrounding mountain slopes. The carrying capacity of these lands was one cow per fifteen acres.⁴³

The fifth settlement pattern to be considered in the San Luis Valley is that of the Japanese-Americans. Japanese-Americans comprised the latest and smallest group. However, as many as fifty-five rural Nisei families lived in the valley in the early 1940's. They were located mostly on the floodplain of the Trinchera River near the towns of Blanca and Fort Garland, east of Alamosa. Most Japanese-Americans moved to the valley to continue their agricultural pursuits during the 1920's and

⁴¹ Forbes Parkhill, "Colorado's Earliest Settlements," *The Colorado Magazine*, XXXIV (October, 1957), 243-53.

⁴² The Baca Grant and Medano estate covered approximately 1,250,000 acres alone. Ralph H. Brown, *Historical Geography of the United States* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1948), p. 453.

⁴³ Interview with Malcolm Stewart, owner of the Medano and Zapata Ranches, April 4, 1960.

1930's from the Central Valley of California. Some left California because of its Alien Land Law which placed limitations upon land ownership and leases.⁴⁴ Later, several families migrated to the valley from other parts of Colorado, especially the eastern Piedmont and the Arkansas River Valley, because climatic storms there were unfavorable for vegetable production; many also had bonds of friendship with Japanese-Americans already living in the valley.

Around 1880, J. S. Stanger, editor and publisher of the *Colorado Farmer*, wrote that "farmer after farmer . . . has plowed, sowed, and reaped, in the San Luis Valley . . . wheat as fine as any grown in the world; barley that can nowhere be excelled; oats weighing forty-five pounds to the bushel, and yielding enormously; timothy hay, growing as high as a man's head; evidence in plenty that all, save the tenderest vegetables, can be raised. . . ."⁴⁵ However, within half a century the Japanese-Americans had started an agricultural revolution in the valley; this was the advent of extensive truck farming. Approximately 600 acres of lettuce had been raised for commercial purposes prior to the arrival of the Japanese-Americans in 1923. After several Nisei farmers migrated to the valley, the acreage of vegetables had increased to over 4,000 acres in 1925;⁴⁶ the increment is largely attributed to these newcomers.

These people settled first as tenant farmers and hired laborers on the Culebra floodplain of the Costilla Estate near the Spanish-American communities of San Acacio, Jaroso, and Mesita in the southern part of the valley west of San Luis. The San Luis Valley was selected for the production of vegetables for several reasons. Summer coolness with abundant sunshine was favorable for raising perishable vegetables that cannot endure high temperatures. The floodplains of the Costilla and Culebra Rivers had sandy alluvial soils well suited for cultivating vegetables. These rivers provided an ample supply of irrigation water and water was also available from nearby small reservoirs. In addition, the valley did not have torrential rainstorms and hail which would damage vegetables. Truck gardening grew rapidly and by 1930 the southern part of the valley had eleven packing houses.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ The California Alien Land Law was passed in 1913 mainly as a result of agitation against the influx of Oriental laborers. It prohibited the Japanese from ownership of land and limited their period of land leases to three years. *The Japanese Farmers in California* (San Francisco: The Japanese Agricultural Association, 1918), pp. 1-15.

⁴⁵ Quoted in Pabor, *Colorado as an Agricultural State*, p. 123.

⁴⁶ U.S., National Resources Planning Board, *The Rio Grande Joint Investigation*

However, within two decades, Japanese-Americans abandoned most of their operations in the southern part of the valley, due primarily to adverse microclimatic conditions. Persistent and strong southwesterly winds damaged the plants raised on the large exposed fields. The farmers moved to the Trinchera Basin in the eastern central part of the valley where the San Luis Hills and the higher Costilla Plains served as wind barriers. Also, the deeper soils of the basin were more conducive to the application of liquid fertilizer.

The average vegetable farm embraced approximately 400 acres in the 1950's, but size ranged from 100 to 2,500 acres. These farms were not compact units like most farms in the valley, but consisted of several fragmented parcels of land, purchased from other farmers as they disbanded operations, or untilled lands which were bought from land companies and surrounding ranchers.

Land utilization was focused upon the marketing of fresh garden vegetables. Lettuce, cabbage, and spinach were the major crops with cauliflower, carrots, and radishes grown on a lesser scale. By 1960 Costilla County had become the largest producer of spinach in the United States during the late summer months. Japanese-American farmers had no livestock, and they sold all of the grains and forage crops grown in their crop rotations.

Again, irrigation was important. All of their cropland needed to be irrigated, and water was derived from the nearby Trinchera River, Sangre de Cristo Creek, and the Smith Reservoir. Few pumps were used, and subirrigation was practiced only sparingly as the alluvium was a heavy sandy loam which had a high capacity for holding water.

Japanese-American farmsteads were fragmented units. The large frame warehouses and packing sheds were located in several locations, but were chiefly situated along railroad spurs. Warehouses were mechanized for washing, packing, storing, and shipping the vegetables; in several cases they contained the business offices where some of the farmers negotiated their sales. Vegetables from the San Luis Valley were shipped primarily to the Middle West and the South.

Vegetable production has been dependent upon migratory labor. Between 500 and 1,000 seasonal laborers came annually

in the Upper Rio Grande Basin in Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, 1936-1937 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1938), IV, 304.

⁴⁷ Interview with Abram Reyela, Costilla County agricultural agent, San Luis, Colorado, September 4, 1960.

in the 1940's and 1950's to work on the farms. Spanish-Americans were hired to do much of the pre-harvest work such as cultivating the crops, but the actual harvesting was done essentially by migrant Mexican nationals and by Filipinos who came from Mexico and the Imperial Valley of California.

In conclusion, rural landscapes of the San Luis Valley are varied because of settlement by several groups of people during the valley's history. Although a comparable physical environment existed in the valley and the primary objective of every group was agriculture largely based upon irrigation, each group appraised the valley differently according to its own cultural values.⁴⁸ Consequently, the patterns of settlement were different and resulted in significant disparities in the compositions of farmsteads, the sizes of agricultural landholdings, and the types of land utilization. It is hoped that this study of the San Luis Valley will contribute to the understanding of the origins and functions of some of the settlement patterns which were established in the United States.

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⁴⁸ As the famous French geographer Jean Brunhes wrote: "In order to satisfy the . . . demands of those primary needs . . . man consciously or unconsciously obeys an instinct, a thought, a fear—psychological elements which vary from individual to individual, from group to group, and especially from epoch to epoch—so that he adopts a certain material solution and creates a certain fact of human geography. The natural setting remaining the same serves successively for contradictory human facts according to the impulses which led the inhabitants. . . . The human psychological element is, then, at the origin of the geographical fact, the necessary intermediary between man and nature. . . ." *Human Geography* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1920), pp. 598-99.

First Ladies of Colorado: Jane Olivia Barnes Cooper

BY HELEN CANNON

Jane Olivia Barnes, wife of Governor Job Adams Cooper, sixth state governor of Colorado, was born on November 28, 1843, in Downer's Grove, DuPage County, Illinois. She was one of eight children of Reverend Romulus E. Barnes and Olivia Denham Barnes. Both parents were sixth-generation New Englanders. Romulus Barnes, born in Bristol, Connecticut, on October 16, 1800, was a direct descendant of Governor William Bradford of Plymouth.¹ He was a graduate of Yale Theological Seminary, a Congregational minister, and a member of the "Yale Band" of home missionaries who went West in the early 1830's.² Olivia Denham Barnes, a descendant of John Dunham who was in Plymouth by 1633, was born on February 22, 1807, on a modest farm in Conway, Massachusetts. A knowledge of the great gospel truths was part of her heritage and education. She attended Ashfield Academy during the time Mary Lyon, later the founder of Mount Holyoke College, taught there.³ Perhaps it was Mary Lyon who instilled in Olivia Denham Barnes the zealous belief and faith in education and equal rights for women which she in turn passed on to her daughter, Jane Olivia.

Jane Olivia's girlhood, college days, and the first five years of her married life were spent in small rural towns in northern Illinois. Romulus and Olivia Denham Barnes had been married

¹ Quantrille McClung, "Colorado Governors—Job Adams Cooper," *Colorado Genealogist*, XIV (July, 1953), 59-63.

² G. S. F. Savage, "Pioneer Congregational Ministers in Illinois," *Journal of the Illinois Historical Society*, III (April, 1910), 78-93; *Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of DuPage County* (Chicago: Munsell Publishing Co., 1913), p. 784.

³ Genealogical and historical data on the Denham, Barnes, and Cooper families compiled by Margaret Storrs Grierson, Northampton, Massachusetts, copies of documents in possession of the author. Hereafter referred to as Grierson Papers.

in Conway, Massachusetts, on April 21, 1831,⁴ and had left immediately for Illinois. They drove but sent their possessions by boat through the Gulf of Mexico and up the Mississippi River. During the next fifteen years, which was the remainder of Romulus's life, the Barnes family moved from place to place in Illinois as he pursued his work of establishing churches and schools. Jane Olivia, next to the youngest of the eight children, was born in Downer's Grove when Reverend Barnes was serving as minister of the Congregational Church. Living was difficult and frugality a necessity. Ministers were paid in land and produce and only a little cash; even produce was often scarce. In addition, there were ideological problems. Romulus Barnes was an abolitionist, and Olivia Denham Barnes was related by marriage to Reverend Lucien Farnham⁵ and Owen Lovejoy,⁶ both active participants in the abolition movement. Reverend Barnes was once mobbed by an angry crowd for preaching against slavery, and Mrs. Barnes was injured in the disturbance.

Romulus Barnes died on September 24, 1846, in Newark, Kendall County, Illinois,⁷ leaving Olivia Denham Barnes at the age of thirty-nine a poor widow with a brood of eight children. Doggedly determined that they should receive a college education in the tradition of their ancestors, she moved the family to Galesburg, Illinois, the site of Knox College, and opened a rooming-and-boarding house for students. Jane Olivia was a student of both the academy and the college from 1857-1862. She graduated in 1863 from Rockford Seminary in Rockford, Illinois.⁸

As an undergraduate, Jane Olivia displayed many of the traits which in later life were so markedly a part of her character and personality: a logical and analytical mind, devotion to a cause, loyalty, tolerance, spirituality, and prudence. When her Aunt Louisa Farnham questioned the effect of higher education on the morality of young women, she was quick to come to the defense of her college and classmates: "When you find a nobler set of girls, just send them along, and if you find a better woman than Miss Sill (the Principal), I would like to have her sent too. I don't think she is perfect, yet where is one that is? I have yet to see one." And when the rumor got around

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Gilbert H. Barnes, "Owen Lovejoy," *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), XI, 435-36.

⁷ Grierson Papers.

⁸ Letters from the registrars of Knox College, April 11, 1967, and Rockford College, December 1, 1965.

just before graduation that a man was to read the senior essays, Jane Olivia joined the protesters with the comment: "I think we had better hang up our fiddle and bow when that takes place." She was alert to the issues of the 1860's which were disturbing wiser and more mature minds than hers: "I like what you said about my doubts," she wrote to her mother. "I think Mr. Beardsly hit the nail on the head exactly though it is hard for me to do so. Yet I am trying to leave it to Him who doeth all things well." Frugality was still a necessity. "Mary," she wrote her sister, "are your white kid gloves white enough for me to wear with white? I will have to pay \$1.75 for a pair, and I thought it would be quite a fair saving if yours could be cleaned with bread if soiled and sent to me (unless you want to save them for your wedding ones)." But several lines later, it was revealed that the contemplated thrift was to compensate for a questionable expenditure: "I rather think I shall be extravagant enough to buy me some corsets. They make the form look so much better, and besides they are worn nearly as generally as shoes."⁹

One of the students of Knox College who enjoyed the comforts and hospitality of the Barnes's home and the company of its attractive daughters was Job Adams Cooper of Greenville, Illinois. His studies were interrupted by service in the Union Army during the Civil War, but he returned to college and graduated in 1865. After graduation he read law and was admitted to the Illinois bar in 1867. On September 17, 1867, he and Jane Olivia were married in Galesburg.¹⁰ That same year

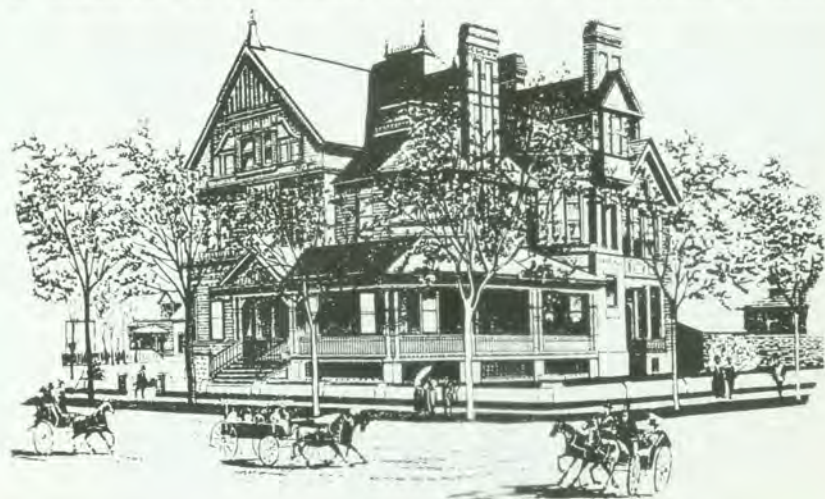


Job Adams and Jane Olivia Cooper's wedding pictures, 1867.

he established a law office in Greenville where for the next five years he pursued his profession. Two of their four children were born in Greenville: Olivia Denham on August 4, 1868,¹¹ and Mary Louise on April 9, 1871.¹²

In May, 1872, the Cooper family moved to Denver, Colorado. At this date, travel by rail had put the hardships and the adventure of "going West" in the realm of "tall tales." The Kansas Pacific Railroad's first sleeping car from Chicago arrived in Denver on October 7, 1870. Denver was no longer a frontier settlement but a settled, thriving town soon to reach the population mark of 16,000 in 1875. Property values were steadily rising in preparation for the speculative boom in real estate from 1887 to 1893 when everyone was buying and plotting additions and making quick fortunes.¹³ On arriving in Denver Mr. Cooper immediately opened a law office, but soon focused his business acumen on the more lucrative endeavors of real estate, banking, and cattle raising.

Home to the Coopers during their early days in Denver was a five- or six-room cottage on Stout Street. Their last two children were born in that house: Charles J. on May 9, 1875,¹⁴ and Genevieve Pearl on September 24, 1877.¹⁵ "It was a humble cottage," Mrs. Cooper later commented, "but we were very happy there when the children were small and I often go down and walk by it now to enjoy the memories."¹⁶ What Mrs. Cooper meant when she said, "I often go down," was that with prosperity they built what nineteenth-century social writers called a "mansion" on fashionable Capitol Hill at the corner of East



Colfax and Grant Street. Its beauties included a three-storied reception hall with stained-glass windows, marble and onyx fireplaces, mahogany and curly maple paneling, and bronze tablets of Colorado vegetation. Among its novel luxuries were four huge bathtubs lined with porcelain so high from the floor that the small members needed a stepladder.¹⁷ This house was Jane Olivia Cooper's home until her death and Colorado's executive mansion during 1889-1891.

Job A. Cooper was not a partisan politician. Although he had always been a staunch Republican, he had never actively identified himself with party matters or run for an office. By 1888 he was known throughout the state as an efficient and progressive businessman, a keen financier, and a public-spirited citizen. The Republican party urged him that year to accept the gubernatorial nomination on the plea of civic duty. He was elected by a large majority and inaugurated on January 8, 1889, as Colorado's sixth state governor for a term of two years.

On coming to Colorado, Mrs. Cooper likewise promptly took an active part in civic affairs, particularly in the established charitable and philanthropic organizations where her sound judgment and executive ability were quickly recognized and utilized. In addition, she initiated a number of needed projects, notably the Lend-A-Hand Society in connection with the Peoples' Tabernacle. Under her direction, this group of adolescent boys and girls, children of parents on charity, served free Sunday morning breakfast at the Tabernacle to unemployed and homeless men, women, and children.¹⁸

Mrs. Cooper was an energetic and tireless woman. When she became First Lady of Colorado in 1889, her life work of service to others was not dropped or even curtailed; the duties of the new position were just easily and graciously added. Though never a devotee of so-called "society," she enjoyed and was genuinely interested in all classes, a valuable attribute for

⁹ Letter written by Janes Olivia Barnes to her family from Rockford Female Seminary, April 24, 1863, Grierson Papers.

¹⁰ Marriage Records, Book E, Galesburg, Knox County, Illinois.

¹¹ Death Certificate No. 11159, Records and Vital Statistics, Colorado State Department of Public Health, Denver, Colorado.

¹² Grierson Papers.

¹³ Jerome C. Smiley, *History of Denver* (Denver: Times-Sun Publishing Co., 1901), pp. 480-86, 594.

¹⁴ Death Certificate No. 21656, Records and Vital Statistics, Colorado State Department of Public Health, Denver, Colorado.

¹⁵ Death Certificate No. 10162, *ibid.*

¹⁶ "Fitz-Mac," *Political Portraits* (Colorado Springs: Gazette Printing Co., 1888), 184-93.

¹⁷ *Denver Post*, March 20, 1928, p. 4.

¹⁸ An anonymous and undated printed booklet owned by Philip K. Alexander, Jr., Denver, Colorado.



the wife of a public official. She was a handsome woman, tall, slender, and graceful with a stately carriage. The planning and wearing of clothes were to her an aesthetic expression, as discerned and noted by a newspaper reporter in the account of her daughter Olivia's wedding:

The costume of Mrs. J. A. Cooper was one difficult to describe, inasmuch as its delicate, softly blending tints left upon the memory only the impression of perfect harmony in color, texture, and design. It was of heavy silk; its lustrous finish a shimmer of pearl, faint heliotrope and sea-green tints, changing with each movement of its wearer, while from the throat to hem diagonally across the front fell a foamy cascade of old point lace.¹⁹

Both Governor and Mrs. Cooper were supporters of the Denver Ladies College Society organized in June, 1887, to establish a college for women in Denver. He gave a twenty-acre block of land five miles east of the Capitol in a division known as Montrose to the society for a campus site. Mrs. Cooper as First Lady was given the honor of laying the cornerstone of the first building erected on the campus of Colorado Woman's College on March 25, 1890. Governor Cooper was a member of the first board of trustees as was a former and future First Lady of Colorado, Eliza Pickrell Routt (Mrs. John L. Routt).²⁰

¹⁹ *Denver Republican*, September 7, 1892, p. 8.

²⁰ Wallace B. Turner, *Colorado Woman's College* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 1-15.

With a recent gift of twenty-five million dollars in November, 1966, Colorado Woman's College now ranks fourth financially among the major women's colleges in the United States, exceeded only by Wellesley, Vassar, and Smith, and is now in a position to become academically one of the distinguished women's colleges of this nation.²¹

After her First Ladyship, Mrs. Cooper made club work and philanthropy virtually a career for the remainder of her life. She was an active participating member of the Fortnightly Club, Denver's oldest literary club, for thirty-six years, from 1882 until her death in 1918.²² Her literary inclination made this organization particularly congenial and afforded the opportunity to prepare and present papers, an activity in which she was skilled and in which she found pleasure. The programs of the club show that she presented many essays, covering the works of a wide range of American and foreign writers in the fields of literature and poetry, drama, art, history, philosophy, and religion. The Fortnightly Club was a member of the national General Federation of Women's Clubs of which Mrs. Cooper was treasurer from 1891 to 1894.²³ During these three years she worked diligently for the organization of the Woman's Club of Denver, and when it was incorporated in 1894, she became a charter member and the first director.²⁴

It is not surprising that with her colonial New England ancestry Mrs. Cooper should have been interested in genealogy. She was a member of the Society of Mayflower Descendants, being seventh in descent from William Bradford.²⁵ The descent was through the maternal ancestors of her father, Romulus E. Barnes.²⁶ A granddaughter laughingly recalls: "My grandmother used to delight in telling me her disappointment in learning that at one point the descent was through a second wife and not through the first who was a witch. How she would have enjoyed being descended from a witch!"²⁷

It is surprising, however, that with such a strong background

²¹ *Denver Post*, November 4, 1966, pp. 1-2.

²² Yearbooks of the Fortnightly Club, Western History Department, Denver Public Library.

²³ Letter from the secretary of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Washington, D. C., December 8, 1966.

²⁴ Programs of the Woman's Club of Denver, Western History Department, Denver Public Library.

²⁵ *Mayflower Index*, comp. by the General Society of Mayflower Descendants (Boston: Spalding-Moss Co., 1963), p. 48; [*Record Book*], comp. by the Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Colorado (Denver: n.p., 1911), p. 15; *Record Book*, comp. by the Society of Mayflower Descendants in the State of Colorado (Denver: n.p., 1966), p. 17.

²⁶ McClung, *Colorado Genealogist*, XIV (1953), 60-61.

²⁷ Grierson Papers.

in Congregationalism the church was not a dominating factor in her life. She and Mr. Cooper joined the First Congregational Church in Denver on May 1, 1881,²⁸ but there is no evidence that she was ever very active in the affairs of the church. She was a student of religion and philosophy, an intellectual, and an idealist. Her personal religious views were drawn from many philosophies. Even in later life, she apparently found it difficult to "hit the nail on the head" and became increasingly less close to any conventional church. She is remembered, however, as a truly spiritual woman.

Governor Cooper died unexpectedly at the age of fifty-six on January 20, 1899. Mrs. Cooper now broadened and accelerated her philanthropic endeavors and spent considerable time in foreign travel. She and her daughter Genevieve made trips to Europe, Asia, the Orient, and Mexico. The dire poverty and prevalence of disease she discovered in Mexico, particularly among the children, distressed her. In October, 1908, she went to Mexico City accompanied by a public health nurse for the purpose of establishing as an experiment a social welfare settlement in cooperation with Americans and native Mexicans under the auspices of the Mexican government. She had planned to stay at least a year and perhaps make Mexico City her home, but returned at the end of four months at the insistence of her family. While a great disappointment to her, she felt that a start had been made and that the benefits would be lasting.²⁹

Mrs. Cooper now embarked on what she considered "the crowning work of my life." In 1907 on the western outskirts of Denver, Frank M. Craig, a tuberculosis patient from the East, set up a tent to live in; one day he invited a penniless dying stranger to share it with him. Other penniless men with the disease sought refuge there, and soon a tent colony, known as the Brotherly Relief Colony or Craig Colony, sprang into existence. Through the efforts of a number of Denver citizens, doctors, and ministers under the leadership of Mrs. Cooper, it was incorporated on September 30, 1910, as an institution of charity. She was elected president of the board and contributed at that time twenty-six lots for tents and a frame building to be used as a hospital. Her support continued through personal donations and private subscriptions. Each day she purchased the needed supplies, adding the little extras the budget would not allow; each day she visited the men to discover their personal

²⁸ Information given by John F. Ryland, Denver, Colorado.

²⁹ *Denver News*, October 12, 1908, p. 2. *Denver Times*, February 4, 1909, p. 10.

needs and give a word of encouragement. From 1910 to 1955, Craig Colony operated as a sanitarium exclusively for men. Today it is a private non-profit community hospital, the Craig Rehabilitation Hospital, located at 1599 Ingalls Street.³⁰

Jane Olivia Cooper died at ten o'clock in the evening, February 1, 1918, in the home of her daughter Olivia at 727 Washington Street,³¹ from injuries received in a fall while preparing a Christmas party for the men at Craig Colony. From the many columns of newspaper copy in regard to her death comes this excerpt:

There is a sadness at Craig Colony today, and a quiet hush about the tents of the cheerful little "City of Hope." Mrs. Jane O. Cooper, beloved philanthropist, who did more than any other one soul except Frank Craig himself to build the Colony and to keep bright and hopeful its spirit is dead.

They are poor out at Craig Colony. The price of admission to the acres of tents is that a man be penniless and without friends. Yet today these sick men, who are being made well because Mrs. Cooper has worked and planned for them, are taking up a collection of a few cents each has earned in various ways to buy flowers for their friend who is lost to them. Monday every man at Craig Colony able to leave his bed will attend Mrs. Cooper's funeral if enough autos are provided them.³²

The funeral in the Cooper residence was largely attended by friends of the benefactress but the interment at Fairmount Cemetery was private. Governor Cooper and three of their children are also buried in Fairmount Cemetery. Olivia (Mrs. Edwin S. Kassler) died on November 1, 1930;³³ Charles J. on December 9, 1941;³⁴ Genevieve (Mrs. Dwight Ryland) on September 2, 1958;³⁵ and Mary Louise (Mrs. Lucius S. Storrs) on February 21, 1967, in Northampton, Massachusetts.³⁶

Mrs. Cooper had expressed the wish before her death that certain gifts be made to Craig Colony. In 1922, near the fourth anniversary of her death, her four children and heirs made a gift of land and money to the Colony.³⁷ Ten years later, on March 19, 1928, the Job A. Cooper residence at 1500 Grant Street was demolished and sold for salvage for one thousand dollars.³⁸

³⁰ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 28, 1910, p. 14; November 6, 1911, p. 3; August 6, 1965, p. 15; *Denver Post*, November 25, 1955, p. 15; "Craig Colony," clipping file, Western History Department, Denver Public Library.

³¹ Death Certificate No. 1147, Records and Vital Statistics, Colorado State Department of Public Health, Denver, Colorado.

³² *Denver Post*, February 2, 1918, p. 3.

³³ Death Certificate No. 11159, Records and Vital Statistics, Colorado State Department of Public Health, Denver, Colorado.

³⁴ Death Certificate No. 21656, *ibid.*

³⁵ Death Certificate No. 10162, *ibid.*

³⁶ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), February 25, 1967, p. 35-c.

³⁷ Newspaper clipping, source and date not given, furnished by Mrs. Sidney L. Broch, Jr., Denver, Colorado.

But its charm and the charm of a former First Lady of Colorado, its mistress for thirty years, is still vividly alive in the mind of a granddaughter:

My long summers, and often Christmas holidays, at 1500 Grant are among my happiest memories. Such laughter as rang through the house through the days! I think that I have never known anyone with a more delicious sense of humor or spirit of gaiety than my grandmother . . . a radiant example of much that is best in American tradition.³⁸

HELEN CANNON, *who is writing a series of biographies of Colorado's first ladies, is associate professor of anthropology and speech at the University of Colorado.*

³⁸ *Denver Post*, March 20, 1928, p. 4.

³⁹ Grierson Papers.

KA-NI-ACHE/2

BY MORRIS F. TAYLOR

Sympathies were divided about what to do with the Mohuache Utes based at the Cimarron Agency in the aftermath of Ka-ni-ache's fight with troops and civilians near Trinidad on October 3, 1866.¹ If people in Trinidad and the vicinity were to have their way, all Indians who visited the valley of the Purgatoire would be summarily killed,² while in New Mexico a fifty-four-foot memorial with three to four thousand names was sent to President Andrew Johnson, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, and General U. S. Grant, calling for all New Mexico Indians to be placed on remote reservations controlled by the military.³

Emotionalism and extreme gestures, of course, did nothing to help those who faced the immediate problem. The army carried on with feeding both the Mohuache Utes and the Jicarilla Apaches,⁴ and a new resident agent at Cimarron helped to relieve tensions.⁵ He was Erasmus B. Dennison, who had to meet a special difficulty in the spring of 1867. The agency buildings were swept away in a great flood in the Cimarron Valley; in his first report he pointed out that if the agency were to be retained, new buildings would of course be necessary.⁶ Probably unknown to Dennison, his colleague at the Tabeguache Agency on the Conejos in Colorado, Lafayette Head, recommended that the Mohuaches be removed to the San Juan country, because they had been largely absorbed by

EDITOR'S NOTE: The first part of this study appeared in *The Colorado Magazine*, XLIII (Fall, 1966), 275-302.

¹ Lieutenant Colonel A. J. Alexander was cited for his conduct against Ka-ni-ache by Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, commanding the Department of the Missouri at Fort Leavenworth. James Harrison Wilson, *The Life and Services of Brevet Brigadier-General Andrew Jonathan Alexander, United States Army* (New York: n.p., 1887), pp. 98-99.

² *New Mexican* (Santa Fe), December 22, 1866, p. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, December 1, 1866, p. 1.

⁴ *Report on Indian Affairs, by the Acting Commissioner, for the Year 1867* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), pp. 191-92.

⁵ Frank D. Reeve, "The Federal Indian Policy in New Mexico, 1858-1880," *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (April, 1938), 171-72.

⁶ *Report on Indian Affairs . . . 1867*, p. 198.

the Tabeguaches.⁷ Head's opinion was not shared by Colonel A. B. Norton, superintendent of Indian affairs in New Mexico, who favored a government purchase of the Maxwell (Beaubien and Miranda) Land Grant, which included much of the valley of the Cimarron, for their reservation. Norton believed that the Utes and Apaches on the Cimarron "would resist to the last extremity" an attempt to remove them,⁸ and his proposal was supported in principle by Major General James H. Carleton, who wanted a reservation east of the mountains to simplify the problem of feeding the Indians.⁹ Remaining east of the mountains meant, of course, that the Mohuaches and Jicarillas would continue to be molested by the Plains tribes. A band of two hundred Arapahoes, for instance, was reported to have crossed the Arkansas about fifty miles below Pueblo, heading for Maxwell's Ranch to attack the Utes in August, 1867.¹⁰ The Arapahoes probably did not reach their goal that summer, as they were turned back by the ravages of virulent disease among the Indians, presumed to be cholera.¹¹

General pressures for removal of the Utes from areas of white settlement increased; consolidation of at least three groups—Mohuaches, Tabeguaches, and Capotes—on a reservation in the Uncompahgre country was part of the plan.¹² Urgency was the keynote of the decision to summon the leading men of the Utes to Washington for negotiations. Five of the chiefs, including Ouray and Ancotash, the Mohuache, accompanied by Agent Lafayette Head, arrived in Denver on January 15, 1868.¹³ Next day, the delegation left for Washington, going by stagecoach to Cheyenne and the Union Pacific Railroad.¹⁴ Kit Carson, who was in poor health, felt these developments were of sufficient gravity to warrant his participation; he was at Fort Lyon, from which place tri-weekly Barlow, Sanderson (Southern Overland Mail) coaches connected with the Union Pacific Eastern Division (later the Kansas Pacific) Railroad at Hays City, Kansas.¹⁵ Perhaps Ka-ni-ache traveled to Washington with his ailing friend from Fort Lyon.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 222-23.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 191-92. Colonel Norton died at Santa Fe, January 10, 1868. He was the brother of Daniel Norton, senator from Massachusetts. *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 20, 1868, p. 4.

⁹ Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 172.

¹⁰ *Weekly Denver Gazette*, August 21, 1867, p. 1.

¹¹ *Ibid.*; *Daily Colorado Tribune* (Denver), September 7, 1867, p. 4.

¹² *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 15, 1868, p. 4.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, January 16, 1868, p. 4.

¹⁵ Morris F. Taylor, *Trinidad, Colorado Territory* (Trinidad: Trinidad State Junior College, 1966), p. 83; Edwin L. Sabin, *Kit Carson Days, 1809-1868*:



This view of delegation members included Colonel Boone, Governor Hunt (third and fourth from left), and H. P. Bennet (far right).

By the time the delegation assembled in Washington around the first of February, other distinguished figures had been added to the roster. Colorado Governor A. Cameron Hunt and Colonel A. G. Boone were there, and when the delegation paid a red-carpet call at the White House, H. P. Bennet, a former territorial delegate, joined the group. The visit to the Executive Mansion took place about two o'clock in the afternoon of Wednesday, February 5, 1868. Presentation of the ten Ute chiefs was made by Governor Hunt, and President Andrew Johnson shook hands with each one. Appropriate remarks were made by Hunt and by General Carson, with a polite response by the President, who then personally escorted the visitors through the White House.¹⁶

Negotiation of a new agreement with the Utes apparently did not conform to the best diplomatic usage. Deviousness, liquor, ignorance, and perhaps even forgery were implicated in the proceedings,¹⁷ which resulted in a revival of the basic terms

Adventures in the Path of Empire (rev. ed.; New York: The Press of the Pioneers, 1935), II, 795.

¹⁶ *Evening Star* (Washington, D. C.), February 5, 1868, p. 1; *National Intelligencer* (Washington, D. C.), February 8, 1868, p. 3.

¹⁷ Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 148, 175.

of the unratified Conejos Treaty of 1863.¹⁸ The Treaty of 1868 was signed in a Washington hotel room on March 2, 1868,¹⁹ but ratification by the United States Senate had to be obtained. The essence of the agreement was that the greater part of the western slope in Colorado would be reserved to the confederated Utes.²⁰ After about one month of experiencing the white man's civilization in his capital city, the Ute delegation proceeded to Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, accompanied by Kit Carson, who sought medical help for his rapidly deteriorating health.²¹ A stop at the Springfield, Massachusetts, arsenal resulted in each Ute obtaining a new rifle, and on the way west this unusual tourist party viewed the roaring awesomeness of Niagara Falls.²² Less than two months after he returned to Boggsville, Kit Carson was dead; Ka-ni-ache's old friend died on May 23, 1868.²³

Mohuache and Jicarilla peregrinations in northeastern New Mexico and southeastern Colorado were a part of the scene in 1868, although the Indians' main source of food still was the United States Army.²⁴ The enmities of 1866 had subsided, and bands of these Utes and Apaches camped and hunted in a leisurely progress along the Purgatoire in Colorado. In the vicinity of Madrid Plaza,²⁵ a few miles upriver from Trinidad, the two young Madrid brothers often played with Indian boys from Ka-ni-ache's band and other groups.²⁶ It may have been about this time (no date can be ascertained) that Ka-ni-ache paid one of his visits to another old acquaintance, "Uncle Dick" Wootton, at the latter's place beside his toll road on Raton Pass. The Ute chief was regarded by his people as quite a marksman, and on this occasion he challenged Wootton to a single shot match, wagering five buckskins against five dollars. Wootton accepted and won; Ka-ni-ache at once put up the same stakes and was bested again. By offering the buckskins as a present to Ka-ni-ache, Wootton very nearly offended him. The

¹⁸ Edgar C. McMechen, "The Indians," *Colorado and Its People*, ed. LeRoy R. Hafen (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1948), II, 62.

¹⁹ Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 148.

²⁰ Charles J. Kappler (ed.), *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), II, 990-93.

²¹ Sabin, *Kit Carson Days*, II, 797.

²² Marshall Sprague, *Massacre: The Tragedy at White River* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1957), pp. 91-92.

²³ *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), June 1, 1868, p. 1.

²⁴ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the Year 1868* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), p. 160.

²⁵ For a description of this Mexican plaza see Hugh and Evelyn Burnett, "Madrid Plaza," *The Colorado Magazine*, XLII (Summer, 1965), 224-37.

²⁶ Interview with Senator J. M. Madrid, CWA Interviews (Las Animas County, 1933-34), Pam 359/6, p. 81, State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

chief curtly informed him that a "Ute Indian always paid his debts." A few days later Ka-ni-ache returned with a similar proposition. Again Wootton won, and in a second contest Wootton's son beat the Indian. It was Wootton's opinion that most Indians, for some reason, just never mastered the art of handling a gun as well as a white man.²⁷

In the summer of 1868, Ka-ni-ache and Ancotash were at Maxwell's Ranch. Some Comanche warriors, who were camped on the Red River about one hundred miles to the east, sent word for the Mohuaches to come down there and talk about making a raid on the Navajos.²⁸ A contemporary rumor had it that about three thousand head of Texas cattle "on the way up" had been stolen by the Navajos.²⁹ As old hands at warring with Navajos, Ka-ni-ache and Ancotash went east with about forty to fifty warriors.³⁰ What followed is far from clear. It is possible that the Comanche message was a ruse to get the Mohuaches away from the Cimarron Agency. One account says enigmatically that when the Mohuaches rode out from Cimarron a band of Kiowas went along also.³¹ Considering the old Ute-Kiowa enmity, the chance that the Mohuaches were being baited seems even more likely. Whatever the circumstance, the upshot was not a joint raid on the Navajos but a fight between the Mohuaches and the Comanches and Kiowas, an encounter of uncertain outcome.³²

Meanwhile, the United States Senate had amended the Ute treaty in July, altering the provisions concerning livestock, farms, and the like.³³ The Indians, of course, had to be persuaded to accept the change, and that set in motion a strange and confusing sequence of events. Governor Hunt served as a special emissary to the Utes to convince them that they should accept the revised version of the treaty. The public had a strong intimation that all had not gone well in the new negotiations when both Denver and Pueblo papers carried accounts of a letter from Hunt. He told of finding the Indians opposed to the changes, but stated that he had managed to overcome their

²⁷ Howard Louis Conard, "Uncle Dick" Wootton, *the Pioneer Frontiersman of the Rocky Mountain Region: An Account of the Adventures and Thrilling Experiences of the Most Noted Hunter, Trapper, Guide, Scout, and Fighter Now Living* (Chicago: W. E. Dibble and Co., 1890), pp. 428-29.

²⁸ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 12, 1868, p. 4.

²⁹ *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), July 9, 1868, p. 3.

³⁰ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 12, 1868, p. 4.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs . . . 1868*, p. 168.

³³ Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 148; *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), November 5, 1868, p. 1.

doubts after long and laborious argument at a council on September 13 and 14, 1868. In his letter, the governor aroused curiosity when he remarked that the Indians had been tampered with by designing individuals.³⁴ What did he mean? There were different reactions.

The editor of the *Pueblo Colorado Chieftain* thought it odd that the Utes had been persuaded to accept the revised treaty, when only a few weeks before they had been unalterably opposed to any change. He did not think the Indians had been "tampered with" but were simply against the governor's proposals. If they had been pressured into something they did not believe in, the future would be dire. The whites were already at war with the Plains tribes, and that with insufficient protection by the government.³⁵ Certainly they did not want the hostility of this most powerful and war-like tribe. It would be no child's play to have war with the Utes, who "are much more dangerous enemies in war than the other tribes, as they are more friendly and reliable in peace."³⁶ Obviously, the *Pueblo* editor was hoping to avoid a two-front war.

About a month later, the same paper featured a remarkable letter from Saguache, Colorado, dated October 19, 1868, and signed with the initials J. L. Several salient points were made. Ouray was indirectly quoted as saying that no treaty was made

Chief Ouray
looked
something less
than peaceful
in this W. H.
Jackson portrait.



at Washington during the last winter, an assertion that was allegedly supported by the interpreter, J. L., whoever he was, went on to say that as recently as October 4, Ouray had told him that in the Washington hotel room the Ute chiefs refused to sign the purported treaty, which was read to them, mainly because they had had no part in its composition. Not one of the Utes signed it, and if any of their names appeared on the document, it was without their knowledge.³⁷ (The suggestion that the Indians signed under the influence of too much liquor was not made.)

In reference to the September 13-14 council between Governor Hunt and certain Utes, it was said that the meeting originally was scheduled for Poncha Pass, between the Arkansas River and the San Luis Valley, but that instead Hunt, with some of the principal men of the Tabeguaches and Ka-ni-ache, chief of the Mohuaches from the Cimarron, met in Saguache during the afternoon of September 13, deliberations being completed the next morning. The trend of events related in the letter is a bit murky at this point, but the reader gets the impression that Ouray also had come to Saguache, but, for some reason, had left before the general deliberations with the others began. The council was held in the house of William J. Godfroy, and only he, Hunt, an interpreter, and one other person were present with the Tabeguaches and Ka-ni-ache. It appears that Ouray had told Ka-ni-ache and the others in advance what to expect: that the Uncompahgre country would be reserved; that the Cimarron country was the property of the Mohuaches; that the clauses about farming, schools, livestock, mills, and machinery had been removed by the Senate, the money to be used instead on the usual goods and presents given to Indians; that the Indians would be free to come and go as they pleased. Ka-ni-ache reiterated the determination of the Mohuaches never to give up the Cimarron country, saying, in partial explanation, that it was their life to fight the Plains Indians. Then Ka-ni-ache

³⁴ *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), October 8, 1868, p. 1.

³⁵ The summer and autumn of 1868 was a period of hostilities with the Plains tribes in eastern Colorado. The Treaty of Medicine Lodge (1867) provided for removal of Comanches, Kiowas, Cheyennes, and Arapaho to reservations in Indian Territory. Bands from these tribes came back every summer, however, at least until 1875. In the same *Colorado Chieftain* that discussed Hunt's negotiations was an item noting that a party of Kiowas and Cheyennes was menacing settlements on the lower Las Animas (Purgatoire) River, and fifteen families had fled to Thomas Boggs's place for protection (p. 3). See also Morris F. Taylor, "Some Aspects of Historical Indian Occupation of Southeastern Colorado," *Great Plains Journal*, IV (Fall, 1964), 17-28.

³⁶ *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), October 8, 1868, p. 1.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, November 5, 1868, p. 1.

asked Governor Hunt if he were telling them the truth "like the sun" in saying that the paper from which he read was the same in effect as what had been stated by Ouray. If so, Ka-ni-ache said, he would sign. The governor was heard to reply in the affirmative, and the Utes made their marks.³⁸

Assuming the veracity of the letter, someone either lied to Ka-ni-ache or so distorted the facts that he was misled. The author of the letter quoted Ouray as saying that the treaty presented by Hunt at Saguache contained the points that have been stated above.³⁹ Perhaps Ka-ni-ache made the mistake of thinking that recognition of the Mohuaches' claim to the Cimarron country meant that they could stay there; or, perhaps it was intended that he should so interpret it in order to finally get his mark on the document. Sometime later, in an official communication, Ouray was quoted as saying that neither Ka-ni-ache nor Ancotash had signed the first draft of the treaty in Washington, and that their signatures had been forged. In fact, according to this source, the chiefs went to the nation's capital without the prior knowledge of their people.⁴⁰ The evaluative difficulty here lies in not knowing the degree of Ka-ni-ache's awareness of all the circumstances of prolonged negotiations in 1868.

Governor Hunt seemed to have no fear regarding future relations with the Utes. He was certain that when he came "in the spring with their herd of cattle and sheep, every one of the Indians will go over into the reservation, and there will be no more trouble with Utes."⁴¹ This may have been simply an expression of opinion, but a threat to deprive the Mohuaches at Cimarron of all or part of their annuities if they shunned the new agency can be inferred from his statement.

When the Treaty of 1868 was published in the autumn, Ka-ni-ache's name and mark were second only to Ouray's on the document. Since it contained no special provision for the Mohuaches to stay on the Cimarron in New Mexico, it appears that Ka-ni-ache had been somewhat equivocally deluded into making his mark. The treaty left him in an awkward position with the Mohuaches, who resented all efforts to get them onto a reservation in western Colorado.⁴² Personal relations between Ka-ni-ache and Ouray further deteriorated rapidly from this

point, a particular example of the widening breach being a visit by Ouray and a large number of his people (Tabeguaches) to Trinidad about Christmas time, in preparation for a two-month buffalo hunt on the plains; this was deep in Ka-ni-ache's bailiwick. Ouray made a point of saying that he would carefully observe his treaty of stipulation, and he expected a like observance on the part of government officials.⁴³ To those who knew nothing of the manner in which Ka-ni-ache's signature had been obtained, Ouray's oblique comment almost put Ka-ni-ache in the light of a renegade.

The winter of 1868-69 was difficult for the Indians of the Cimarron Agency. The Mohuaches, especially, suffered an unusually large number of deaths, attributed to the extremely changeable weather which brought much sickness. And the Utes stayed away from the agency more than usual because they distrusted the influx of miners, who were lured by gold into the nearby mountains.⁴⁴

But spring came, and in early June Ka-ni-ache and his people were on the plains of northeastern New Mexico, first on the Canadian and then on the Dry Cimarron,⁴⁵ just below the Colorado line. There were reports that Comanches were active in the area; the town of Trinidad experienced a visitation by friendly Maxwell Apaches (Jicarillas from the Cimarron Agency), fleeing from Comanches, who were to the east in the area of Trincheras Pass through the mesas of the Raton Mountains.⁴⁶

At about this time, the Utes had a fight with the Plains Indians; a contemporary source says that it took place on the Canadian River,⁴⁷ while later versions place it on the Dry Cimarron⁴⁸ or simply east of Trinidad.⁴⁹ The contemporary account says that the son of one of the chiefs was severely wounded and scalped, and that he was brought into Trinidad to be cared for by Dr. Michael Beshoar. The Ute band camped near Trinidad, and on July 3 that camp was attacked by a mixed band of Comanches, Kiowas, and Cheyennes. In the affray the chief's son was killed, and the Utes' horses were

³⁸ *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), December 24, 1868, p. 3.

³⁹ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Made to the Secretary of the Interior, for the Year 1869* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1870), p. 240.

⁴⁰ The Dry Cimarron is in the extreme northeastern part of New Mexico, and is not to be confused with the Cimarron, a tributary of the Canadian, on which the Cimarron Agency at Maxwell's Ranch was located.

⁴¹ *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), June 17, 1869, p. 2.

⁴² *Ibid.*, July 8, 1869, p. 2.

⁴³ *Chronicle-News* (Trinidad), March 12, 1903, p. 1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, September 1, 1906, p. 4. This issue is in the possession of the Storz family, pioneers of the Stonewall country west of Trinidad.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 151, 175.

⁴¹ *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), November 5, 1868, p. 1.

⁴² Kappler (ed.), *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, II, 990-93; Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 151.

driven off. Neither the name of the chief nor that of his son is given, but a much later description says that it was Ka-ni-ache and his son.⁵⁰

The contemporary report says that the son of *one* of the chiefs was wounded and later killed (*italics mine*). That suggests that more than one chief was present, which in turn makes it necessary to give consideration to a third version of the episode. It says that the two Utes most directly involved were the war chief Curecanti and his son. There are notable discrepancies in details. The account gives the time of the fight on the Dry Cimarron as the latter part of June, 1867, but this could be an error of memory or typography. Arapahoe is given as the identity of the Utes' enemies in this incident, and the item says that Curecanti's son was killed near Trinidad on July 4.⁵¹ The three stories agree that the gravely wounded Ute was brought in to Dr. Beshoar, and two of them agree that Ute horses were driven off.⁵²

With one version referring to Ka-ni-ache and the other to Curecanti, a case of mistaken identity may be the answer to the problem. There are data which assert that they were twin brothers. Curecanti, while still an infant, is said to have been

Curecanti, who was perhaps a brother of Ka-ni-ache, seems to have favored colorful headgear.



stolen by another tribe and then restored to his people many years later.⁵³ Perhaps this fight with the Plains Indians occurred soon after Curecanti returned from his involuntary exile. It is pertinent to note that Curecanti was not a signer of the Treaty of 1868, but he is listed on the Ute Treaty of 1873 as a chief of the Mohuaches.⁵⁴ The question of their fraternal relationship, however, is quite complex and will not be considered further here.

Toward the end of 1869 the army no longer fed the Indians at the Cimarron Agency, and the government tried to force the Mohuaches onto the Colorado reservation by stopping the issuance of rations.⁵⁵ Governor Hunt's hint seemed to have substance, but it resulted mainly in increased depredations on settlers' herds.⁵⁶ A buffalo hunt in the summer of 1870 was a failure, and the Cimarron Utes and Apaches returned in a starving condition.⁵⁷ Great pressure was brought on Ka-ni-ache, as an apparent signer of the Treaty of 1868 and therefore author of much of the current misfortune; he was also probably enmeshed in personal rivalries and intra-tribal struggles for power, the rather drastic outcome of which was his demotion from the chieftainship. Whether he was banished is a matter of conjecture, but he did leave Cimarron Agency. In 1870, it was hoped by some white men that he might take employment as cattle herder for the White River Utes on the Gunnison,⁵⁸ but it is not likely that he accepted such a demeaning job.

Evidently Ka-ni-ache's demotion, in practice, did not last very long. James B. Thompson, special Indian agent at the Ute Agency in Denver in 1871 and brother-in-law of Territorial Governor Edward M. McCook, reported that Ka-ni-ache visited that agency with his band and rarely appeared at his own agency. The special agent also revealed that there were about

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, March 12, 1903, p. 1.

⁵² *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), July 8, 1869, p. 2; *Chronicle-News* (Trinidad), March 12, 1903, p. 1.

⁵³ Sidney Jocknick, *Early Days on the Western Slope of Colorado and Campfire Chats with Otto Mears the Pathfinder, from 1870 to 1883, Inclusive* (Denver: The Carson-Harper Co., 1913), p. 293; Pearle R. Casey, "Two Tales of the Utes," *Southwestern Lore*, III (June, 1937), 9-10.

⁵⁴ *Report of the Commission Appointed under Act of Congress Approved April 23, 1873, to Negotiate with the Ute Indians in Colorado Territory* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1873), p. 13. Hereafter referred to as *Report of the Commission, 1873*.

⁵⁵ Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 173.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Weekly New Mexican* (Santa Fe), August 2, 1870, p. 1.

⁵⁸ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1870* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1870), p. 171.

450 Utes, in addition to Ka-ni-ache's band and that of Shavano, the Tabeguache, who wandered in and out of Denver rather than go on the 1868 reservation.⁵⁹

Curecanti also frequented Denver, and it was there that he and Ka-ni-ache saw each other occasionally during the years 1870-73. They were described as close companions and very good dancers. The Ute Bear Dance was their forte, and they gave an elaborate presentation of it each March in Denver. Curecanti was seen as the strait-laced one, trying to hold back Ka-ni-ache and his propensity for women and liquor (Ka-ni-ache was thought to be polygamous).⁶⁰ An anecdote about Ka-ni-ache and the bottle dates from this period. One night in Denver he staggered into the newsroom of the *Rocky Mountain Herald* where some of the employees handed him a plug hat belonging to the editor, O. J. Goldrick, a well-known figure who had been Denver's first schoolteacher in 1859; in the hatband they stuck a red label with gold letters saying "Superior Cocktail Bitters." Out went Ka-ni-ache onto the street, his new hat at a jaunty angle, much to the amusement of passersby.⁶¹

In the meantime, conditions remained as difficult and discouraging as ever for the Maxwell Utes. Agreement with the government was no closer,⁶² and Washington officials kept up pressure by not allowing any of the \$30,000 appropriated for clothing and blankets for seven bands of Utes to be expended on the Mohuaches at Cimarron; Agent Charles Roedel feared that war would break out in the spring of 1872.⁶³ Matters were not made easier by the sale of the Maxwell Land Grant to a group of British investors and by increased sales of liquor to Indians by unscrupulous whites.⁶⁴ The superintendent of Indian affairs in New Mexico, Nathaniel Pope, advised that the Mohuaches be based with the Weeminuche and Capote Utes at Abiquiu, and he thought that the Jicarilla Apaches might be

⁵⁹ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1871* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), p. 556. It is said that Governor McCook wanted Indian agencies near the larger towns, where there were more civilizing influences. This was in opposition to Ouray's feeling that the temptations of such agencies were harmful to his people. Thompson realized there was quite a bit of anti-Ouray sentiment among the Utes, and told them that they could just as legally register at the Denver agency. Those who took advantage of the gun shops and government warehouses of Denver were known as Denver Utes. Sprague, *Massacre*, pp. 121-22.

⁶⁰ Jocknick, *Early Days on the Western Slope*, pp. 293-94; Casey, *Southwestern Lore*, III (1937), 9-10.

⁶¹ Jocknick, *Early Days on the Western Slope*, pp. 295-96; Sprague, *Massacre*, pp. 123-24.

⁶² *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs . . . 1870*, p. 173.

⁶³ Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 175-76.

⁶⁴ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs . . . 1871*, pp. 368-69, 395-96.

induced to join the southern Apaches, or, as an alternative, that they might be persuaded to take a reservation in the extreme northeastern part of the territory, where they would serve as a buffer against Comanches and Kiowas.⁶⁵ Pope's suggestions fell flat; both the Mohuaches and the Jicarillas refused to vacate.⁶⁶

War did not come that spring, but matters were just as deadlocked. Ka-ni-ache was regaining his ascendancy; in April, Superintendent Pope sent a special investigator to him only to be given the stock answer: an agency in the Cimarron country would have to be the solution.⁶⁷ In response, the government persisted in moving toward a closure of that agency, with plans to move the 650 Mohuaches either to Colorado or to the old Abiquiu Agency, then at Tierra Amarilla,⁶⁸ where events were on the verge of getting out of control.⁶⁹ The danger came from the Utes under Sobito⁷⁰ and Ka-ni-ache's brother (Curecanti?).⁷¹ There was strong skepticism in some white quarters that the Utes were really the source of difficulty. An alarming report from Trinidad stating that three men had been killed, another wounded, and that a boy had been carried off by Utes, only eight miles north of the town, was countered by the suggestion that these depredations very easily could have been the work of a renegade band of Navajos, Apaches, and Utes recently seen at Maxwell's Ranch, or by white outlaws known to be operating in the area, who had assumed Indian disguise.⁷² The *Rocky Mountain News* was especially forthright in asserting that there were numerous white men in Colorado who would not hesitate to precipitate war with the Utes from hatred or hope of gain.⁷³

In the spring of 1872 about seventy-five to one hundred Mohuache (Maxwell) Utes headed by Ancotash hunted buffalo on the plains east of Denver. Ka-ni-ache was not with them; he still was not officially restored as chief of the Mohuaches, but it was generally conceded that Ancotash's position was nominal and that Ka-ni-ache was the real power. Presumably Ka-ni-ache stayed in the vicinity of Cimarron during this time, where

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 368-69; Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 179.

⁶⁶ Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 177.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1872* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), p. 55.

⁶⁹ *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), May 23, 1872, p. 1.

⁷⁰ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), June 2, 1872, p. 2.

⁷¹ *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), June 5, 1872, p. 1.

⁷² *Ibid.*; *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), May 28, 1872, p. 4; May 29, 1872, p. 4.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

tensions with the Indians over the status of the Maxwell Grant tightened to such an extent that troops were called for to protect company officials.⁷⁴

The perennial problem of the Cimarron Agency was a partial cause of much coming and going to councils in Denver and Pagosa Springs;⁷⁵ a part of these stirrings was the migration of two hundred Utes under Ka-ni-ache north through Walsenburg and Pueblo in July.⁷⁶ On one such peregrination to the little town of Walsenburg, Ka-ni-ache acquired his blue military

The portrait on the right, depicting "Chief Conniach" in all his military glory, is from Conard's "UNCLE DICK" WOOTTON. It is obviously a retouched photograph of the Ute Washington shown at left.



coat with brass buttons, which became his most familiar identifying feature. He saw it at Fred Walsen's trading post. He wanted it. It so happened that Walsen was interested in getting the chief's well-tanned buckskins, but the men were not able

⁷⁴ *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), May 23, 1872, p. 1.

⁷⁵ *Pueblo Chieftain*, April 28, 1872, p. 4; July 23, 1872, p. 2; July 27, 1872, p. 2.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, July 18, 1872, p. 2.

to agree on a trade. An unspecified game of chance was chosen as the means of breaking the impasse, and Ka-ni-ache, an inveterate gambler, won.⁷⁷

Gold and silver discoveries in the San Juan Mountains had brought fresh disputes over the Ute Reservation of 1868.⁷⁸ The old process of attrition was starting again; it was obvious that the reservation of 1868 would be the subject of alteration, probably contraction. Nobody was greatly surprised when on April 23, 1872, Congress authorized negotiations at which the reservation would be the main subject of examination.⁷⁹ On the strength of this, a council was called for mid-August, 1872, at the Los Pinos Agency on the Cochetopa southwest of Gunnison City.⁸⁰ With the chiefs of all the Ute bands invited, it was hoped that the anomalous position of the Cimarron Agency might finally be resolved. In that connection, Colonel Albert H. Pfeiffer met with the principal men of the Mohuaches, including Ka-ni-ache, Curecanti, Ancotash, and Aguilar, and he received the usual refusal to move from Cimarron to Tierra Amarilla.⁸¹

The government's commission was composed of Governor Edward M. McCook; John D. Lang, of Vassalboro, Maine; and General John McDonald, of St. Louis. Many of the important men in Indian affairs in Colorado and northern New Mexico attended. Naturally, General Charles Adams, the agent at Los Pinos, was there, and so was Denver Ute Agent J. D. Thompson. So too was old Indian hand Lafayette Head, along with Felix Brunot, chairman of the National Board of Indian Commissioners, from Washington. New Mexico Governor W. F. M. Army brought along eighty lodges of Mohuaches and twenty-four of Capotes. About fifteen hundred Indians camped in the hills around the agency, including a small delegation of Jicarilla Apaches. The most interesting absence was that of the Weeminuche Utes, whose land would be sold if the negotiations were successful.⁸²

⁷⁷ Louis B. Sporleder, *The Romance of the Spanish Peaks* (Pueblo: O'Brien Printing and Stationery Co., 1960), p. 25.

⁷⁸ Colin B. Goodykoontz, "The Settlement of Colorado," *History of Colorado*, ed. James H. Baker and LeRoy R. Hafen (Denver: Linderman Co., Inc., 1927), II, 455.

⁷⁹ Lois Borland, "The Sale of the San Juans," *The Colorado Magazine*, XXVIII (April, 1951), 118. Since 1871, negotiations and agreements with Indian tribes had been authorized by act of Congress rather than by the usual treaty procedure requiring ratification only by the Senate. Percy Stanley Fritz, *Colorado: The Centennial State* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1941), p. 286.

⁸⁰ Borland, *The Colorado Magazine*, XXVIII (1951), 188.

⁸¹ Letter from Col. A. H. Pfeiffer to Col. Nathaniel Pope, September 2, 1872, Papers of Col. Albert Henry Pfeiffer, microfilm copy, State Historical Society of Colorado Library. Hereafter referred to as Pfeiffer Papers.

⁸² Borland, *The Colorado Magazine*, XXVIII (1951), 116-17; Albert H. Schroeder, "A Study of the Apache Indians: Part II, The Jicarilla Apaches," p. 115.

In the opening ceremonies, Ouray presented the other chiefs to the commissioners. The Indians responded with the pulsating rhythms of a war dance, and then the chiefs (among them Ka-ni-ache, Curecanti, and Ancotash) and commissioners retired for their deliberations in the agency schoolhouse, where U. M. Curtis acted as interpreter.⁸³ It was soon evident that the Indians were opposed to any diminution of their reservation, and on the second day of the council, August 29, 1872, Ka-ni-ache took the floor and strongly expressed his doubts that the commission had any official status in Washington. It was privately constituted, he thought,⁸⁴ otherwise Governor McCook, no friend of the Indians as the newspapers and Indians well knew, would not be a member.⁸⁵ McCook was notoriously unsympathetic to the Indians. His public statements, both written and oral, against letting a handful of savages have half the territory, should have aroused the suspicions of all Utes but the most obtuse or servile.⁸⁶ Ka-ni-ache employed a dramatic mode of oratory,⁸⁷ which doubtless was used to good effect in his denunciation of McCook, to which McCook replied by telling his audience that Ka-ni-ache filled their ears with lies,⁸⁸ a not very effective rebuttal. The Mohuache chief also castigated Governor Arny as being unsympathetic to the Indians' view of things. By this time, perhaps, this was a stock reaction by Ka-ni-ache to high white officialdom. In a later interview which Arny had sought with Ka-ni-ache and other chiefs, the Mohuache leader was convinced that his appraisal of Arny was wrong.⁸⁹

In the course of the debate, Commissioner Lang asked Ka-ni-ache if he lived on the reservation. Ka-ni-ache merely said in reply: "I am here now,"⁹⁰ probably with the dignity for which he was known. His position was simple: although he did

unpublished manuscript in the possession of Mr. Schroeder, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

⁸³ Borland, *The Colorado Magazine*, XXVIII (1951), 188.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*; *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver) September 12, 1872, p. 4; *New Mexican* (Santa Fe), September 24, 1872, p. 2.

⁸⁵ *New Mexican* (Santa Fe), September 24, 1872, p. 2.

⁸⁶ See *Second Biennial Message of Governor E. M. McCook, to the Legislature of Colorado, Delivered January 3, 1872* (Denver: Rocky Mountain News Printing House, 1872), especially pp. 7-9; LeRoy R. Hafen, "Historical Summary of the Ute Indians and the San Juan Mining Region," pp. 25-26, unpublished manuscript, State Historical Society of Colorado Library; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, . . . 1870, pp. 163-64.

⁸⁷ Louis B. Sporleder, "La Plaza de Los Liones," *The Colorado Magazine*, X (January, 1933), 33.

⁸⁸ Borland, *The Colorado Magazine*, XXVIII (1951), 118.

⁸⁹ *New Mexican* (Santa Fe), September 24, 1872, p. 2.

⁹⁰ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 12, 1872, p. 4; Borland, *The Colorado Magazine*, XXVIII (1951), 119.

not live on the reservation, he was opposed to its sale because he believed that it had been set aside for all the Utes.⁹¹ The question of the continuance of the Cimarron Agency was raised concomitantly, with Ka-ni-ache and others strongly opposed to its abolition. He was quoted as referring to "the Cimarron country, where I have always lived," and another Mohuache chief, Maatchick, said: "I have always lived there."⁹² These statements made the point that the Cimarron country had been occupied by Utes long before an official agency was established there. On the fourth and last day Ka-ni-ache, Ancotash, and several other chiefs made long speeches saying that they could not sell.⁹³ The closing session was very tense, and some feared that it all would end in bloodshed. It did not, and the Indians promised not to molest the miners at least until the next spring. The commissioners had the impression that negotiations eventually would succeed,⁹⁴ and it was reported that Ouray called on them that evening, telling them that the Indians had unanimously agreed to sell at some time in the future.⁹⁵

Ancotash was seated to the left of Ouray in this grouping, which also included the Tabeguache chief Shavano (standing, right).



If Ouray's action was accurately related, then he engaged in a bit of duplicity, and Ka-ni-ache determined to give him the lie by showing independence and defiance. For much of March, 1873, Ka-ni-ache and thirty lodges of Mohuaches were camped on the upper Cucharas in Colorado, near the fortified ranch of Colonel J. M. Francisco and below the towering Huajattollas or Spanish Peaks.⁹⁶ The usual depredations on property were committed, and it was recalled by nervous settlers that it was Ka-ni-ache and his band who fought troops and citizens near Trinidad in 1866 and who robbed and murdered on the Cucharas and Huerfano as an aftermath.⁹⁷ The situation in the spring of 1873 was extremely strained when it was reported that a sixty-year-old woman had been raped⁹⁸ by one of Ka-ni-ache's young men, and charges were made that white men were selling liquor to the Utes.⁹⁹ Charles Adams, the Los Pinos agent, hurried to the Cucharas.¹⁰⁰

Agent Adams thought that the Mohuaches should be moved to the reservation, by the military if necessary, but he also felt that his hands were tied. Although the Mohuaches, in accordance with time-honored custom, were on the Cucharas in Colorado, their base was the Cimarron Agency, and they probably were under the jurisdiction of the New Mexico Superintendency. From Pueblo, Adams telegraphed to Washington for instructions; he was informed that the Mohuaches were indeed under the New Mexico office, and that the Cimarron agent had been ordered to bring them back at once.¹⁰¹ It was a rather typical response from a remote and unknowledgeable official, and it promptly came to naught. J. L. Gould, a special agent, did go to the Cucharas from Cimarron, but Ka-ni-ache, complaining that his people had to plunder to live, stayed on. Gould recommended troops,¹⁰² and Ka-ni-ache's old adversary, Colonel A. J. Alex-

ander, appeared with men from Fort Garland. The chief agreed to clear out, but he evidently went just a few miles downstream.¹⁰³

Ka-ni-ache and his band showed up in Pueblo on the night of April 29, and the *Chieftain* reported next day that he had letters of good conduct from General Alexander and L. Edwin Dudley, superintendent of Indian affairs in New Mexico.¹⁰⁴ Skepticism was the reaction of settlers south of Pueblo.¹⁰⁵ It was thought that Ka-ni-ache and his men would head east from Pueblo onto the plains,¹⁰⁶ probably to make war on the Cheyennes.¹⁰⁷ At this stage of affairs, Ouray sent an "order" for Ka-ni-ache to come at once to the Los Pinos Agency. Agent Adams told Ouray that he really had no authority since Ka-ni-ache was subject to the New Mexico Superintendency. Ouray treated this as a technicality, insisting that Ka-ni-ache was a sub-chief under the head chief of all the Utes, Ouray. Also, Ouray observed, Ka-ni-ache should be on the reservation according to the terms of the Treaty of 1868. He pointed out that the Mohuache chief Ancotash was at the agency with his band.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps the runner did not find him, but it is more likely that Ka-ni-ache refused to subordinate himself to Ouray and blandly ignored the summons. So far as Ka-ni-ache was concerned, the terms of the treaty as he now understood them were not the same as Ouray had represented them at Los Pinos; nor did he regard Ouray as a representative or reliable spokesman for the Utes, a position which seemed to rest on white sponsorship more than anything else. In the middle of May, Ka-ni-ache and his people were camped at Captain William Craig's big Hermosilla Ranch on the Huerfano,¹⁰⁹ "drawing their rations and enjoying their reservation."¹¹⁰

Then, in early June, Ka-ni-ache showed up again on the Cucharas with only twelve to fifteen lodges. Circumstances quickly became taut as a result of renewed livestock and crop destruction.¹¹¹ At least eighty warriors were said to be on the

p. 268; Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 178.

¹⁰³ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), April 11, 1873, p. 4; *Pueblo Chieftain*, April 29, 1873, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ *Pueblo Chieftain*, April 30, 1873, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, May 2, 1873, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, April 30, 1873, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), May 4, 1873, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Lloyd, "The Uncompahgre Utes," Part III, 17-19.

¹⁰⁹ William Craig had been agent for Ceran St. Vrain, and the Hermosilla Ranch was a derivative claim from the enormous but unconfirmed Vigil and St. Vrain (Las Animas) Grant. Taylor, *Trinidad, Colorado Territory*, pp. 34-35, 81.

¹¹⁰ *The People* (Pueblo), May 21, 1873, p. 3.

¹¹¹ *Pueblo Chieftain*, June 8, 1873, p. 4; *Denver Tribune*, June 3, 1873, p. 4; *The People* (Pueblo), July 5, 1873, p. 1.

⁹¹ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 12, 1872, p. 4.

⁹² Schroeder, "A Study of the Apache Indians: Part II, The Jicarilla Apaches," p. 115.

⁹³ *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, September 12, 1872, p. 4.

⁹⁴ Borland, *The Colorado Magazine*, XXVIII (1951), 120.

⁹⁵ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 12, 1872, p. 4.

⁹⁶ *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), March 27, 1873, p. 1; *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), April 11, 1873, p. 4. *The People* (Pueblo), July 5, 1873, p. 1, says there were fifty lodges.

⁹⁷ *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo), April 3, 1873, p. 1.

⁹⁸ *The People* (Pueblo), July 5, 1873, p. 1.

⁹⁹ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), April 11, 1873, p. 4; May 1, 1873, p. 2;

Colorado Chieftain (Pueblo), March 28, 1873, p. 1; April 29, 1873, p. 2.

¹⁰⁰ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), April 11, 1873, p. 4; letter from Charles Adams to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, May 2, 1873, quoted in John B. Lloyd, "The Uncompahgre Utes" (unpublished Master's thesis, Western State College, n.d.), Part III, 17-19.

¹⁰¹ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), April 11, 1873, p. 4.

¹⁰² *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1873* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1874),

Cucharas, a force large enough to cause great alarm.¹¹² If that were true, then there were other Utes there besides Ka-ni-ache's band, a probability supported by word circulating in Pueblo that about a hundred Cimarron Utes had appeared there with Quarante (Curecanti?) as their chief.¹¹³ Certainly a quasi-military organization of settlers on the Cucharas above the stage station, bolstered by one hundred and fifty needle guns and ammunition from Fort Garland,¹¹⁴ was much more than was necessary to hold off an aging chief and ten warriors, despite the fact that each was armed with bows and arrows, two pistols, and a gun.¹¹⁵ The Fifth Infantry's A Company had arrived on the Cucharas from Fort Leavenworth,¹¹⁶ and one company from the Eighth Cavalry was encamped a day's ride away,¹¹⁷ these movements had all the earmarks of preparations against a force much greater than Ka-ni-ache's immediate following. The old Mohuache chief moved his camp to North Veta Canyon, continuing from there to ravage the herds of the settlers. Ka-ni-ache was said to have claimed that one of the residents of the region had poisoned his brother and two children, for which there would have to be some sort of compensation.¹¹⁸

General Alexander was absent from Fort Garland when the report came in of Ka-ni-ache's reappearance on the Cucharas. A message was promptly sent to L. Edwin Dudley, superintendent of Indian affairs in New Mexico, who went at once to Colorado to seek out Ka-ni-ache. He found him high in the mountains only about thirty or forty miles from Fort Garland. In the ensuing "talk" Ka-ni-ache at first refused Dudley's demand that he leave, but eventually the Indians agreed to return to their agency.¹¹⁹ Dudley went back to New Mexico, only to learn three days later that the Utes had not left and had, in fact, been joined by many more. In haste he returned, threatened the Utes with immediate military reprisal, and told them to get out by July 6, a demand with which they complied.¹²⁰ The episodes on the Cucharas had made Ka-ni-ache generally *persona non grata*, especially in Denver. Here is what Special Agent

¹¹² *Pueblo Chieftain*, June 14, 1873, p. 4.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, June 17, 1873, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, June 18, 1873, p. 4; *The People* (Pueblo), July 5, 1873, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ *New Mexican* (Santa Fe), July 1, 1873, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ *Pueblo Chieftain*, June 17, 1873, p. 4; June 25, 1873, p. 4.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, July 10, 1873, p. 4; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* . . . 1873, p. 268.

¹¹⁸ *The People* (Pueblo), July 5, 1873, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ *New Mexican* (Santa Fe), July 1, 1873, p. 2.

¹²⁰ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 12, 1873, p. 2; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* . . . 1873, p. 268.

Thompson wrote on December 1, 1873:

I believe that every Indian of note in the seven bands of Utes has visited Denver and shaken hands with me within the last nine months—if I except Sac-ne-och, Sap-o-wa-we-re, and Kan-e-a-che. The latter gentleman I warned, through an Indian runner, not to come here at all, as he is notoriously mischievous, and the other Utes informed me they did not wish to be blamed for the disturbances which the presence of himself and band were sure to create. Of course it is not my province to relate his amusements in the southern counties during the past spring and summer. Suffice it to say that I should not have tolerated anything of the sort near here.¹²¹

Ouray summoned the Ute bands on the Arkansas River side of the mountains to the Los Pinos Agency. In reference to the recent troubles, Ouray was quoted as saying that "Kanneatche did wrong in the first place in leaving the Cimarron Agency, but the cause of the disturbances on the Cucharas was owing to the whites giving him whisky. I know myself that when Kanneatche left Pueblo on his first visit, he left drunk. . . ." After this indirect rebuke, Ouray said, somewhat patronizingly, that "there is not a more peaceably disposed chief of the whole tribe than Kanneatche when he has no whisky."¹²²

It is likely that this was about the time the chiefs learned of new negotiations in progress for sale of the San Juan country. What they probably were not told was that Ouray had already committed himself to work for a big reduction of the 1868 reservation, in return for strong government assistance in attempts to secure the return of his son from the Arapahoes.¹²³ In other words, Ouray was willing to bargain away common Ute lands for a personal matter.¹²⁴

A full-fledged council assembled at Los Pinos on September 6, 1873.¹²⁵ Felix Brunot was the chief negotiator for the government. Early in the session heated discussions took place over the actual surveys of the 1868 reservation, with the Tabeguache chief, Shavano, expressing the Indians' displeasure and dis-



approval.¹²⁶ When talk veered to the circumstances of the southern Utes, meaning the Mohuaches and Capotes, it was clear that they wanted their agency at Cimarron; on this subject Curecanti was the major spokesman, but this may have been because Ka-ni-ache was late in arriving or because he boycotted the session altogether.¹²⁷ Brunot suggested that Curecanti might go to Washington to determine this issue.¹²⁸

Despite the widespread opposition at the outset, a treaty was signed on September 13, 1873, by which the Utes surrendered about three million acres of mineral land in the San Juan Mountains. Again one cannot help wondering if hard cash and liquor helped matters along.¹²⁹ At any rate, the government had its way, and the Utes made another major retreat in Colorado. The Mohuaches who signed the treaty in the first group were the chiefs Maatchick, Jose Maria, Ancotash, Juan, John (son of Ka-ni-ache), Curecanti, Aguilar, Alamon, and the sub-chiefs Samora and Juan Martine.¹³⁰ The name Ka-ni-ache appears in a second group, which may mean that he did not attend the council and later was prevailed upon to sign because it was useless to hold out any longer.¹³¹ Ouray had signed first as principal chief of the Utes.¹³²

Ka-ni-ache was nearing sixty years of age¹³³ when the Brunot Treaty, as it was called, was approved in Washington in the spring of 1874. From the record, at least, he seems to have left the limelight. The Indians gradually left the country around Cimarron, heading for Colorado.¹³⁴ In 1877 the Los Pinos Agency was removed to a new site south of the San Juans in the southern part of the Ute Reservation,¹³⁵ and by the summer of 1878, Mohuache Utes and Jicarilla Apaches no longer roamed

¹²¹ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs . . . 1873*, pp. 262-63.

¹²² *Pueblo Chieftain*, August 15, 1873, p. 2.

¹²³ The boy was captured by Sioux on the plains about 1862. See Ann W. Hafen "Efforts to Recover the Stolen Son of Chief Ouray," *The Colorado Magazine*, XVI (March, 1939), 53-62.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 54; Borland, *The Colorado Magazine*, XXVIII (1951), 121.

¹²⁵ *Report of the Commission, 1873*, p. 25.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 8; Borland, *The Colorado Magazine*, XXVIII (1951), 121-22.

¹²⁷ *Report of the Commission, 1873*, pp. 25, 33.

¹²⁸ Borland, *The Colorado Magazine*, XXVIII (1951), 122.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 124.

¹³⁰ *Report of the Commission, 1873*, pp. 13-15.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 13.

¹³³ *Ibid.* The estimate of his age is from Jose Anastasio de Jesus Valdez, who had known him. Early Far West Notebook VI, p. 8, Cragin Collection, Pioneers' Museum, Colorado Springs.

¹³⁴ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1875* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875), p. 328; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1877* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1877) pp. 161-62.

¹³⁵ Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 188.

through mountain and plain in southeastern Colorado and north-eastern New Mexico. The Cimarron Utes passed through Tierra Amarilla around August 1 on their way to Los Pinos, saying that they had left Cimarron forever;¹³⁶ the Cimarron Apaches were sent to Fort Stanton.¹³⁷

Ka-ni-ache went with them, succumbing to relentless pressures. In the new environment he retained a respected position among his people, but pressures did not relax. Hardly had he arrived when the Mohuache, Capote, and Weeminuche Utes were called into council at Pagosa Springs to consider a further reduction of the reservation. This time the chiefs agreed to give up that part south of parallel 38° 10', and to locate their bands on the headwaters of the Piedra, San Juan Blanco, Navajo, and Chama Rivers in Colorado. Ka-ni-ache and Ancotash were among the signatories.¹³⁸

One of the last appearances of Ka-ni-ache occurred when he, as a chief of the Mohuaches, attended a council which Major General Edward Hatch called at Fort Lewis (Pagosa Springs) in the autumn of 1879 because it was feared that the southern Utes (Capotes, Mohuaches, and Weeminuches) might give trouble as a result of the recent successful ambush of Major T. T. Thornburgh and the Meeker Massacre by the northern Utes at the White River Agency.¹³⁹

Death came to Ka-ni-ache in the form of a lightning bolt in the late summer of 1880, just a short time after the death of his old rival, Ouray.¹⁴⁰ It is ironic that Ka-ni-ache's death may have brought Chief Ignacio and other southern Utes to sign a new treaty, giving up much more Ute land, because they looked upon the lightning bolt as a sign of divine displeasure.¹⁴¹

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¹³⁶ Letter from D. Burns to Col. A. H. Pfeiffer, August 3, 1878, Pfeiffer Papers.

¹³⁷ Reeve, *New Mexico Historical Review*, XIII (1938), 188.

¹³⁸ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1879* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1879), pp. 178-81.

¹³⁹ Robert G. Athearn (ed.), "Major Hough's March into Southern Ute Country, 1879," *The Colorado Magazine*, XXV (May, 1948), 104.

¹⁴⁰ Sprague, *Massacre*, p. 325.

¹⁴¹ *Pueblo Chieftain*, September 17, 1880, p. 4.