

Tightening the Colorado Purse Strings

BY JAMES F. WICKENS

Twice during the period between the two world wars, in the late twenties and again in the late thirties, Colorado government faced what state officials claimed to be fiscal "crises," when legislative over-appropriation caused state deficits. In both cases retrenchment brought state expenditures back into line with state income. In neither case, however, did state officials ever come to grips with the essential problem: outmoded administrative procedures hindered effective handling of fiscal matters. Failure to initiate substantial administrative reorganization left Colorado state government little more efficient in 1941 than it had been two decades earlier.

During much of this period Governor William H. Adams was the leading political figure. "Billy," as he asked to be called, was a cattle rancher, simple in taste and manner. A conservative Democrat, he spent forty years in the state senate as a representative of the San Luis Valley. His victory for governor in 1926 and his re-election in 1928, as well as his unprecedented third term in 1930, exemplify Adams' power in Colorado during the era between the two world wars.¹

It might have been difficult for a Colorado voter to prognosticate what Governor Adams (1927-33) was going to emphasize as state executive, because he had never campaigned actively for public office, made many speeches, or introduced many bills. Anyone who knew the governor's political philosophy, however, easily could have predicted his approach: rigid economy in state government.² Opposed to increased taxation,

¹ Typical of Adams' character, his official portrait as governor of Colorado pictures him leaning against a barbed-wire fence post and wearing weather-beaten stockmen's clothes. For details of his life see Adams, W. H. "Billy," in the Clippings Collection, Western History Department, Denver Public Library.

² *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), February 5, 1954, p. 30.



Governor William H.
"Billy" Adams

for example, the governor charged in 1931 that "excessive taxes were an important contributing factor in creating the present economic depression [the Great Depression]."³

When Governor Adams took office in 1927 he faced a deficit of \$1.3 million. Since the state constitution required the governor to sign all appropriation bills which the legislature passed, he decided "to confer" with various state departments, agencies, and institutions to persuade them to cut expenses independently. One can imagine that if they did not, they would feel the political wrath of William H. Adams. As a result of these self-imposed reductions, the governor was able to restrict the deficit to about \$1 million for the entire 1927-28 fiscal biennium, to erase the deficit in his second term, and to boast of a "substantial surplus of revenues" as he began his third term in January 1931.⁴

³ Inaugural address of Governor William H. Adams, January 13, 1931, Colorado, General Assembly, *Senate Journal*, 28th Sess., 1931, pp. 33-40.

⁴ *Ibid.*; Adams to W. W. Hastings, December 20, 1927, and Adams to State Audit Board, November 15, 1927, *Records of the Office of the Governor*; William H. Adams, 1927-33, Correspondence, Colorado State Archives and Records Service, hereafter cited as Adams Correspondence.

Rigid control over state expenditures did not let up with the end of the financial crisis in the late twenties. No sooner did Governor Adams bring state expenditures into line with revenues than he faced a momentous problem, the Great Depression of the thirties. With a decline in business and farm profits and a rise in unemployment, tax revenues to city, county, and state governments decreased. At the same time demands by the unemployed for government assistance increased.⁵

In early 1933 Colorado government faced the most serious crisis in its history. Hunger and unemployment threatened the very existence of government itself, national as well as state. Facing another fiscal deficit, this one amounting to nearly \$1 million for the 1931-32 biennium, the Adams administration was in no mood to expand public services, let alone raise taxes to pay for them. Instead, the governor succeeded in continuing his policy of economy without drawing much attention to the red ink in state finances.⁶

Governor Adams' protégé and successor, Edwin C. Johnson (1933-37, 1955-57), thought in similar terms. "Colorado's Government is a business institution and should be run as one," he wrote in 1932.⁷ "Big Ed," as Johnson was called, had been a successful rancher and Democratic state legislator from Craig before becoming governor of Colorado for two terms. As a result of his enormous political power and appeal, Johnson was able to spend the next two decades in the U.S. Senate and one final term as governor in the mid-fifties. Like Adams, or any other conservative western politician for that matter, Governor Johnson labored to balance the state budget during the Great Depression without increasing taxation. Only when compelled by reasons of civil disorder and demands for state funds to match federal grants for depression programs did Governor Johnson support increased taxation.⁸ "We need less of government rather than more," Big Ed asserted in 1934, "and we

⁵ The only full-length analysis of Colorado history during the 1930s is the author's "Colorado in the Great Depression: A Study of New Deal Policies at the State Level" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Denver, 1964).

⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapter II; "Financing Government in Colorado, 1926-1937," *University of Denver Reports*, XIV (March 1938), 14. Economy in government was not unique to Colorado during this period. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., reported that "Tom Connally of Texas, visiting Warm Springs in December [1932], was shocked to find Roosevelt talking of budget balancing and stressing the constitutional limitations on government action." *The Age of Roosevelt*, Vol. I: *The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919-1933* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), p. 452.

⁷ Johnson to Walter Walker, June 4, 1932, Adams Correspondence. For a biography of Johnson's political career see Patrick F. McCarty, "Big Ed Johnson of Colorado: A Political Portrait" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Colorado, 1958).

⁸ For a synopsis of political conflict, see the author's article "Colorado in the New Deal," *Pacific Historical Review*, XXXVIII (August 1969), 278-82.



"Big Ed" Johnson,
Governor
of Colorado
and a United
States Senator

need a curtailment and not an expansion of public service. At the rate we are going," he added, "soon half of our people will be paid to regulate the other half."⁹

Like the state government, local governments were under pressure to take measures to prevent indebtedness. In 1933, for example, the state legislature passed the "Local Government Budget Act" which forced all governments, from counties through school districts, to initiate the use of budgets. "Denouncing, abusing and disparaging public officials and government in general became a popular, if not fashionable pastime," reported one contemporary of the time. "Government in Colorado," he continued, "came to symbolize a monster which squanders tax-payers' money." The situation became so crucial in Silverton that the town fathers passed a resolution condemning newspapers which referred to public officials as "tax spenders" and "tax eaters." The magic word "economy" with

⁹ "Taxation Thoughts," typewritten speech given at Greeley, July 23, 1934, Records of the Office of the Governor: Edwin C. Johnson, 1933-37, Correspondence, Colorado State Archives and Records Service, hereafter cited as Johnson Correspondence.

the secret formula of "tax reduction" was challenging the very necessity of government itself.¹⁰

Accompanying the mania to reduce the cost of government was a movement to consolidate Colorado's sixty-three counties. In the early thirties State Senator George C. Monley of Denver proposed a reduction in the number of counties to thirty-six. An independent study under the Colorado State Agricultural Extension Station went so far as to suggest a further cut to twenty-two, based upon geography, wealth, and transportation. Governor Johnson endorsed the idea of consolidation and appointed a committee to investigate the matter. The committee, however, reported against such action.¹¹

As was the case in most other states which also attempted county consolidation, strong opposition defeated it. Business interests in threatened county seats protested the possible loss of profits. In the small counties and in those losing population due to drought or mining depression, county politicians and their staffs pictured themselves joining the army of the unemployed. Also evident was a resentment among some citizens who had a natural sentiment for their counties. The result was that legislative representatives of potentially eliminated counties formed a bloc to prevent consolidation.¹²

By and large the most extensive government reorganization to occur during the thirties in Colorado came under the "Administrative Code of 1933." A synopsis of the background of this law will explain its passage.

Beginning in 1915, and reinitiated thereafter in each legislature through 1923, administrative reform bills failed to win legislative approval, other than one which inaugurated the use of a budget system in 1919. During the last of these attempts at reform, in 1923, Governor William E. Sweet proposed centralizing administrative authority in a cabinet system under the direct control of the state executive. The appointments and removals of individual department heads were dependent upon the governor's discretion. The legislature balked at such centralization.¹³

¹⁰ "Anarchism through Economania," *Colorado Municipalities*, IX (March-April 1933), 20; E. P. Sallee, "Local Government Budgets," *ibid.*, X (September-October 1934), 181.

¹¹ "County Consolidation Movement Advances," *ibid.*, X (March-April 1934), 126; *Denver Post*, February 25, 1934, p. 1, and June 12, 1934, p. 16; Lucy M. Klein, "County Consolidation for Colorado" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Denver, 1938), Chapter III.

¹² Klein, "County Consolidation for Colorado," pp. 6, 10, 15-19.

¹³ Allen Moore and Lashley G. Harvey, "Sweeping Reorganization in Colorado," *National Municipal Review*, XXII (July 1933), 334-36; "Plans for Reorganizing Colorado's Government," undated typewritten statement, Johnson Correspondence, 1933.

Despite its defeat as a bill, the idea of a cabinet form of government remained alive. In all three inaugural addresses and in his farewell speech Adams urged its adoption not merely to control executive department positions but also to regulate all state finances.¹⁴ Why so powerful a politician as Governor Adams was never able to obtain such a change is not clear; perhaps he promised not to press the issue in exchange for a legislative favor such as reduced appropriations.

What failed to materialize in the way of government reorganization under Billy Adams became a reality in part under Big Ed Johnson. Even before his inauguration Governor-elect Johnson appointed a special committee to prepare a plan of administrative reorganization to present in his first inaugural address in January 1933.¹⁵ His proposal consisted of two parts. The first of these was the consolidation of forty-four state agencies with a newly created Executive Council to function as the final authority on the state's fiscal policy. It derived its duties by transfer from the recently defunct State Auditing Board. After a bitter struggle the legislature passed this part of Governor Johnson's recommendations in early April 1933.¹⁶

Five members formed the Executive Council: the governor, who acted as chairman; the secretary of state; the state treasurer; the auditor of state; and the attorney general. These officials usually held weekly meetings in the office of the secretary to the governor, provided there was a quorum, though special meetings at particular times were not unknown. Frequently deputies took the place of the assigned officials, particularly in the case of the attorney general and to a lesser degree of the secretary of state. More often than not, the state purchasing agent sat in on the conference. Specific parties interested in particular issues often testified in their own behalf. Interestingly enough, the auditor of state, through his membership in the council, actually passed judgment on expenditures which he was to audit independently.¹⁷

¹⁴ Inaugural addresses of Governor William H. Adams, Colorado, General Assembly, *House Journal*, 26th Sess., 1927, pp. 81-86; *Senate Journal*, 27th Sess., 1929, pp. 36-41; *ibid.*, 28th Sess., 1931, pp. 33-40; Message of Governor Adams, January 6, 1933, *ibid.*, 29th Sess., 1933, pp. 30-37.

¹⁵ For reorganization plans in the pre-inaugural period see the *Denver Post*, December 28, 1932, p. 3. Governor Johnson's inaugural speech may be found in Colorado, General Assembly, *Senate Journal*, 29th Sess., 1933, pp. 60-71.

¹⁶ See "House Bill 30" in Colorado, General Assembly, *Senate Journal* and *House Journal*, 29th Sess., 1933, indexes, and "Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 2 to Amend Section 13 of Article XII of the State Constitution, Relating to Civil Service," Colorado, General Assembly, *Session Laws*, 29th Sess., 1933, p. 947. There are numerous articles on the development of House Bill 30 in the *Denver Post*, January 15-April 15, 1933; of particular note are January 15, 1933, pp. 6-7, and March 22, 1933, p. 10. See also *ibid.*, January 22, 1941, p. 6.

¹⁷ Executive Council, Record of the Minutes, Ledgers 1-13, Colorado State Archives and Records Service.



Senators and representatives assembled on October 30, 1935, to hear Governor Johnson address a special session of the General Assembly.

The Executive Council was the budget-maker and the budget-administrator of the state. The council required all state departments, institutions, and agencies to submit their estimated expenditures for review, revision, and approval. It also directed all auditing, printing, purchasing, and supplying of state services and materials. It examined and decided all quarterly allotments; it prepared and submitted a biennial state budget; and it provided needed fiscal data to the governor and legislature.¹⁸

The clerical staff of the Executive Council was small. It consisted of one permanent secretary who took minutes and two clerks. All had civil service classifications.¹⁹

A second part to Governor Johnson's plan of government reorganization was rejected by the electorate. This proposal consisted of a constitutional amendment which provided the governor with full appointive powers over the offices of secretary of state, state treasurer, attorney general, superintendent of public instruction, and regents of state universities, leaving only the lieutenant governor and state auditor as elected, autonomous officials. While the legislature had created the Executive Council, the electorate did not give the governor power to appoint its members. In other words, the Executive Council comprised five elected officials who sometimes pulled the Colorado purse strings in different directions.²⁰

Working with the Executive Council, Johnson was able to maintain a balanced budget during most of his tenure as governor. To say that such fiscal success benefited Colorado, however, would assume that during this time the state satisfied the minimal needs of most of its citizens. Such was not the case.²¹

By late 1937 Colorado faced another financial "crisis." To compare its seriousness with that of the "crisis" of a decade earlier is difficult. First, a fiscal "crisis" did not mean that the entire government was on the verge of bankruptcy. At best the term implied that the state's General Fund, which controlled only about nine percent of the state's revenues, had registered a deficit due to legislative over-appropriation. All

other state income automatically went to over 230 legally designated funds, regardless of the deficit. By law the governor could not transfer money from one fund to another. Thus, in the minds of some, the deficit in the General Fund appeared to represent a crisis.²²

Second, as one study of state finances has warned, comparing surpluses and deficits in this era is difficult because the state auditor's reports do not offer a clear picture of the financial situation.²³ Bond issues went into the totals distorting the apparent surplus in some years. The \$14 million surplus during the 1935-36 biennium, for example, was not representative of the actual surplus, if any existed.

Any surplus remaining in the General Fund by mid-1936 quickly disappeared by the time the state's new governor, Teller Ammons (1937-39), came into office. The first Colorado-born governor and, at thirty-nine years of age, the youngest man ever to hold the office, Ammons was the son of former Governor Elias N. Ammons. While the new governor disagreed with his father's extreme states' rights position, Teller and Elias had similar views on issues within Colorado. Both men, too, entered office in the midst of a depression. However, Elias Ammons began with a surplus in the state treasury; Teller Ammons inherited a \$1 million debt from the Johnson administration and faced a headstrong Democratic legislature which appropriated more money than state finances could afford. The end result for Teller Ammons was a deficit of about \$3.6 million in the General Fund.²⁴

To counteract this accumulating deficit, Governor Ammons followed three time-honored courses of action. First, when the threat of a deficit emerged, retrenchment ensued, although it proved much less effective than it had a decade earlier. In the middle of a depression, after a decade of government reductions in expenditures, there was little fat left to trim. More importantly, by the 1930s pressure groups had learned the trick of using the initiative to finance their programs. Highway interests, for example, engineered a 1934 election victory which

¹⁸ *Ibid.* For more extensive details see Executive Council, Voucher Listings, Colorado State Archives and Records Service, and "Administrative Code of 1933," Colorado, General Assembly, *Session Laws*, 29th Sess., 1933, art. I, sec. 4, p. 207, and art. VIII, secs. 16-21, pp. 226-31.

¹⁹ E. O. Griffenhagen & Associates of Chicago, mimeographed "Reports on the Government of Colorado," Denver, 1939, Report 2, p. 1, hereafter cited as "Griffenhagen Reports."

²⁰ *Denver Post*, March 22, 1933, p. 10, and January 22, 1941, p. 6.

²¹ See the author's dissertation and article, previously cited, for evidence for this statement.

²² "Financing Government in Colorado," p. 14.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ See Ammons, Teller, in the Clippings Collection, Western History Department, Denver Public Library; *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), June 23, 1955, p. 38; "Program of Constructive Work Aimed at the Modernization and Simplification of the State Government of Colorado," undated mimeographed statement; Ammons to Thomas Amear, December 11, 1937, and "State of Colorado Estimated State Revenue Applicable to General Fund, July 1, 1937, to June 30, 1939, Revised December 15, 1937," mimeographed paper, all in Records of the Office of the Governor: Teller Ammons, 1937-39, Correspondence, Colorado State Archives and Records Service, hereafter cited as Ammons Correspondence.



Teller Ammons, son of
former governor
Elias M. Ammons

ordered all automobile and gasoline taxes to go to road construction. As another example, in 1936 old age pensioners used the initiative to create the most generous pension plan in America, \$45 a month of public support, over twice the national average. Automatically earmarked for the pensioners were all excise taxes and eighty-five percent of all liquor and sales taxes. With the remaining revenue, Governor Ammons initiated an economy drive.²⁵

Simultaneous with cutting the cost of government, Ammons initiated his second course of action: increased taxation. The Executive Council ordered a flat increase of state property taxes from 3 to 4.5 mills per thousand dollars evaluation, a fifty-percent increase, and the General Assembly passed a two-percent service tax. Business interests bellowed in disfavor. They had actually demanded a tax reduction to combat the oncoming recession. County governments, too, bemoaned increased taxation, for they feared that the increment would hurt their own efforts to raise taxes. The debate notwithstanding, the additional taxes did not erase the fiscal deficit.²⁶

The third means by which Governor Ammons attempted to solve the financial "crisis" of 1937-39 was a further reorganization of state government. By this time, the "Administrative Code of 1933" had proved a disappointment. As a University of Denver study later concluded, the code created "artificial administrative units with vague powers of control which only complicated and confused the administrative system."²⁷ Thus, something more than a piecemeal change was necessary. As Governor Ammons put it: "It is inconceivable that our state should continue to function under such an archaic system [with earmarked funds]. Equalization of the tax burden to give effect to just principles of taxation and restore full control of public financial policies to the elected representatives of the people, can be realized only when we have simplified the structure of the state government and adopted public budgeting in all its implications."²⁸

What Governor Ammons wanted was a scientifically based reconstruction of Colorado state government, not just the re-shuffling of agency powers as prior reorganization proposals had planned.²⁹ Therefore, he requested the Executive Council to grant him \$40,000 to contract E. O. Griffenhagen & Associates, noted governmental analysts, to survey Colorado state government from top to bottom and to make recommendations for changes. Two council members, State Treasurer Homer E. Bedford and Secretary of State George F. Saunders, fought the proposal openly, considering it an unwarranted expense which would accomplish little. In support of the plan was State Budget and Efficiency Commissioner R. G. Montgomery, who probably suggested the survey by an outside agency. The council compromised by begrudgingly doling out \$4,000.³⁰ As a result, Governor Ammons had to turn to the public for the remainder. E. O. Griffenhagen assisted by cutting the original price to \$20,000, and two men, Denver millionaire James Quigg Newton and his brother Whitney, a Pueblo capitalist, contributed half that cost in the name of "good government." Or, as some suggested at the time, maybe the purpose of the contribution was to reinstate the family name. (Earlier that year, a third Newton brother, Wilbur, had been a prime contributor in the hidden

²⁵ "Governor Ammons Opens Drive to Improve State's Finance," undated, Ammons Correspondence; "Colorado Reckoning," *Business Week* (October 26, 1940), 29-30.

²⁶ *Montrose Daily Press*, December 28, 1937, p. 2; "Finances," clippings from the *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 1937, in the Clippings Collection, Western History Department, Denver Public Library.

²⁷ Bureau of Business and Social Research of the University of Denver, "Reorganizing State Government in Colorado," *Business Study No. 92* (March 1939), 8.

²⁸ *Montrose Daily Press*, December 28, 1937, p. 2.

²⁹ Already in 1937 the legislature had considered State Senator Elmer Headlee's reorganization proposal. Colorado, General Assembly, *Senate Journal*, 31st Sess., 1937, p. 706; *House Journal*, 31st Sess., 1937, p. 1916.

³⁰ *Denver Post*, December 9, 1937, p. 1.

microphone scandal, a clumsy James-Bond-type episode which involved "bugging" the governor's office to gain personal information which could damage Ammons politically. None emerged.)³¹

Initiated in January 1938, the Griffenhagen investigation required nearly one year to complete. At times, the analysts met resistance as they combed through Colorado state government. Some civil servants felt that the investigators were trespassing on private grounds, while others feared for the elimination of their jobs.³²

When completed the reports detailed the lack of coordination and centralization in Colorado state government and pointed out why the state's management of monetary affairs was outmoded. In particular the reports claimed that the Executive Council failed in its purpose as an advisory body to help the governor determine fiscal policies. It was also ineffective in coordinating and regulating various executive department activities. In the opinion of the investigators, the Executive Council was a "barrier to any attempt on the part of the chief executive of the state to give the people of the state efficient and economic state government." Because the members of the council were elected officials, they were not responsible to the governor and were, in fact, immune to executive and legislative control. Executive Council decisions often reflected the members' personal political ambitions, for the members built up their own political machines through patronage and "other means."³³ As a solution, the study recommended the creation of a cabinet form of government in lieu of the Executive Council.

The reforms which the Griffenhagen reports proposed won much support from persons not directly connected to state government. An independent study by the University of Denver, for example, verified the Griffenhagen findings. Also confirming the conclusions, the western political scientist Thomas C. Donnelly wrote: "The recommendations made by Griffenhagen were looked upon by students of government as being both reasonable and practical."³⁴

³¹ *Ibid.*, February 27, 1938, pp. 1, 4. Interestingly enough, E. O. Griffenhagen & Associates faced great difficulty in gaining payment for their work. The state still owed most of the \$20,000 in February 1939. Executive Council Correspondence, "Miscellaneous," February 21, 1939, Colorado State Archives and Records Service.

³² Ammons to George Norlin, March 12, 1938, and Ammons to Judge Stanley H. Johnson, April 22, 1938, Ammons Correspondence.

³³ "Griffenhagen Reports," Report I, pp. 7, 18.

³⁴ *Ibid.*; "Reorganizing State Government," p. 17; Thomas C. Donnelly (ed.), *Rocky Mountain Politics* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), p. 85.



Ralph L. Carr was governor of Colorado when the nation entered World War II.

Before E. O. Griffenhagen finished his investigation, Colorado voters turned out Teller Ammons in November 1938 as part of a growing state trend against Democrats. Replacing Ammons was Republican Ralph L. Carr (1939-43), a newspaperman turned lawyer from Antonito. The governorship was Carr's first elective office. Strongly supported by business interests to reduce taxes, the new governor's chief objective was to balance the budget.³⁵ He succeeded by 1941.

Governor Carr's success in ending the state's fiscal "crisis" is attributable to two factors. First, he sacrificed public education and welfare. In 1937 the electorate had voted in a state income tax with the view that all revenues would go to public schools, but two years later Carr convinced the legislature to pass a law restricting income tax funds for schools to thirty-five percent, with the remaining sixty-five percent going to the General Fund. As a result of this legal diversion of these funds from schools, public education in Colorado was curtailed severely. At the same time Governor Carr cut state welfare

³⁵ Donnelly (ed.), *Rocky Mountain Politics*, p. 83; *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), November 9, 1938, p. 2.

expenditures.³⁶ The public apparently approved of such actions, for Carr won re-election by a landslide in 1940. Soon afterward the state deficit changed to a surplus as the second reason for his success manifested itself: state collected revenues swelled after 1939 from the economic stimulus related to the beginning of World War II and the end of the Great Depression.³⁷

Unrelated to balancing the budget was still another proposal for government reorganization. Almost immediately after Carr won the governorship in November 1938, he publically endorsed the administrative program of Elmer Headlee, a Democratic state senator from Monte Vista opposed to Ammons. Headlee and fourteen other "nonpartisan" legislators formed a committee which proposed the "Reorganization Bill of 1939." This bill incorporated little of the Griffenhagen reports. Despite local enthusiasm for administrative reform, few changes actually resulted.³⁸

It is not difficult to understand why the legislature failed to support the new reorganization bill or to inaugurate changes which the Griffenhagen reports suggested. For every reform bill initiated in the General Assembly, an opposition group arose to defeat it. Most people in Colorado government offered qualified support to the abolition of special accounts with earmarked funds; that is, they wanted all state revenues to go into the General Fund for executive and legislative use. Whenever there was a specific proposal for such a change, however, each independent governmental body and its supporters argued that it should be an exception to the law. The result was no significant reorganization.³⁹

Also easy to comprehend was Governor Carr's continued interest in administrative reorganization. As the first Republican state executive in over a decade, he found state departments, bureaus, and agencies entrenched with Democratic Party appointees and civil servants. Six months after his inauguration Carr complained to a friend that the only appointive vacancy he had was "a gardener's job at a state laboratory." When vacancies did arise, as the governor lamented

to another friend, the Executive Council defeated his important appointments by three-to-two along party lines.⁴⁰

Just prior to his second term in office, in 1941, Carr reiterated his desire for government reorganization.⁴¹ A Joint Committee on Reorganization formed immediately. First, the group junked the Griffenhagen reports as impractical. Next, the committee examined the "Administrative Code of 1933" section by section and concluded that the Executive Council had failed in its intentions. The council, as one unnamed committee member characterized it, was a board of "five governors which has taken over the executive functions of the governor."⁴² Finally, the Joint Committee introduced, and the legislature passed, the "Administrative Code of 1941: Reorganization of the State Government." Among other things, this new law abolished the Executive Council and replaced it with a Governor's Council. This new body consisted of the secretary of state, the state treasurer, the director of revenue, the superintendent of public instruction, the attorney general, the state budget and efficiency commissioner, and the state purchasing agent, with the lieutenant governor as an ex officio member. The group was to meet once a month solely to advise the governor.⁴³

On June 30, 1941, the "Board of Five Governors," as some had called the Executive Council, ceased to exist. Colorado administration was somewhat different from what it had been when the Executive Council began to function in 1933, but the change did not measure up to the recommendations of E. O. Griffenhagen & Associates. Instead of roaring off in the latest administrative model available, Colorado government preferred to putter along in a patched-up antique as it journeyed into an age of enlarged governmental obligations to its citizens.

Thus, during the era between the two world wars Colorado government resisted assuming greater responsibility for its citizens' needs in a period of expanded federal power. This resistance marked a continuation of the nineteenth-century political belief that small government automatically meant good government. During the fiscal "crises" retrenchment policies and demands for government reorganization were attempts to

³⁶ Earl C. Crockett, *Taxation in Colorado*, Report No. 1 (Boulder: University of Colorado, 1946), pp. 29-31. In 1943 Colorado increased the percentage of total income tax revenues to schools from thirty-five to fifty. Despite this increment, state aid to public education remained low by comparison to that in other states. As late as 1946, for example, Colorado ranked thirty-fourth in state aid. Prompted by this fact, Crockett bemoaned: "The amount of state support for public education has always been relatively low in Colorado."

³⁷ A. D. H. Kaplan, "The Economic Outlook for 1940," *City Club Chronicle* (Denver), May 10, 1940, unpaginated supplement; *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 7, 1941, p. 1.

³⁸ *Denver Post*, November 29, 1938, p. 1, and December 16, 1939, p. 1.

³⁹ Donnelly (ed.), *Rocky Mountain Politics*, p. 86.

⁴⁰ Carr to Bruce Cole, November 22, 1939, and Carr to C. D. Thompson, June 16, 1939, Records of the Office of the Governor: Ralph L. Carr, 1939-43, Colorado State Archives and Records Service.

⁴¹ Message of Governor Ralph L. Carr delivered to the Joint Session of the Colorado Legislature, January 9, 1941, Colorado, General Assembly, *Senate Journal*, 33d Sess., 1941, pp. 65-81.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 68; *Denver Post*, January 22, 1941, p. 6, and January 23, 1941, p. 1.

⁴³ Colorado, General Assembly, *Session Laws*, 33d Sess., 1941, art. I, sec. 4, p. 36; *Denver Post*, June 29, 1941, p. 6.

reduce the size of government. How serious these "crises" were is speculative. Historians need to initiate in-depth research on the subject; and, if they do, perhaps they will be able to answer several pertinent questions. Did Billy Adams exaggerate the seriousness of the fiscal crisis of 1927-28 as an excuse to win public support for reducing government activities? In the election year of 1932, why did Adams and the public appear less concerned about a similar biennium deficit? Is there justification in criticisms of Teller Ammons' fiscal management, or was the "crisis" of 1937-39 purposefully distorted to use as a political springboard against the governor? And finally, were the Griffenhagen reports a waste of money, or did they eventually serve a purpose?

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For Water-Level Rails Along the Colorado River

BY O. DOCK MARSTON

Two inscriptions at the confluence of the Colorado and Green rivers in Utah are landmarks of a survey for a Denver-promoted railroad—the Denver, Colorado Canon and Pacific Railroad. These inscriptions were related to the two parts of the survey—one led by Frank Kendrick, the other by Frank Brown and Robert Brewster Stanton.

The concept of using the Marble Gorge of the Grand Canyon, along with the other canyons of the Colorado River, as an easy rail grade from the mines of Colorado to coal-hungry Southern California caught the ear of restless, forty-three-year-old Frank Mason Brown, a Denver capitalist. Born June 9, 1845, he had been in the fur seal business in Alaska; irrigation and politics in California; and mining, irrigation, and politics in Colorado.

Down the Green River to its confluence with the Colorado.

Frank Mason Brown,
president of the
Denver, Colorado Canon
and Pacific Railroad
Company, and a drowning
victim on the survey
of the Colorado.



Study of the acclaimed Ives and Powell reports on the Colorado River¹ prompted the organization by Brown of the Denver, Colorado Canon and Pacific Railroad Company on March 26, 1889, with Brown occupying the office of president.

Only two days after the incorporation President Brown and a survey party stepped from the train at Grand Junction, Colorado, and celebrated the start of the survey minutes later by driving the first stake. Engineer Frank Clarence Kendrick and his assistant, Thomas P. Rigney, who had come from Denver with Brown, then bought supplies for the forthcoming survey, which was to run to the mouth of the Green River. They also added George Cost, Charles Brock, and Frank Knox to the crew. Brown, after purchasing an open, flat-bottom, pine skiff from the local ferryman, left for Denver and the East.²

¹ Lieutenant Joseph C. Ives, under the U. S. Topographical Engineers, attempted to cruise up the Colorado River from its mouth in 1858 in a crude steamer, the *Explorer*, reaching the foot of Black Canyon below present Hoover Dam. He pushed up through Black Canyon in a skiff to Las Vegas Wash before turning back. Changing to land travel, he arrived at the mouth of Diamond Creek and visited Havasupai Canyon. *Ives' Report upon the Colorado River of the West* (S. Rept. 90, 36th Cong., 1st Sess., 1860), is embellished with imaginative illustrations which surpass the exaggerations of the text. John Wesley Powell, *Exploration of the Colorado River and the West, and its Tributaries* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1875), is a document dictated by Powell in 1874 to simulate a journal of the 1869 cruise from Green River, Wyoming, to the mouth of the Virgin River. The illustrations are absurd and deceptive.

² For additional information about the Kendrick survey see Helen J. Stiles, "Down the Colorado in 1889," *The Colorado Magazine*, XLI (Summer 1964), 225-46, in which appears Kendrick's journal.

The survey of the line, which commenced March 29, ended at the mouth of the Green River on May 4, 160.78 miles from Grand Junction. A water-level route was maintained except for twelve-mile Westwater Canyon, called Hades Canyon by Kendrick. Here Kendrick proposed carrying the rails onto the mesa where a roadbed of easy grades could avoid heavy cutting into the vertical granite walls of the canyon. Elsewhere six tunnels, totaling four and a half miles, could save some twenty-three miles of track.



The Loop on the Colorado where Kendrick planned tunnels, between four and eleven miles above the mouth of the Green.

Although the party was delayed at the foot of Westwater Canyon by the failure of supply delivery and again at Moab, the party arrived at its destination, the mouth of the Green River



At the confluence Kendrick inscribed a "Red Sand Stone" on the talus of the lower right bank, as viewed with the Green entering on the right.

an hour ahead of schedule. On Saturday, May 4, 1889, Kendrick recorded in his journal:

Ran from 8202+70 to 8489+50 at the mouth of Green river or 160.78 miles from Grand Junction. Struck Green river at 11 A.M. or 1 hour before the time I had set. About 2 miles above the mouth we struck a Lime formation full of fossils. Got quite a lot of spec.

Took dinner [?] at mouth of Green and are now ready to take a 75 mile pull up to Blake. At mouth of Green we mark a large Red Sand Stone (lying in the forks of the Green & Colorado)³

Sta 8489+50
DCC & PRR
May 4th 1889

The Colorado canon from here does not look very rough but we cannot see only about ¼ mile & have seen enough canon so we are not anxious to go down to see what it is.

After dinner they started to drag the skiff up the Green River to Blake (present Green River, Utah). By May 13 they had towed and rowed the skiff ninety-five miles to the Wheeler brothers' ranch opposite the mouth of the San Rafael, where the fine hospitality of the four brothers eased the disheartening news that there remained twenty-two more miles to drag the boat to Blake. On May 15 they sighted the railroad bridge at Blake, where they stowed their boat and equipment. The crew

³ The distance between each station ("Sta") is 100 feet.

was paid in Grand Junction, and Kendrick reported to Brown in Denver on May 18.⁴

Only a few days earlier the second party was organizing to carry the railroad survey from the junction of the Green with the Colorado through the Grand Canyon. On May 13, 1889, Stanton became chief engineer of the rail company. Stanton,



Robert
Brewster
Stanton,
engineer.

⁴ Frederick S. Dellenbaugh, in *The Romance of the Colorado River* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1902), pp. 342-46, outlines this part of the rail project without benefit of direct knowledge of the route surveyed. Lewis R. Freeman, *The Colorado River, Yesterday, To-day and To-morrow* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1923), pp. 293-95, is less accurate than Dellenbaugh. Edwin Corle, *Listen, Bright Angel* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1946), pp. 128-31, relates some discussions between Brown, John Wesley Powell, and Almon H. Thompson as additions to the record. Robert Brewster Stanton, *Down the Colorado*, ed. and with intro. by Dwight L. Smith (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), pp. xiii-xiv, 7, 22-23, adds much to the development of the concept of the rail route, but the usefulness of this work suffers from the confusions of the author.

only one year younger than Brown and a fraternity brother, had graduated from Miami University in Ohio, after which he worked in railroad location and construction. He suffered from some restriction of his left arm as the result of a crippling childhood disease.

With President Brown in command and Stanton as engineer in charge, the survey party left Denver on May 22, 1889. Also in the group were Ethan Allen Reynolds and J. Neville Hughes, genial young Denver lawyers whom Brown had invited as guests. William Hector Bush and John Hislop were transitmen, and George Edward Howard and Edward Coe were to operate levels. Charles W. Potter, George A. Sutherland, Peter M. Hansbrough, E. W. Terry, and T. P. Rigney (who had assisted Kendrick) were chainmen and flagmen. Henry C. Richards assisted with the survey and acted as steward while George Washington



George
Washington
Gibson,
cook.

Gibson was cook. A novelty in rail surveying was the presence of a photographer, with Franklin Asa Nims in this role.⁵

Five fifteen-foot, clinker-built, cedar skiffs were shipped to join the pine unit stored by Kendrick. The veteran skiff was named the *Brown Betty* (or *Black Betty*), and the new craft were the *Colorado*, *Denver*, *Ward*, *Mary*, and *Mason*. Freight and crew far exceeded the flotation capacity, so five zinc compartments with pine framing, loaded with provisions and intended to fit the middle of the cedar boats, were lashed together into a "flotilla" to be towed by the *Brown Betty*.⁶



Departing from the railroad bridge at Green River on May 25, Brown and Stanton studied the terrain along the river for the possible placement of a branch rail line from Green River, Wyoming. The overloaded skiffs cruised the 117 miles to the mouth of the Green with but moderate difficulty and established camp May 29 a hundred yards below the Green River on the

⁵ The roster of the party is in Brown's water-stained notebook in the author's files; in Stanton, *Down the Colorado*, p. 36; and in Franklin A. Nims, *The Photographer and the River, 1889-90: The Colorado Canon Diary of Franklin A. Nims*, ed. by Dwight L. Smith (Santa Fe: Stagecoach Press, 1967), p. 20.
⁶ Ethan Allen Reynolds, "In the Whirlpools of the Grand Canon of the Colorado," *Cosmopolitan*, VIII (November 1889), 25-34, provides a number of details although Reynolds traveled none of the Grand Canyon with the party. See also Nims, "Through Mysterious Canons of the Colorado," *Overland Monthly*, 2d ser., XIX (March 1892), 253-70.

and bored by the elaborate detail of Stanton's work, which was contrary to his idea of a reconnaissance supported by photography, Brown suggested that the time budget of six months be cut to sixty days. Stanton abruptly rejected Brown's suggestion, thus starting a schism in the leadership.

On May 31, 1889, the ill-fated Brown-Stanton survey party set out to learn what had lain out of sight to Kendrick when his group left the Colorado. The first revelation was to be the rapids of Cataract Canyon. Leaving the campsite of May 29 and 30, the survey crew worked their line down the left bank about three and a half miles while the remaining crew brought five boats to beach above the first rapid at right bank. In the



Nims photo of Brown-Stanton survey starting, left bank of the "Grand."

right bank of the Colorado.⁷ Stanton burst into a bustle of business early on May 30, taking a meridian from Polaris and, after breakfast, gathering his surveyors and equipment to cross to the left bank of the Grand (Colorado) River. Opposite Kendrick's Station 8489+50, the survey set and leveled 0.6 miles of line and then returned to camp on the right bank. Puzzled

⁷ Brown's journal noted: "We emerged from Stillwater Canon . . . at 1:45. The other boats joined us at the mouth of Grand & Green and the head of the Colorado an hour and a half later. At camp on the west bank. . . . After supper we attempted to cast the seine . . . I fell into the river. . . ." Reynolds, "In the Whirlpools of the Grand Canon of the Colorado," pp. 27-28, states: "We made our camp on the northwest bank of the Grand River, where we could look directly down the Colorado." There is a possible conflict between these two records in determining whether the camp was above or below the mouth of the Green River, but the angle at which the Green River comes in could have confused Reynolds; also, the more advantageous campsite is below the mouth of the Green.



Down Cataract Canyon at the end of the first mile, showing the ample talus in this section for railroad location.

meantime, the flotilla was lost when the *Brown Betty* attempted to tow it across the river, this being the first of an amazing series of portages, smashing of boats, loss of craft in lining, and other impediments. Stanton created dissension in the midst of these difficulties and divided the party twice. Nevertheless, the



A Brown-Stanton skiff at the head of Rapid No. 23, Cataract Canyon.

entire crew reached Hite without serious injury, although the *Brown Betty* was lost in a rapid; the *Mary* had been demolished to salvage parts for repairing other units; and food, instruments, records, and personal gear had gone into the river. Fortunately, supplies and repair facilities were available at Hite and at Tickaboo, fifteen miles below Hite.

The personnel also underwent revision at these points. At Hite buckskin-clad Harry McDonald was added to the crew, while Rigney and Terry left for Denver. And at Tickaboo Hughes departed for Denver by way of Hite. Brown and Stan-

ton having compromised their differences, the remaining men were assigned to two parties. Bush, assisted by Coe, Howard, Sutherland, and Potter, was to carry the instrument work down to Lees Ferry, an estimated 125 miles, with the *Mason* providing their water transport. The remainder were to use the other three boats for a reconnaissance, supported by camera, through the Marble Gorge and the Grand Canyon, cruising first through Glen Canyon to reach the starting point of the reconnaissance.

The latter group was delayed for several days after they reached Lees Ferry as supplies had not arrived, but they departed again on July 9. At Mile 12 in Marble Gorge, Brown was rowing the *Ward* when it capsized and he was thrown into the eddy. Although McDonald, who was with him, was carried to the beach below, Brown was lost.



Crewman Hansbrough inscribed a ledge near the spot where Brown drowned when his boat capsized not far from the beach at center of this view, looking upstream.



This tragedy did not convince Stanton that the boats were unequal to the water problems, and he ordered the continuation of the survey. Five days after Brown's death, Hansbrough and Richards were drowned at Mile 25.2 when their boat capsized. The impact of this lesson was sufficient that Stanton then led his crew out of the canyon at Mile 31.6 below Lees Ferry.⁸

Meanwhile, the transit crew abandoned the line in Glen Canyon and cached their equipment at Mile 34.4 above Lees Ferry when they ran out of supplies. They cruised the remaining distance to Lees Ferry in their skiff. Although this section generally has little reputation for violence, Bush related, with an apparent taste for fiction:

We abandoned the idea of surveying the canyon for but one thing, a place to get out. With the canyon walls climbing 6000 feet above us, there was little chance of doing anything but keep alive.

Every minute we figured was our last. We shot over rapids expecting momentarily to be overturned, and passed whirlpools which towered 20 ft. above our heads.



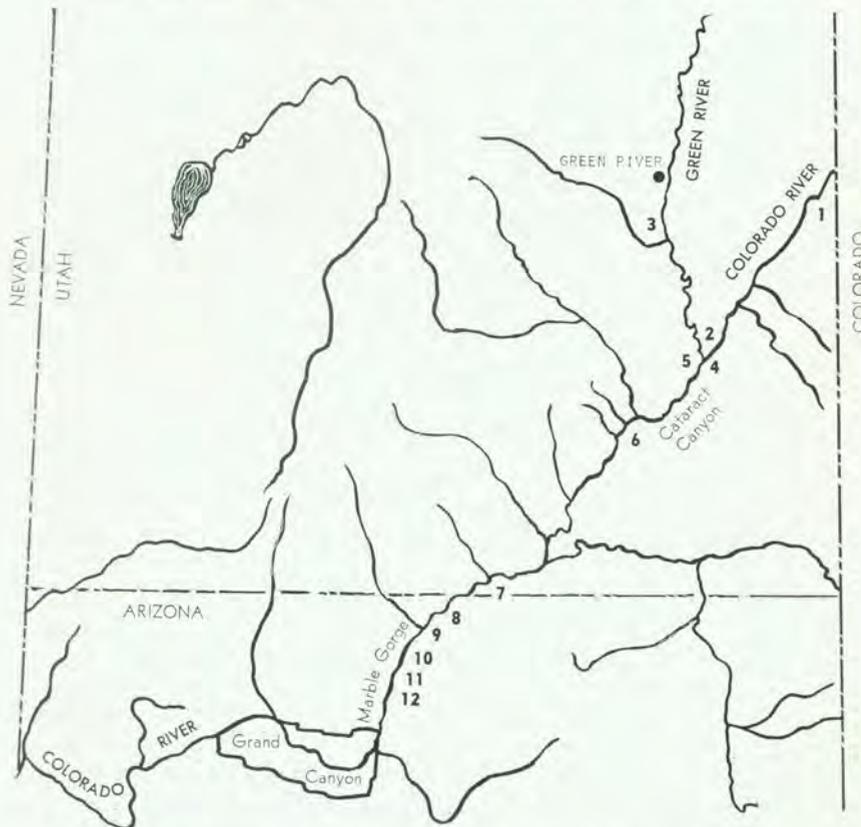
River boating, according to a *Cosmopolitan* magazine illustration for Reynolds' "In the Whirlpools of the Grand Canon of the Colorado."

⁸ The best sources covering the events through Cataract Canyon and to the abandonment of the river in Marble Gorge are the Brown and Stanton journals. Parts of the Brown journal have disappeared from the soakings of the rapids. The Stanton journals are in the New York Public Library, and numerous copies are in various depositories.

It was late in July when we found a place to land, Lees Ferry, where the Mormons crossed. We dragged the boat ashore and threw ourselves on the sand to sleep.

I learned later that the eight others had passed Lees Ferry and that Banker Brown and three others had drowned when the boat capsized. The five men with me were all alive, but when we awoke on the sand at Lees Ferry the next morning one of them was raving mad.

All we had left was the clothing on our backs, no water, and no food. . . . For seven days we tramped across the desert without food, constantly guarding the maniac, until almost dead, we literally crawled into the frontier town of Arizona.⁹



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Westwater Canyon | 7. Bush survey ended |
| 2. Boulder marked by Kendrick | 8. Bush cruise ended |
| 3. Wheeler brothers' ranch | 9. Lees Ferry |
| 4. Surveys joined | 10. Brown drowned |
| 5. Boulder marked by Brown-Stanton | 11. Hansbrough and Richards drowned |
| 6. Supplies at Hite and Bush survey separated | 12. Stanton boats and gear cached; party out to Kanab |

Thus, this attempt to survey the water-level route for a railroad from Denver to the Pacific ended in failure and tragedy. Although the death of Brown received considerable public notice and regret in Denver, the railroad company felt justified in reorganizing, with Stanton acquiring an interest in the stock, and sending Stanton on a further survey, at his suggestion, which successfully ran from the head of Glen Canyon to the Gulf of California. But, while the segments of the survey have become familiar Colorado River lore, the purpose for which they were organized was forgotten soon.

The inscriptions at the confluence of the Green and Colorado have continued to interest latter-day river runners. In 1911 Ellsworth Leonardson Kolb together with his little brother, Emery Clifford, made a cruise from Green River, Wyoming, to the Gulf of Mexico. As they camped under a willow at the right bank of the Colorado about one hundred yards below the mouth of the Green on October 25, Ellsworth crossed to the east side of the Green, photographed what he thought to be Stanton's record (actually Kendrick's), and painted the Kolb names on the rock.¹⁰ When the Kolb brothers were associated with the U. S. Geological Survey, which reached the mouth of the Green River on September 15, 1921, they ignored the inscription.¹¹

The next apparent sighting of this rock was by Haldane ("Buzz") Holmstrom. During Holmstrom's solo cruise from Green River, Wyoming, to Hoover Dam in 1937 and his retransiting of the course with Amos Burg in 1938, he made extensive notes on his Geological Survey maps. An arrow pointing to the north side of the Green River, and in the forks, is accompanied by the caption "Stanton Survey Mark," but the Holmstrom journals make no mention of this detail¹² and no reference appears in Burg's record.

On May 21, 1961, when Carrol Lambeth of Moab carried Ken Howard, P. T. Reilly, and me as guests of the Friendship Cruise, a search of the area in the forks disclosed a faded Kolb

⁹ "Surveys of the Grand Canyon," *Proceedings of the American Society of Civil Engineers*, L (February 1924), 61, quoting the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (n.d.). See also P. T. Reilly, "How Deadly Is Big Red?" *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII (Spring 1969), 244-60, which gives a partial list of fatalities in the Colorado River.

¹⁰ Ellsworth Kolb's journal entry for October 26, 1911, states: "I crossed to East side of Green, and . . . took a photo of Stanton's record." Kolb, *Through the Grand Canyon from Wyoming to Mexico* (New York: Macmillan, 1914), p. 126, records the inscription:

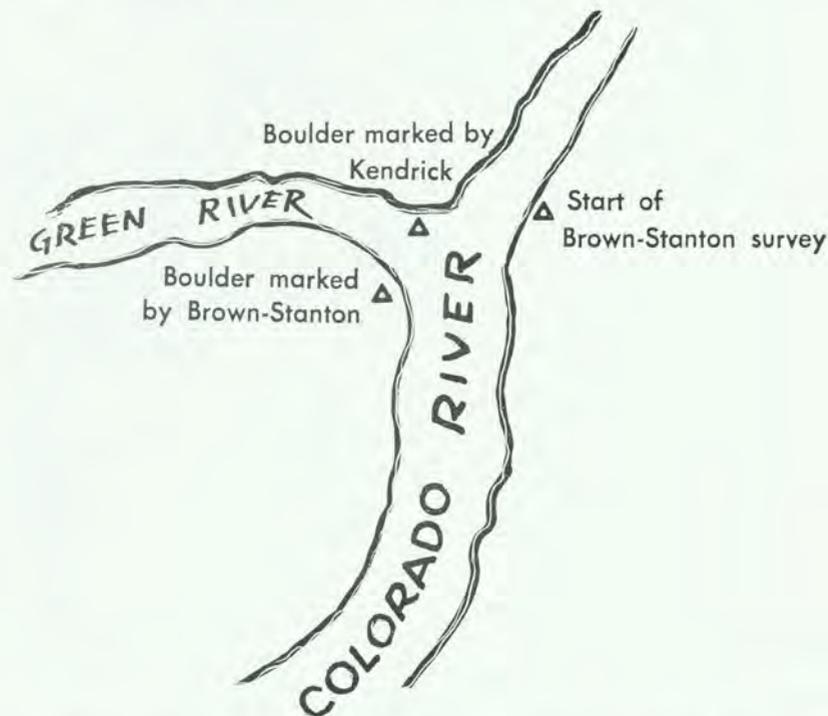
A81-50
Sta. D. C. C. & P. R. R.

Evidently weathering caused difficulty in accurate reading then.

¹¹ W. L. Rusho, "River Running, 1921: The Diary of E. L. Kolb," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII (Spring 1969), 274.

¹² Holmstrom's brother Carl has the journals. Burg wrote a series of postcards documenting the cruise, and a copy is in the U. S. Geological Survey Library.

inscription, but nothing that could be considered the Kendrick record was found on the same boulder. A search of the same zone during a cruise from Moab on March 28, 1964, showed nothing of the Kendrick mark.¹³ To mark his location of Station 8489+50 on May 4, 1889, Kendrick probably used keel (surveyor's crayon) or paint on the boulder which would remain until the arrival of the enlarged survey party a month later. Weathering has since removed it from the rock lying in the forks of the Green and Colorado.

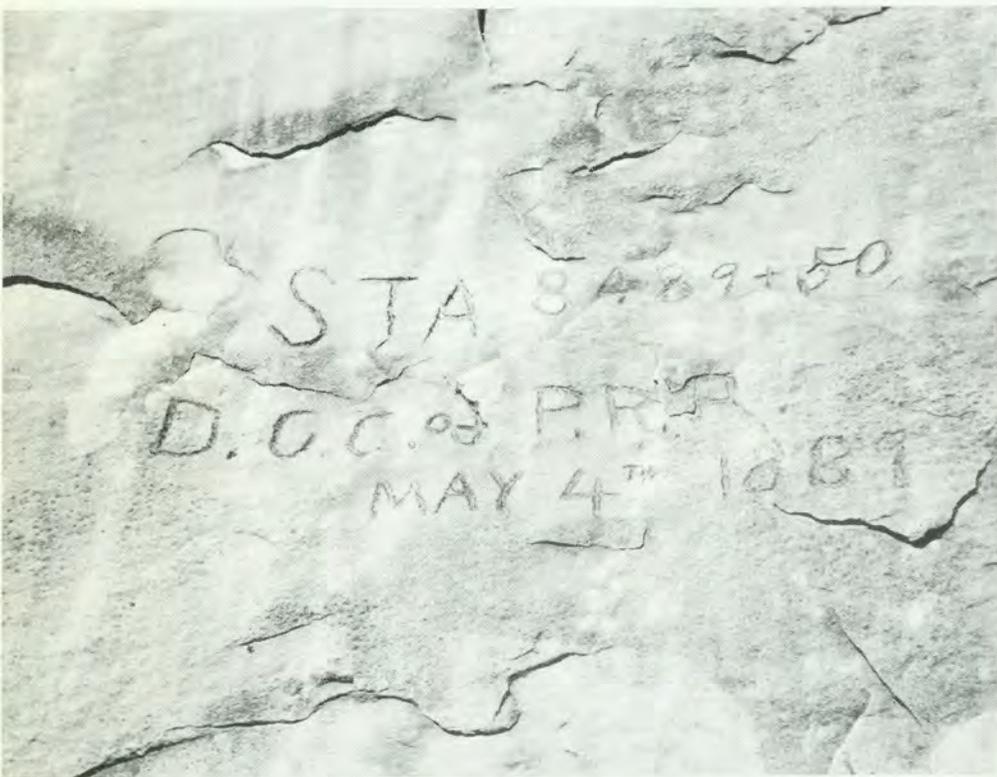


Other parties have observed a second inscription. In 1914 John Francis Richardson and Eugene LaRue of the Bureau of Reclamation left Moab with Albert I. Anderson to inspect the drilling operations for a proposed dam in the Colorado River directly below the mouth of the Green River. The next day LaRue noted a boulder on the right bank of the Colorado River

¹³ Tex McClatchy was able to lead the same party one hundred yards to a cliff on which was painted the Kolb name, confirming the 1911 visit. Helen Stiles, editor of the Kendrick journal, joined in this search.

and a hundred yards below the mouth of the Green.¹⁴ He read the markings on the boulder:

Sta. 8489+5
D.C.C. & P.R.R.
May 4, 1889



and near the base:

U.S.R.S. B.M.
Elev. 3916.62'
Aug. 1914

In his operation of Wonderland Expeditions, informed of the Kendrick inscription, Ken Sleight inspired his passengers to some study of the canyons by research in the field. He had seen

¹⁴ LaRue's notebook in the Huntington Library gives the readings of the inscription and a small sketch showing the location. See also E. C. LaRue, *Water Power and Flood Control of Colorado River below Green River, Utah*, U. S. Geological Survey, Water Supply Paper 555 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925), pp. 49-50.

previously the second inscription—i.e., the carving below the Green River—but did not identify its relationship to the Brown-Stanton party until July 13, 1966, when he photographed it.

This deeply incised sign on the right bank of the Colorado River is approximately 1,250 feet below the other inscription location in the forks, and had it been part of the traverse run by Kendrick in 1889, the point would have been Station 8502+00. The assumption seems warranted that it was cut by a member of the Brown party about Memorial Day of 1889 to mark the resumption of the survey approximately at the location where Kendrick had terminated it. Today this mark is a reminder of the Brown-Stanton group which on May 31 headed down Cataract Canyon into heavy water, personality conflict, hunger, loss of boats and lives, and the monumental failure of this section of the DCC&PRR survey.

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Confederate Guerrillas in Southern Colorado

BY MORRIS F. TAYLOR

Reverberations of the attack on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, April 12, 1861, soon were felt in the territories of Colorado and New Mexico. One of the first signs of divided allegiances was within the officer corps of the frontier U.S. Army posts. At Fort Union, New Mexico, Captain and Brevet Major Henry Hopkins Sibley was in the curious position of having assumed command of the fort while awaiting acceptance of his resignation. That came on June 13, 1861, and he departed for Texas.¹ At Fort Wise on the Arkansas River in Colorado Territory, the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel John Sedgwick, Second Cavalry, remained loyal to the Union; but several of his subordinate officers defected, notably First Lieutenant J. E. B. Stuart, First Cavalry.²

The question of allegiance also rent the civilian populations of New Mexico and Colorado. The territorial legislature in New Mexico had passed a slave code in 1859, which, with the pro-Southern attitude of the territory's delegate to Congress, Miguel A. Otero, seemed to tie New Mexico to the Confederacy; but Governor Abraham Rencher (1857-61), a native of North Carolina, supported the Union. The general populace seemed hesitant to make forthright declarations, in part because of New Mexico's contiguity with Texas, but mainly because their Southern orientation was not very deep-rooted.³

Although many Colorado residents leaned towards the South, most were of Northern background and persuasion; and the new territory, created in February 1861, had a staunchly pro-Union man in its first governor, William Gilpin.⁴ Gilpin, in a letter to Colonel Edward R. S. Canby, commandant of the military Department of New Mexico, said in October that the secessionist element in Colorado Territory numbered about 7,500. He also asserted that the Southern sympathizers had been secretly and ably organized since the previous November—apparently meaning from the time of Abraham Lincoln's election in 1860. According to Gilpin, rebel strength in the territory came mainly from Texas, Arkansas, and Utah, and from among the Confederated Cherokees, Creeks, and other Indians.⁵

Confederate flags appeared briefly in Denver City.⁶ Farther south on the upper Arkansas River, although only the Stars and Stripes fluttered over the tiny settlement of Canon City,⁷ there was some doubt about the Union loyalty of the Canon City *Times*.⁸ South of the Arkansas the ratio of pro-Confederate residents probably was somewhat higher than in the north, but there is no statistical evidence to prove it. This assessment is inferred from subsequent events and from informal appraisals. One such report claimed "that Trinidad is the principal rendezvous of all the horse thieves [*sic*] and secessionists of this section of the country, and that the inhabitants should be well watched."⁹ It is impossible to know whether the speaker was equating horse thieves with secessionists or was referring to them as distinct types in the little settlement on the Purgatoire River.

However, the purpose of this article is not to recount the several aspects of Confederate sentiment and activity in Colorado Territory but to consider those manifestations of pro-Southern operations that may be regarded as irregular warfare of a more or less predatory nature. For that reason no attention will be given to the recruitment of a Confederate regiment by a Colonel John Heffner at Mace's Hole (Beulah),¹⁰ nor will the

¹ Robert M. Utley, *Fort Union National Monument, New Mexico* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962), pp. 23, 64, 66n; Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), I, 886; Martin Hardwick Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960), p. 30. Sibley was the inventor of a portable stove and the Sibley tent, adopted by the U.S. Army.

² Morris F. Taylor, "Fort Wise," *The Colorado Magazine*, XLVI (Spring 1969), 109; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 71. In the lieutenant colonelcy of the Second Cavalry Sedgwick had succeeded Robert E. Lee.

³ Calvin Horn, *New Mexico's Troubled Years: The Story of the Early Territorial Governors* (Albuquerque: Horn & Wallace, Publishers, 1963), pp. 85-87; Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign*, p. 14.

⁴ LeRoy R. Hafen (ed.), *Colorado and Its People: A Narrative and Topical History of the Centennial State* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1948), I, 280.

⁵ Calvin Horn and William Wallace (eds.), *Confederate Victories in the Southwest: Prelude to Defeat* (Albuquerque: Horn & Wallace, Publishers, 1961), p. 88.

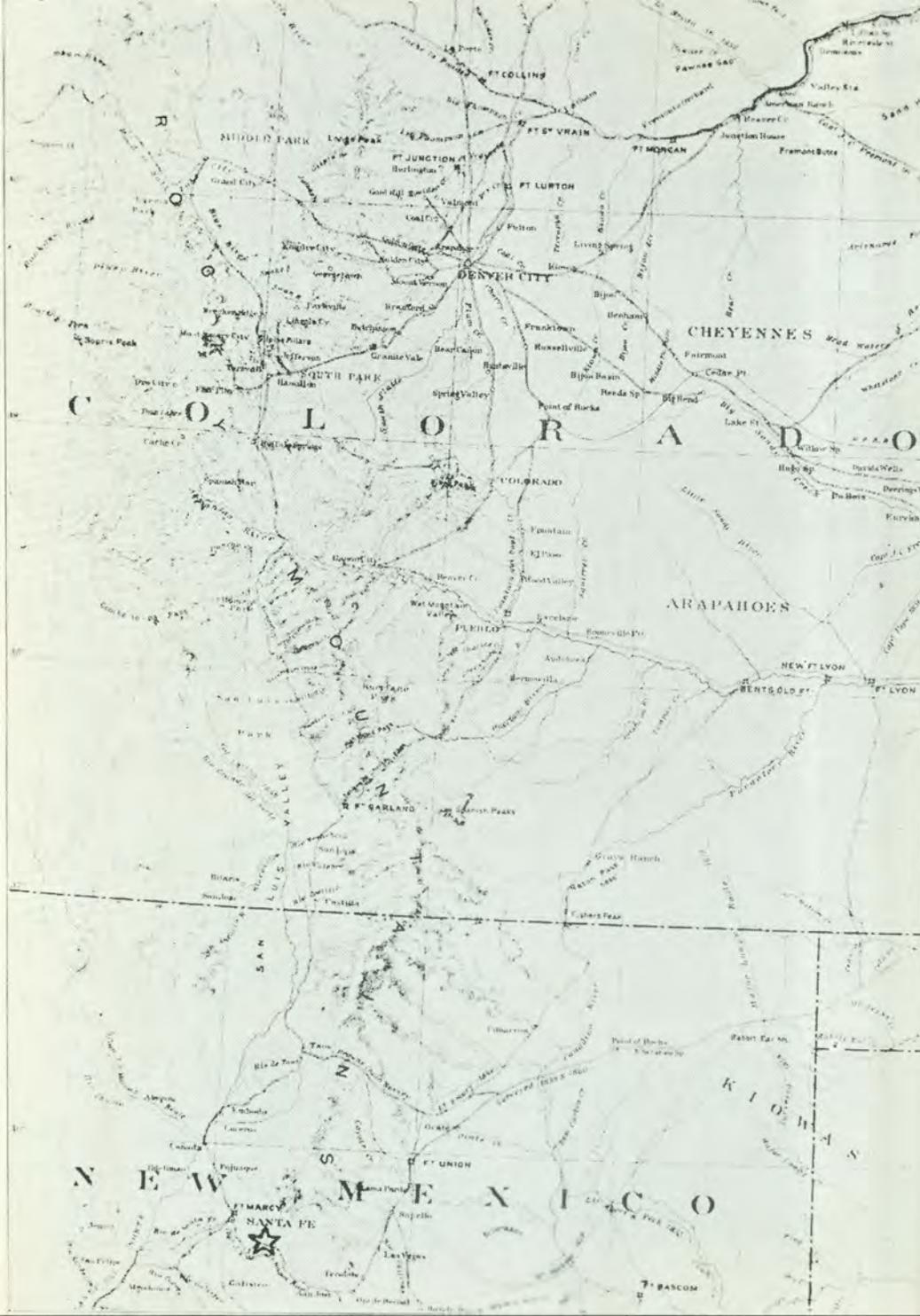
⁶ Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado* (Chicago: The Blakely Printing Company, 1889), I, 269-70.

⁷ *Ibid.*, III, 394.

⁸ Billie Barnes Jensen, "Confederate Sentiment in Colorado," *1957 Brand Book of the Denver Westerners*, ed. by Numa L. James (Boulder, Colo.: Johnson Publishing Company, 1958), pp. 99-100.

⁹ *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), February 26, 1863, p. 3.

¹⁰ Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, II, 257-67.



proclivity of the prominent figure "Uncle Dick" Wootton, a Virginian by birth, be discussed.¹¹

Following the outbreak of the Civil War, Fort Wise acquired fresh significance from its location on the Arkansas River in southeastern Colorado Territory. Essentially a cavalry post, it was vital to communications along the Santa Fe Trail, and it was the first major military installation on that route north of Fort Union, New Mexico.¹² Governor Gilpin believed that Confederate guerrillas planned to seize both Fort Wise and Fort Garland,¹³ the latter west of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the San Luis Valley. Close by Fort Wise at Bent's New Fort were the headquarters of the Upper Arkansas Indian Agency in charge of Colonel Albert Gallatin Boone, grandson of the famous Daniel. In the late summer and autumn of 1861 Colonel Boone became concerned about reports of the activities of Albert Pike, commissioner of the Confederate States to the Indian nations and tribes west of the Arkansas.¹⁴

The alert consequently maintained by Captain Elmer Otis at Fort Wise resulted in two October forays by regular cavalry units which captured forty alleged guerrillas, who evidently had been marauding along the Trail. These pro-Southerners had left Denver and gathered at the head of Cherry Creek, whence they again fled to escape a company of the First Regiment of Colorado Volunteer Infantry sent to seize them. They reassembled on the Arkansas River below Fort Wise and while there captured a small army wagon train.¹⁵ The captain of the band—a man named Joel McKee—had been languishing in a Denver jail for several weeks.¹⁶ Captain Samuel Cook's company of Colorado Volunteers went down from Denver to fetch the prisoners, including one under arrest at Colorado City, but the *Rocky Mountain News* was disappointed in its hope that the Volunteers would get a chance "to thrash some guerrilla band of Secessionists."¹⁷

¹¹ Jensen, "Confederate Sentiment in Colorado," pp. 114-15.

¹² Taylor, "Fort Wise," pp. 93-119.

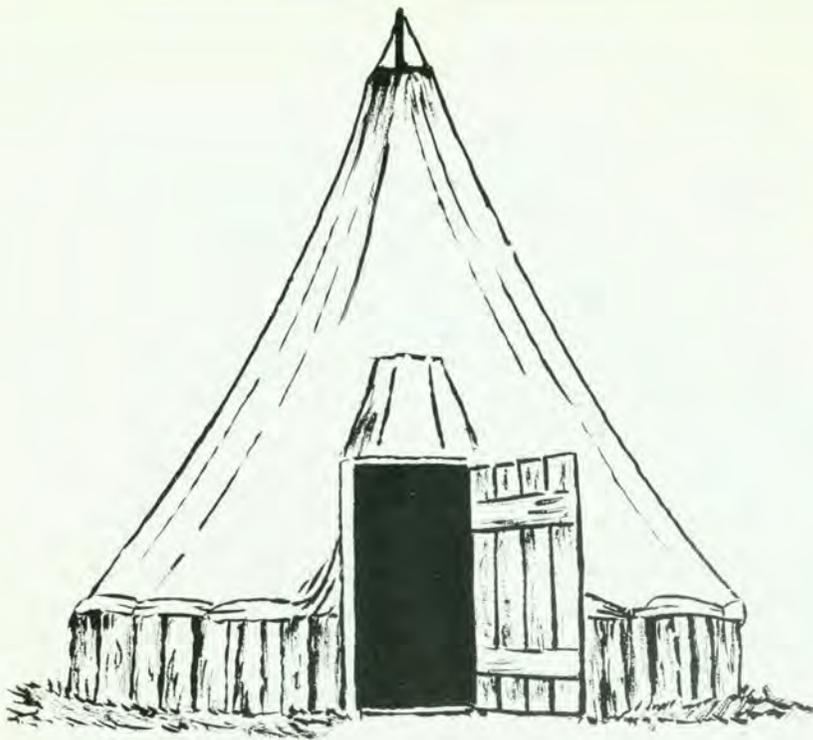
¹³ Horn and Wallace (eds.), *Confederate Victories in the Southwest*, p. 88.

¹⁴ *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Accompanying the Annual Report of the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1861* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1861), pp. 105-06; letter from A. G. Boone to William P. Dole, October 26, 1861, Letters Received by the Office of Indian Affairs, 1824-1891; Upper Arkansas Agency, 1855-64, Microcopy 234, Roll 878, National Archives Microfilm Publications, copy in the State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

¹⁵ Jerome C. Smiley, *Semi-Centennial History of the State of Colorado* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1913), I, 380. Thirty-seven prisoners were taken by the first cavalry detachment out from the fort, and three by the second detachment. Taylor, "Fort Wise," p. 115.

¹⁶ Horn and Wallace (eds.), *Confederate Victories in the Southwest*, p. 88. For McKee's career in Colorado see Jensen, "Confederate Sentiment in Colorado," pp. 104-07.

¹⁷ *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 30, 1861, p. 2; November 23, 1861, p. 2.



When it became known in Colorado that Sibley, now a brigadier general in the Confederate army, was about to leave Texas with a force to subject New Mexico, Colorado, and ultimately the entire Southwest, Fort Wise was strengthened by three companies of Colorado Volunteers in the late autumn. Those companies later joined the balance of the regiment coming down from Camp Weld, near Denver, to relieve federal troops in New Mexico, who were suffering reverses at the hands of Sibley and his northward-driving brigade.¹⁸ The Colorado

Above is a sketch of the Sibley tent, while to the right (not drawn to the same scale) is the Sibley stove. Both were invented by General Sibley.



Volunteers sharply checked the Confederate advance at La Glorieta Pass and Apache Canyon north of Santa Fe (March 26-28, 1862), and the grandiose plans of the Confederacy for the Southwest were severely damaged as a result.

The retreat of Brigadier General Sibley's troops reduced Colorado Territory's danger of invasion and relieved some of the pressure on New Mexico, at least for the immediate future,¹⁹ but there remained in the two territories many civilian Confederate sympathizers, whose numbers were augmented by nearly five hundred Texan prisoners taken by the Union forces. Some of these prisoners were captured stragglers, and others were the sick or wounded and hospital attendants left behind in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Socorro.

Colonel Canby reported about the middle of May 1862 that 240 Confederate prisoners had been paroled and allowed to leave New Mexico.²⁰ Violations of parole probably were not uncommon, and it may have been from this situation that the first guerrilla activity emerged in southern Colorado following Sibley's reverses at La Glorieta and Apache Canyon in New Mexico. The earliest indication of that kind of operation is found in a report of August 4, 1862, from Major A. H. Mayer, First New Mexico Volunteers, who had recently succeeded Lieutenant Colonel Daniel P. Whiting, Tenth Infantry, in command of Fort Garland in the San Luis Valley. In addition to repairs of the rather dilapidated and undermanned post, Major Mayer was almost at once concerned with accounts of a guerrilla band not far from Fort Garland and east of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, on the headwaters of the Huerfano and San Carlos rivers. Intelligences brought into the fort put the number of the band at fifty to seventy-five men, whereas an item published in Denver's *Rocky Mountain News* said thirty-five, and a later version estimated about forty.²¹

Positive identification of the guerrilla leader seems to be impossible, but the evidence allows some reasonable speculation.

¹⁸ Arthur A. Wright, "Colonel John P. Slough and the New Mexico Campaign," *The Colorado Magazine*, XXXIX (April 1962), 89-90.

¹⁹ In June a scare brought a hasty concentration of troops at Fort Lyon. Reports had come through that Sibley's Texans had made an unexpected detour through Indian country and by forced marches were headed northward to intercept government wagon trains on their way to New Mexico. *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), June 21, 1862, p. 1.

²⁰ Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign*, pp. 192-93, 202-03.

²¹ Letters from Major Mayer to the Acting Assistant Adjutant General (hereafter referred to as AAAG), July 27, 1862, and August 4, 1862, Fort Garland, Letters Sent (July 1860-August 1863), Records of the United States Army Commands, Record Group No. 98, microcopy in the State Historical Society of Colorado Library, hereafter referred to as Fort Garland, Letters Sent. See also *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 11, 1862, p. 2; clipping from *Denver Field and Farm* (n.d.), T. F. Dawson Scrapbooks, IX, 341, State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

The first appearance of a surname—Mathison—is found in Major Mayer's August 4 report, mentioned above. The *Rocky Mountain News* on August 11 referred to him as Captain Matheson,²² and on August 18 Major Mayer gave the name as Mattison.²³ Also, the Denver paper on the latter date used the name Madison²⁴ and on August 22, quoting from a letter from Fort Lyon dated August 12, published the name as George T. Madison.²⁵ A much later source said that Captain George Madison had a "roving commission" (whatever that may have been) from Brigadier General Sibley.²⁶

Although the rank of captain implies a military connection and reasonably suggests that the man was in some way associated with Sibley's brigade or the Army of New Mexico, no one with the surname of Mathison, Matheson, Mattison, or Madison was listed as a commissioned officer on the muster rolls of the units making up Sibley's force.²⁷ There is, however, a George Mattison listed as a private in Captain Bethel Coopwood's San Elizario Spy Company, an independent company enrolled in the summer of 1861. Coopwood's company apparently was part of the force left to protect the Mesilla Valley and did not move northward in March with Sibley to Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and defeat at La Glorieta.²⁸ But Captain Coopwood and part of his company came up to Albuquerque on April 1 to help Captain William P. Hardeman hold that town for the main Army of New Mexico, which was falling back from Santa Fe. They held Albuquerque against Colonel Edward R. S. Canby and a Union contingent from Fort Craig.²⁹ Perhaps it was shortly thereafter that George Mattison and others were detached and ordered to remain behind to harass Union supply trains and communications in New Mexico and Colorado. Or maybe Mattison and others were wounded and left behind, recovering and then embarking on guerrilla activity of their own. The tone of the evidence, however, indicates that Mattison and his men operated under some sort of official authorization.³⁰

²² *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 11, 1862, p. 2.

²³ Letter from Major Mayer to the AAAG, August 18, 1862, Fort Garland, Letters Sent, pp. 179-80.

²⁴ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 18, 1862, p. 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, August 22, 1862, p. 2.

²⁶ Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, II, 259. This source erroneously gives the year of Madison's activities as 1861.

²⁷ Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign*, pp. 235-329.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 76, 172.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 172; Theo. Noel, *A Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi, Being a History of the Old Sibley Brigade from Its First Organization to the Present Time; Its Campaigns in New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas in the Years 1861-2-3-4*, ed. by Martin Hardwick Hall and Edwin Adams Davis (Houston: Stagecoach Press, 1961), pp. 37-38.

³⁰ Another remotely possible identification may be made with a George T. Madison, who perhaps held the rank of captain at the time and later was

Whatever the obscurity of the guerrilla captain's background, his goals seem clear enough. The evidence shows that indiscriminate strikes against the government or private citizens were not a part of Mattison's methods. Mattison apparently made every effort to convince local farmers and ranchers that he and his men were in Colorado only to destroy government wagon trains and other public property, not to molest private property or persons. Proof of the pudding seemed to be that Mattison's raiders refrained from attacking a wagon train belonging to Frederick W. Posthoff,³¹ who, although he was sutler at Fort Garland, was a general merchant at other points in the region.³²

Major Mayer sent out single scouts daily from Fort Garland to serve as a precaution and to keep himself apprised of the whereabouts of a cavalry detachment of fifteen men under a Lieutenant Durwin. Mayer had ordered Durwin to keep the guerrilla force under observation and, if feasible, to engage them in combat. One of the scouts came into the fort on the evening of August 3 with the information that Durwin's troopers had gone to John M. Francisco's camp at the foot of Spanish Peaks and from there had headed through the mountains for the Greenhorn Ranch, an area where Mattison was active. For a while Major Mayer feared that Lieutenant Durwin's party had been destroyed by the guerrillas, but the troopers eventually returned to their base.³³

The Greenhorn Ranch on Lieutenant Durwin's itinerary was the home of the well-known Alexander (Zan) Hicklin, who had settled on the Greenhorn, a tributary of the San Carlos, in 1859. Hicklin was a Missourian married to a daughter of the ill-fated Charles Bent, first American governor of New Mexico who was assassinated in the Taos uprising of January 1847.³⁴

Lieutenant colonel of the Third Texas Cavalry (Arizona Brigade) commanded by Colonel Joseph Phillips. Madison succeeded to command of the regiment when Colonel Phillips was killed on June 28, 1863, during the unsuccessful Confederate assault on Fort Butler at Donaldsonville, Louisiana. The strongest point against the possibility is the fact that the Arizona Brigade did not serve under Sibley. Stephen B. Oates, *Confederate Cavalry West of the River* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), p. 173; Harry McCorry Henderson, *Texas in the Confederacy* (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1955), pp. 125-26, 135; Cooper K. Ragan (ed.), "The Diary of Captain George W. O'Brien, 1863," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, LXVII (October 1963), 235n. Allowance must be made also for the chance that an otherwise unknown man flitted in and out of the historical records as a practitioner of guerrilla tactics in southern Colorado.

³¹ Letter from Major Mayer to the AAAG, August 4, 1862, Fort Garland, Letters Sent, p. 174.

³² Duane Vandenburg, "Life at a Frontier Post: Fort Garland," *The Colorado Magazine*, XLIII (Spring 1966), 145; letter from Major Mayer to the AAAG, August 18, 1862, Fort Garland, Letters Sent, pp. 179-80.

³³ Letter from Major Mayer to the AAAG, August 11, 1862, Fort Garland, Letters Sent, pp. 176-77.

³⁴ David Lavender, *Bent's Fort* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, 1954), pp. 333, 416n; D. W. Working, "The Hicklins on the Greenhorn," *The Colorado Magazine*, IV (December 1927), 183.



Sometime before 1855
Alexander Hicklin
sat for this portrait,
now faded and
scratched almost
beyond recognition.

Pro-Southern associations made Hicklin a prominent figure in an unsuccessful attempt to pull together an effective Confederate force made up of miners from California Gulch, Georgia Gulch, and other mining camps, with Mace's Hole as their rendezvous.³⁵ Occasionally, it was said, Hicklin referred to himself jokingly in the presence of federal men as "Old Secesh" to divert suspicion.³⁶ South of the Greenhorn the Butte Valley of the Huerfano River was reputed to be a strong "secesh" spot.³⁷ Boanerges (Bo) Boyce, an early settler near the Huerfano (Orphan) Butte—also called in those days the Iron Butte—was known to be a friend of the Southern cause,³⁸ along with Kentuckian James S. Gray, down on the Purgatoire at its con-

fluence with the Rito San Lorenzo, or Gray Creek.³⁹ That Trinidad, four miles up the Purgatoire from Gray's place, was a secessionist center has been noted.

The presence of men like Hicklin, Boyce, and Gray doubtless was helpful to Captain George Mattison and his men as they searched mountain and plain for their Union government victims. One of their notable achievements was seizure of the Fort Garland mail near Francisco's ranch on the Cucharas just east of the mountains. The incident took place in early August 1862,⁴⁰ and the mail probably was that carried by a military express from Fort Garland to Fort Wise.⁴¹ In one of the accounts of that raid, the leader was identified as "Captain Matteson," who claimed to belong to the rebel army of Texas;⁴² two other participants were named—a gambler apparently known as Snaggletooth Jones and a Captain William M. Pierson.⁴³ Several other Denverites were said to belong to the group,⁴⁴ an assertion which suggests that Mattison's activities attracted Confederate sympathizers from parts of the territory other than the areas in which he operated. After destroying the mail, the guerrillas took the courier and a ranch herder (a witness?) as prisoners; they were released four days later on parole. An unidentified writer of a letter from Fort Garland commented that the band supposedly was a detachment sent out to capture government trains, and he expressed the fear that they already had destroyed two wagon trains en route to Fort Union in New Mexico.⁴⁵

Probably it was about the same time that an alleged act of premeditated violence was attempted by Mattison and frus-

³⁵ Obituary of James S. Gray, December 1884, clipping, State Historical Society of Colorado Library.

³⁶ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 11, 1862, p. 2; August 22, 1862, p. 2; *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 21, 1862, p. 1.

³⁷ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), November 18, 1861, p. 3; March 6, 1862, p. 3.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, August 11, 1862, p. 2.

³⁹ According to Ralph C. Taylor, *Colorado South of the Border* (Denver: Sage Books, 1963), p. 126, a W. M. Pierson had a dairy farm on the Huerfano River, from which place he reached the wholesale markets of Denver and mining camps; he also had a dairy in the mining camp of California Gulch, where there was strong Confederate support. In the *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), February 25, 1861, p. 3, there is an item about H. S. Latourette, of the firm of Latourette and Pierson (dairy farmers on the Huerfano), who was in Denver with samples of butter and who delivered to the Denver market every few days.

⁴⁰ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 11, 1862, p. 2.

⁴¹ *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 21, 1862, p. 1. In Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, II, 259, 264-65, it is related that Buckmaster, "Sibley's chief of artillery at the Battle of Valverde," later was captured by Union men and charged with robbing the mail carrier on the Cucharas, then tried and sentenced to be shot. He escaped from prison in Santa Fe by bribing a guard and fled to Colorado, where he raised a band of sixteen men to go to Texas in the fall of 1862. Frank Hall's story about Buckmaster is curious. A careful check in Martin Hardwick Hall's *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign* and Noel's *Campaign from Santa Fe to the Mississippi* (particularly the appended muster rolls of Sibley's Army of New Mexico) revealed no officer by the name of Buckmaster, let alone a "chief of artillery" by that name.

³⁵ Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, II, 258-59.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 260.

³⁷ Early Far West Notebook VI, p. 3, F. W. Cragin Papers, Pioneers' Museum, Colorado Springs.

³⁸ From material on Boyce in unpublished "Biographical Sketches," Part III, p. 27, comp. by the late Louis B. Sporleder, Sr., and used here by the kind permission of Mr. C. Otto Unfug, Sterling; Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, II, 258-59; letter from Mrs. Katharine McIntyre to the author, September 22, 1963. Mrs. McIntyre's grandmother was Boyce's stepdaughter and Gray's niece.

trated. Colonel John M. Chivington, who had destroyed Sibley's supply wagons at Apache Canyon and later served as commander of the Southern Military District at Fort Craig, New Mexico, was relieved of the latter command on July 4. He went to Santa Fe, where he obtained a leave of absence to go to Washington in the hope of getting the First Regiment of Colorado Volunteers transferred to the Army of the Potomac.⁴⁶ He then proceeded northward, evidently on his way to Denver. Word reached George Mattison and his men, from what source is not known, that Colonel Chivington was on the old Denver-Fort Union road, traveling in an ambulance and presumably with a small escort. Accompanying the Union officer was O. D. Cass, a Denver banker.⁴⁷

An account set down some years later alleged that Mattison's intention was to seize and kill Chivington to avenge the loss of Sibley's supply wagons and the bounties which Chivington had placed on guerrilla heads. The plan was to intercept Chivington's ambulance somewhere between the Spanish Peaks and Trinidad. The guerrillas, who had camped in a ravine not far south of the twin mountains, were enjoying a substantial breakfast of chickens and coffee one morning when a man named Cutter unexpectedly came upon them. He was quickly questioned as to whether he had seen Chivington's conveyance along the road. Apparently Cutter sensed that he was in the presence of men who were a grave danger to the colonel, so he lied to them, convincingly it seems, saying that Chivington had spent the previous night many miles to the north at Pueblo. Cutter was allowed to go on his way, and Mattison did not realize that Chivington was only three miles away.⁴⁸ However, Cutter's story of his encounter with the guerrillas does not ring quite true. Credence is strained by Cutter's incorporation of information obtained from a member of the "Madison Band," a man named John Gantz, who said that one of the guerrilla schemes was to kidnap the mayor of Denver, judges of the United States court, and the governor of the territory.⁴⁹ In view of the lack of supporting evidence, these claims sound like barroom or bivouac talk.

⁴⁶ Hall, *Sibley's New Mexico Campaign*, p. 194; William Clarke Whitford, *Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War: The New Mexico Campaign in 1862* (Denver: The State Historical and Natural History Society, 1906), p. 153.

⁴⁷ Hafen (ed.), *Colorado and Its People*, II, 561.

⁴⁸ Clipping from *Denver Field and Farm* (n.d.), T. F. Dawson Scrapbooks, IX, 341.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Charles A. Cook was the mayor of Denver at the time. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Colorado Territory was Benjamin F. Hall, who was strongly pro-Union, writing a well-known decision justifying denial of a writ of habeas corpus in the case of the Confederate recruiter, Captain Joel



This photograph of Fort Garland was probably taken in the 1870s.

In the meantime, rewards were advertised for the capture of the guerrillas, payable at Forts Lyon, Garland, and Union or at Santa Fe.⁵⁰ From Fort Garland Major Mayer sent an express to warn Lieutenant Colonel Charles S. Clark,⁵¹ commandant at Fort Lyon. (Fort Wise recently had been renamed "Fort Lyon" to be rid of the association with Henry Wise, former governor of Virginia and now a Confederate army officer.)⁵² Major Mayer's warning to Colonel Clark was substantiated before long by reports at Fort Lyon that horsemen, probably Mattison's "gang of jayhawkers," were in the vicinity.⁵³ Two men out from the fort in search of lost government mules were accosted by about twenty-five well-armed, well-mounted men, who questioned the pair rather thoroughly.⁵⁴ Upon learning of the incident, Colonel Clark sent out a detachment of sixty-five troopers with double rations on August 11. That same

McKee. A desire to kidnap Justice Hall is understandable, but Associate Justice E. Newton Pettis was absent in the East, never having presided over his court, and the third justice was Charles Lee Armour, a Marylander, strongly suspected of pro-Confederate sympathies. Governor of Colorado Territory was John Evans. The judges and governor were all Lincoln appointees. See Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, II, 523, 533, 535; John D. W. Guice, "Colorado's Territorial Courts," *The Colorado Magazine*, XLV (Summer 1968), 205-20; Jensen, "Confederate Sentiment in Colorado," pp. 90, 98.

⁵⁰ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 19, 1862, p. 3.

⁵¹ Letter from Major Mayer to the AAAG, August 4, 1862. Fort Garland, Letters Sent, p. 174. Lieutenant Colonel Clark, Ninth Kansas Volunteers, was in command of Fort Lyon briefly during the summer of 1862. Post Return of Fort Lyon, August 1862, Microcopy 617, Roll 659, National Archives Microfilm Publications.

⁵² Taylor, "Fort Wise," pp. 118-19.

⁵³ Probably the term "jayhawker" was used in this instance to mean a lawless raider. During the Civil War it was used generally to describe guerrillas in Kansas and, of course, originally had referred to free-staters in "bleeding Kansas" prior to the Civil War. See Mitford M. Mathews (ed.), *A Dictionary of Americanisms on Historical Principles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 900.

⁵⁴ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 22, 1862, p. 3, quoting a letter from Fort Lyon dated August 12, 1862.

evening a man named Jenks, who was camped beside the Arkansas about ten miles above Bent's Old Fort, saw twenty to twenty-five men dismount and turn their horses out on the opposite bank. He thought they might be of the "Madison" band, but he made no direct inquiry.⁵⁵

The troopers sent from Fort Lyon were commanded by Captain Scott J. Anthony, Company E, First Colorado Volunteers. On September 1 he reported from Pleasant Valley Camp on the Purgatoire River that he had heard of about thirty-five guerrillas in the Spanish Peaks area; he sent part of his force to investigate. He said flatly that Mattison was not of the group, the guerrilla leader apparently having gone to Texas. At the time Colorado abounded with rumors of a new invasion from Texas. Captain Anthony was told that a force of 8,000 Texans with fifty pieces of artillery was on the way, but the young officer refused to believe it.⁵⁶ If nothing else, the rumor was indicative of the state of settlers' nerves along the Purgatoire.

The belief that Mattison had returned to Texas probably was not very well founded. In mid-August he and his men were reported to be back in the hills around the upper Purgatoire, whence word filtered out that they had released several prisoners after making them take an oath of allegiance to the Confederacy.⁵⁷ Major Mayer believed that the guerrillas had split into small squads in order to better search through the Raton Mountains (Raton Pass), watching for government wagon trains on their way to Fort Union.⁵⁸ In the San Luis Valley the major's spies were trying to keep under surveillance one Phillips, who was believed to be a Mattison man. A reward of \$100 was offered for delivery of Phillips to Fort Garland.⁵⁹ Efforts to apprehend Mattison failed, although it was known that thirty to forty guerrillas, perhaps including Mattison, were in the mountains with stolen livestock, and three of them were captured at Phillips' house in mid-September.⁶⁰

Then the focus shifted again to the vicinity of Fort Lyon on the plains. The *Rocky Mountain News* reported that a party

of ten to twenty "rebel scouts" had been seen frequently near the fort and up-river from it. They had disturbed no one, and it was supposed that they were under the command of the "notorious Madison."⁶¹ That was the last direct mention of the guerrilla leader. Presumably he returned to Texas. In late October a vague report circulated that a band of men who had recruited for the Confederate army in the mines of southern Colorado "last season" probably had been overtaken by citizens and military below Bent's Old Fort.⁶² It may be inferred that the men were the remnants of forces raised by A. B. Miller, Captain Joel McKee, or Colonel John Heffner, all of whom had actively recruited in Colorado for the Confederacy in 1861.⁶³ There is nothing in the item to warrant making association with George Mattison and his guerrillas, however.

The winter of 1862-63 in southern Colorado was without free-lance activity; and, when in the spring there were events recorded as guerrilla operations, they were of a different character. About April 1, 1863, one man was killed near the Arkansas River and two beside its tributary *Fontaine qui Bouille* (Fountain Creek). A detachment of the First Colorado Cavalry was sent to investigate; and a few days later the troopers, commanded by Lieutenant George L. Shoup, with a stroke of good luck, succeeded in capturing two men unhurt, wounding two others and killing a fifth. The so-called guerrillas were surprised at night in the ravine of Black Squirrel Creek about ten miles off the Arkansas River wagon and stage road, the creek being a northern tributary of the Arkansas about ten miles below the Rio San Carlos.⁶⁴ They had a campfire enclosed in a stone chimney, and the fire could be seen only from one point, that viewpoint being discovered accidentally by Lieutenant Shoup and his men. Shoup divided his force and approached the unsuspecting campers from two sides. One of the captured men was Hank Way, known in Denver; and the severely wounded one was named Riley, an employee of a widely known Huerfano River rancher, J. B. Doyle.⁶⁵ No identification was made of those men with any particular band or gang, but it was generally accepted that they were guerrillas.

The wounded man, Riley, probably was John Reilly, a

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Weekly Commonwealth and Republican* (Denver), September 18, 1862, p. 1. The *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver) as early as August 23, 1862, p. 2, quoting a letter from Fort Garland dated August 13, 1862, said that Mattison had returned to Texas because of spirited pursuit by mounted infantry from that post. Captain Anthony was based at Fort Lyon for just a short time in the summer of 1862 and apparently spent most of it on detached service looking for guerrillas. Post Return of Fort Lyon, August 1862.

⁵⁷ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 18, 1862, p. 2; *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 21, 1862, p. 2.

⁵⁸ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 19, 1862, p. 3.

⁵⁹ Letter from Major Mayer to the AAAG, August 18, 1862, Fort Garland, Letters Sent, pp. 179-80.

⁶⁰ Letters from Major Mayer to the AAAG, September 16, 1862, *ibid.*, 186.

⁶¹ *Weekly Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 18, 1862, p. 1.

⁶² *Ibid.*, October 30, 1862, p. 2.

⁶³ Jensen, "Confederate Sentiment in Colorado," pp. 102-07; Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, II, 257.

⁶⁴ Kenyon Riddle, *Records and Maps of the Old Santa Fe Trail* (Raton, N.M.: The Raton Daily Range, 1949), p. 38.

⁶⁵ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), April 6, 1863, p. 2; April 16, 1863, p. 2.

Southern sympathizer who was said to be the leader of a band of desperadoes operating from a hideout in the canyon of Apache Creek, northeast of the later town of Walsenburg. Sometime in 1863, whether before or after the incident on Black Squirrel Creek is not known, Reilly and his men allegedly conspired to rob an army paymaster on his way south to Fort Union, New Mexico, but were deterred from trying to carry out their plan because of the military escort that accompanied the officer. Apparently, someone told the authorities of the plan; arrests were made but all were freed because of insufficient evidence.⁶⁶ Not only was the evidence against them scant, but also their reasons were obscure. Were they simply outlaws, or were they genuine Confederate guerrillas? Perhaps neither, and it is impossible to assign relative weights to the motivations. In some cases the line between legitimate, semi-military action and plain robbery was very indistinct.⁶⁷

About a year elapsed before signs of a guerrilla-type operation again came to public attention. In the spring of 1864 (May 26), a government wagon train was captured and looted near the Dry Cimarron Crossing on the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail. Its attackers were twenty-two Confederate supporters under the leadership of James Reynolds, a former Park County placer miner who had spent some time in a Denver jail.⁶⁸

Why James Reynolds was in jail is a pertinent question; an important clue to the answer has been overlooked heretofore. He was imprisoned at Camp Weld because he was one of the forty alleged rebels captured near Fort Wise on the Arkansas in October 1861 and brought to Denver. The *Rocky Mountain News* published their names; among those listed were James Reynolds, John Reynolds (undoubtedly his brother, who returned to Colorado with him in 1864), and Addison F. Stowe,⁶⁹ who may have been the Jake Stowe with James Reynolds in 1864.⁷⁰ The prisoners were released from Camp Weld in early

⁶⁶ From material on John Berrard in unpublished Sporleder (comp.), "Biographical Sketches," Part II, p. 150.

⁶⁷ Jensen, "Confederate Sentiment in Colorado," p. 102, is of this opinion and quotes a similar position found in S. S. Zweig, "William Gilpin: First Territorial Governor of Colorado" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Colorado, 1953), p. 94.

⁶⁸ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 29, 1864, p. 2; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Ser. I, Vol. XLI, Part II, pp. 753-54; Stan Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 64-65. Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, I, 313, says that Reynolds captured two trains, neither of which is referred to as a government train.

⁶⁹ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), November 21, 1861, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Kenneth E. Englert, "Raids by Reynolds," 1956 *Brand Book of the Denver Westerners*, ed. by Charles S. Ryland (Boulder, Colo.: Johnson Publishing Company, 1957), p. 151.

1862 because their incarceration was too great a burden on the financially shaky territorial government, according to one account,⁷¹ while another says they escaped.⁷²

Reynolds and his group reputedly had permission from Confederate General Cooper—probably Samuel Cooper, adjutant general and inspector general of the Confederate army—to recruit men in Colorado,⁷³ and later Reynolds' men were quoted as saying that they belonged to Collins' Texas Brigade.⁷⁴ Striking a government train was in keeping with the Mattison tradition. It netted about \$1,800 in specie and a like amount in greenbacks for Jim Reynolds and his men, who divided the money and sent it to their respective homes upon their return to Fort Belknap, Texas.⁷⁵

Soon after this incident occurred, Captain Samuel H. Cook, First Colorado Cavalry, then commanding the post of Fort Lyon,



was alerted, and he sent two men from Company F to trail the "guerrillas," who had headed back toward Texas.⁷⁶ The scouts followed them at least as far as Red River, and beyond if the account is correct in saying that Reynolds and his men returned to Confederate-held Fort Belknap (on the Salt, or Red, Fork of the Brazos River).⁷⁷ On June 12 the Reynolds party again rode north, but it numbered only nine instead of twenty-two men, the other thirteen apparently going westward into New Mexico. The nine followed a fresh military trail much of the way, and the two scouts kept them under observation until it seemed certain that the guerrillas were headed for the road along the Arkansas, the Santa Fe Trail. Thereupon the scouts dashed directly to Fort Lyon to give warning.⁷⁸

The reappearance of Jim Reynolds and nine of his followers in the summer of 1864 coincided with a rapidly developing state of large-scale hostilities with the Plains Indians. It was natural for the military and civilians alike to speak apprehensively of the Plains tribes and Confederate guerrillas in the same breath, almost as a common enemy, but be it remembered also that the Indian wars of 1864 were not fomented by Confederate Indian policy. Nevertheless, the Indians were referred to as "Red Rebels."⁷⁹ Another example of the double-edged problem was in an item in the *Rocky Mountain News* which observed that Colonel John M. Chivington, then commanding the military district of Colorado, had returned from Fort Lyon without having been molested by Indians or "Tejanic [Texan] guerrillas."⁸⁰ The comment probably reflected Chivington's belief that a Confederate invasion might be mounted in south-eastern Colorado, to thwart which he was moving troops into the area.⁸¹

The reduction of Reynolds' band from twenty-two men to nine implies a division of opinion within the group resulting in the smaller, hard-core number going their own way for purposes less and less distinguishable as guerrilla activity. This

assumption accords pretty well with their subsequent achievements in Colorado. They kept under cover, not coming into public view until late July, when they burst forth in the mountainous mining country around the headwaters of the Arkansas River. It is not necessary to relate here the details of the exploits of the Reynolds gang, such as the robbery of Major DeMary and the destruction of McLaughlin's stagecoach,⁸² which bestirred the fears of the citizenry even in Denver. The editor of the *Rocky Mountain News* warned that Denver was vulnerable, that fifty armed and desperate men could take the town;⁸³ if nothing else, the item shows something of the lack of reliable information and the uneasiness in the place.

When Jim Reynolds and his men began their variegated robberies, some people thought that George Mattison had returned to direct a new series of attacks,⁸⁴ until the indiscriminate pattern of Reynolds' raids indicated that they were "solely for the purpose of plundering those who were gathering large quantities of gold from the mines."⁸⁵ Although that opinion may have been an oversimplification, Reynolds' operations in Colorado in the summer of 1864 clearly were geared more to plunder than to a cause. Superficial and misleading were his assertions that they were Confederate soldiers with an "open and perfect line of communication with Texas"⁸⁶ and his claim to belong to Collins' Texas Brigade; the gang's vow of vengeance upon all Union soldiers and certain Denver citizens (unidentified); the insidious threat that they knew where the bones of thirty-two men of the Colorado Second Volunteer Infantry Regiment were bleaching in the sun and that they intended the same for sixty-four members of the Colorado First Infantry.⁸⁷

Trying to square words with deeds leads to another conclusion. The Reynolds gang may have been bona fide Confederate guerrillas when they raided in New Mexico in the spring, but when they struck in Colorado in the summer the character of their actions gave support to historian Frank Hall's statement that they operated "without authority of either the civil or military branch of the Confederate government."⁸⁸

⁷¹ Smiley, *Semi-Centennial History of Colorado*, I, 380.

⁷² Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, p. 64.

⁷³ *Ibid.*; Heitman, *Historical Register*, I, 326.

⁷⁴ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 1, 1864, p. 2.

⁷⁵ *The War of the Rebellion*, Ser. I, Vol. XLI, Part II, pp. 753-54; Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, p. 65.

⁷⁶ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 29, 1864, p. 2.

⁷⁷ Robert W. Frazer, *Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios and Posts Commonly Called Forts West of the Mississippi River to 1898* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 142.

⁷⁸ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 29, 1864, p. 2.

⁷⁹ George E. Hyde, *Life of George Bent*, Written from his Letters, ed. by Savoie Lottinville (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 129.

⁸⁰ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 5, 1864, p. 2.

⁸¹ *The War of the Rebellion*, Ser. I, Vol. XXXIV, Part III, p. 335; Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, p. 55.

⁸² *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 28, 1864, p. 2; Englert, "Raids by Reynolds," pp. 148-73; Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, pp. 64-67.

⁸³ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 30, 1864, p. 2; August 1, 1864, p. 2.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, July 28, 1864, p. 2.

⁸⁵ Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, I, 313.

⁸⁶ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), July 28, 1864, p. 2.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, August 1, 1864, p. 2. An oath of allegiance to the Confederacy, later found in the flyleaf of Reynolds' diary (*ibid.*, August 13, 1864, p. 2), does not necessarily alter the appraisal.

⁸⁸ Hall, *History of the State of Colorado*, I, 313.

Reaction to the Reynolds raids in the mountains was mainly in the form of civilian posses—vigilantes—in Lake, Park, and Summit counties. In a night contact with the gang, a posse attacked and killed one of the outlaws gathered around a campfire. The next morning a vigilante severed the dead man's head and took it into the town of Fairplay,⁸⁹ an act of savagery in keeping with the extremism frequently characteristic of self-appointed enforcers of the law. Certainly the deed was far in excess of what the gang merited; Reynolds and his men apparently had killed no one in their raids. However, some sort of civilian response perhaps was justifiable in view of the slight and ineffective action by the military while the outlaws were harassing the area of the mining camps.⁹⁰

After Reynolds, with only seven men, was dislodged from the mountains and tracked to the vicinity of Canon City, military pursuit took over from civilian posses.⁹¹ First Lieutenant George L. Shoup, with a company of the First Colorado Cavalry from Camp Fillmore on the Arkansas below Pueblo, headed the search. On August 9 from the Jerome Ranch on the Arkansas twenty-five miles below Canon City, Lieutenant Shoup asked for fifteen days' rations because "it may take some time to bag all the rebels."⁹² The military, then, persisted in regarding the outlaws as motivated by Confederate sympathies, which may have been an official stance necessary for employing troops against them. Within five days Shoup had captured five of the band, including Jim Reynolds, while John Reynolds and two others were chased as far as Two Buttes, "beyond the pale of settlements,"⁹³ evidently a reference to the formation of that name in the extreme southeastern part of the territory.

Just about the time that Jim Reynolds was captured, active recruitment of hundred-day volunteers for the Third Regiment of Colorado Volunteer Cavalry was being pushed successfully in response to Governor Evans' almost frantic (and probably exaggerated) call for fresh troops. Although this measure was intended to meet the growing Indian menace on the plains,⁹⁴ some looked upon recruitment of the hundred-days men as being aimed at "guerrillas of whatsoever class or color"—another lumping together of Indians and Confederates.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Englert, "Raids by Reynolds," pp. 164-66.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 163.

⁹¹ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 8, 1864, p. 2.

⁹² *Daily Rocky Mountain News Extra* (Denver), August 23, 1864, p. 3.

⁹³ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 26, 1864, p. 3.

⁹⁴ Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, pp. 67-70, 129-30; Hafen (ed.), *Colorado and Its People*, I, 312.

⁹⁵ *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), August 13, 1864, p. 2.

Consequently, when Jim Reynolds found himself in prison in Colorado for a second time, his well-being was given into the hands of the formidable Colonel Chivington, who had convinced the federal marshal that Reynolds and his men should be tried by a military commission.⁹⁶ Chivington sought permission from Major General Samuel R. Curtis at Fort Leavenworth to shoot the "five notorious guerrillas" if convicted. General Curtis was on campaign in western Kansas, and his adjutant said such authorization could not be delegated.⁹⁷ About September 1 Reynolds and his four companions were placed in the charge of a military escort commanded by Captain T. G. Cree, Third Regiment of Colorado Volunteer Cavalry, to be transferred from Denver to Fort Lyon on the Arkansas River. A few miles south of Denver, at Russellville on Cherry Creek, the five prisoners were shot while attempting to escape.⁹⁸

United States District Attorney S. E. Browne, who was absent when Chivington prevailed on the U.S. Marshal to release the five prisoners to him, was shocked and incensed at what he believed was employment of an old ruse under orders from Colonel Chivington. Browne quoted the colonel as having sneeringly said, when informed of the killings, "I told the guard when they left that if they did not kill those fellows, I would play thunder with them." It was the attorney's opinion that the deed was "a most foul murder" committed "by the express order of old Chivington." The people, Browne asserted, had no sympathy with the "thieves,"⁹⁹ an unadorned term that indicates a general view of the Reynolds gang as plain outlaws with no significant guerrilla association or motivation.

After the incident at Russellville, the course of events was dominated by the build-up to the Sand Creek Massacre of Cheyennes and Arapahos in November. The Civil War ended the next year with no further evidence of Confederate guerrillas in southern Colorado.

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⁹⁶ *The War of the Rebellion*, Ser. I, Vol. XLI, Part II, p. 828; Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, pp. 70-71.

⁹⁷ *The War of the Rebellion*, Ser. I, Vol. XLI, Part II, p. 843; Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, p. 71.

⁹⁸ Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, p. 72. The scene was the site of the 1858 gold discovery by Southerner William Green Russell, who, with his brother Oliver, left for their Georgia home in 1862 because of harassments for their alleged pro-Southern preferences and experienced arrest and release on their way (Jensen, "Confederate Sentiment in Colorado," pp. 109-10).

⁹⁹ *The War of the Rebellion*, Ser. I, Vol. XLI, Part III, pp. 596-97; Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre*, pp. 72-73.

Jack Langrishe and the Theater of the Mining Frontier

BY ALICE COCHRAN

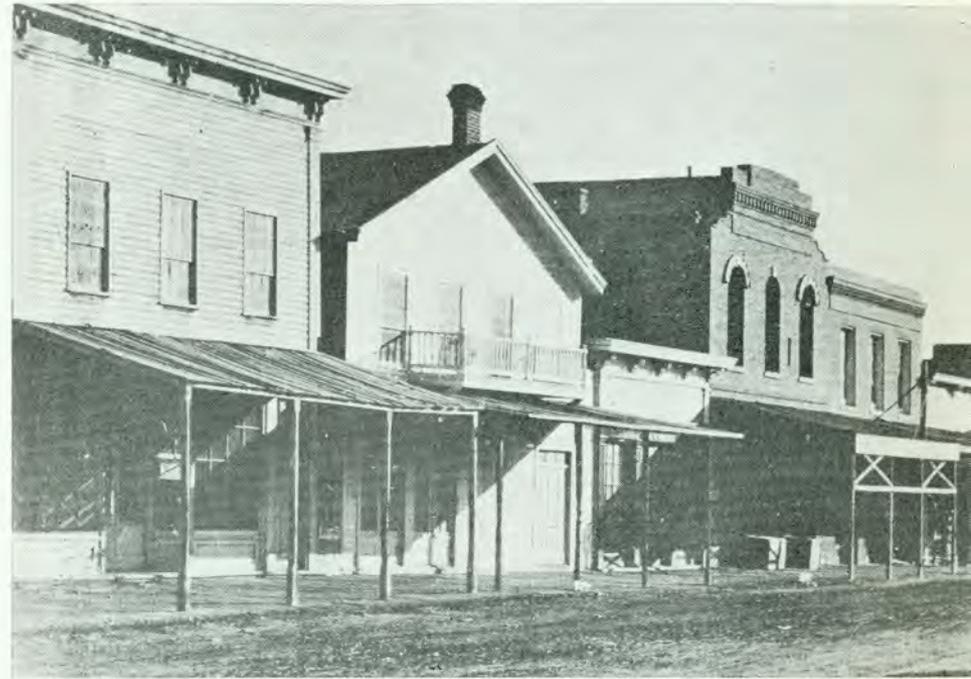
The one man most responsible for providing the miners of Colorado with theater was an Irish immigrant named Jack Langrishe—producer, director, star, and owner of many theaters in western mining towns. Denver became Langrishe's home for several years, and it was here that he demonstrated most vividly the role that he and the theater played in culture on the mining frontier.

Langrishe and his troupe arrived in a boom town. Since the discovery of gold in 1858, Denver had grown fantastically. Within a year Denver took on a more permanent air with brick and frame buildings and well-laid streets. It differed from other mining communities as it became a commercial center and as families came to it, giving it a more settled tone. But the air of roughness was still there. In 1859 a miner wrote: "Certainly a more reckless, unprincipled set of men never got together in one place than here."¹ William Hedges, a teetotaling miner remembered it this way: "Denver . . . was a most lively town, in any and all kinds of wickedness. I doubt if there was ever a place on this continent, where great amount of evil to the square acre was so spontaneously and openly developed."²

Denver had its theater early despite the roughness of the mining town; and the *Rocky Mountain News*, which began its long career as a daily and weekly newspaper in 1859, soon became a great fan of the theater, giving it much free advertising in a day when managers announced productions with handbills rather than newspaper advertisements.

¹ Henry Wildman, *Reports from Colorado: The Wildman Letters, 1859-1865*, Vol. XIII of *The Far West and the Rockies Historical Series, 1820-1875*, ed. by LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen (Glendale, Calif.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1961), pp. 271-72.

² William Hedges, *Pike's Peak . . . or Busted: Frontier Reminiscences of Wm. Hawkins Hedges*, ed. by Herbert O. Brayer (Evanston, Ill.: Branding Iron Press, 1954), pp. 24-25.



Denver's first theater was upstairs at Apollo Hall (second from left) on the west side of Larimer between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets.

Often the saloon and the theater were located together, and the fare presented was consonant with the setting at first. In Denver the upper story of the Apollo saloon became the theater. It was cold, noisy, and poorly lighted, with a dozen candles providing the illumination. It had neither ceiling nor plaster, but it was roomy enough to hold three hundred people, and the stage facilities allowed the production of a large number of plays. The main problem was the noise; frequently the plays could not be heard above "the clinking of glasses, rattling of billiard balls, and boozy attempts at vocal melodies from the uproarious regions below."³

Even with the proximity of the saloon, the audiences behaved well, although there were, of course, instances of rowdiness. At one point, William N. Byers of the *News* scolded the audience for misbehavior and inattention⁴ and complained on

³ Jerome Smiley, *History of Denver* (Denver: The Times-Sun Publishing Co., 1901), p. 335.

⁴ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 25, 1860, p. 3.

another occasion: "The conduct and language of the few rowdies in the gallery were most shameful. None but the most brutal instincts would have prompted such indecent and riotous exhibitions."⁵ On occasion a member of the audience might, in appreciation of the troupe's performance, invite the performers downstairs for a drink between acts. The invitations were seldom refused, and the company in full costume would descend to the saloon for refreshment. The quality of later acts might be impaired, but the audience's critical capacities were similarly diminished.⁶

The price of admission was one dollar, and almost all of the three hundred seats were occupied every night. Gold dust and vegetables were accepted for admission. In the box office was a scale for weighing out the dollar's worth of dust, but a dozen eggs could buy a ticket in the gallery.⁷ The custom of throwing bags of gold dust on the stage when a spectator was especially pleased netted some interesting results. When one miner, in need of a new beaver hat, lacked the funds to buy it, he was struck with a scheme to raise the money. After a performance at the Apollo, he swept the floor of the theater. He then panned the trash and extracted, along with cigar butts and a note arranging an assignation, \$13.56 worth of gold dust. He immediately bought the new beaver.⁸

Before Langrishe took it over, this theater was under the temporary management of Mlle. Haydee, who with her sisters, the Wakeleys, was extremely popular in Denver and the gold circuit, as the series of mining towns played by pioneer thespians was called. Mlle. Haydee, whose real name was Rose Brown, was quite pretty and very much a favorite with the miners. (When she disappeared one night in November 1860, many feared that she had been abducted by a notorious gambler, Thomas Evans, who also was missing. Some days later Evans was brought to town and actually tried for kidnapping. The dramatic trial quickly evaporated when Millie, as she was known to miners unfamiliar with French abbreviations, appeared and revealed that she had married the culprit.)⁹

On November 8, 1859, the Wakeleys presented the "celebrated low comedian," Mike Dougherty, who had lately tried his hand, with fair success, at mining. His six-night stand was

to result later in a partnership with Langrishe and a merry but short life in the frontier theater.¹⁰ Jolly and affable, Dougherty was a great favorite wherever he went. He came to Colorado to hunt gold and seems to have found it in Mike Dougherty's lode. His years with Langrishe in Denver and on the gold circuit were even more profitable than his gold hunting. But Dougherty had a serious weakness for drink, and his affability and love of whiskey were his undoing. On July 5, 1865, he died of acute alcoholic poisoning after a particularly uproarious Fourth of July celebration, his death causing genuine grief for many. J. E. Wharton, a contemporary historian, remarked that in him, "Colorado lost one of her most ingenuous and generous men."¹¹

Unlike Dougherty who was born in the United States, Langrishe was a native of Ireland, born on September 24, 1829. His theatrical career began when he played roles in Dublin at the age of fifteen. He immigrated to New York, changing his name at some point,¹² and worked for a time as reporter on Horace Greeley's *Tribune*. He also played roles in productions at the Chatham House Theatre and the Apollo Rooms in New York City. Sometime before 1858 he formed a theatrical company, of which his wife was a member, and which played the army posts along the frontier.

Langrishe had heard good things about Denver, the young city on the banks of the Platte River, and in August 1860, set off to see what the prospects were for a theatrical company there. Liking what he saw, he returned to gather his company and possessions awaiting him at Fort Laramie. The group arrived in September,¹³ and on September 25 he staged the grand opening at the Apollo. The troupe played *His Last Legs* and *The Youth Who Never Saw a Woman*, and the audience loved it.¹⁴ The six-day engagement which had been planned lengthened to many years. Langrishe soon was to take over the rowdy establishment, upgrade the theatrical fare, and impose certain standards of behavior on his audiences. The ladies had not attended the early variety shows, but they went to Langrishe's plays even when they were presented above the saloon.

⁵ J. E. Wharton, *History of the City of Denver* (Denver: Byers and Dailey, Printers, 1866), pp. 33-35.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁷ Smiley, *History of Denver*, p. 907; *Leadville Herald-Democrat*, December 22, 1895, p. 28.

⁸ Wharton, *History of the City of Denver*, p. 181; Stanley A. Zamonski and Teddy Keller, *The Fifty-Niners: A Denver Diary* (Denver: Sage Books, 1961), pp. 165-66.

⁹ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 26, 1860, p. 2; Zamonski and Keller, *The Fifty-Niners*, p. 166.

⁵ *Ibid.*, October 28, 1861, p. 2.

⁶ Smiley, *History of Denver*, p. 906.

⁷ *Denver Republican*, October 12, 1902, p. 26.

⁸ Libeus Barney, *Early-day Letters from Auraria (now Denver)*, Written by Libeus Barney to the Bennington Banner, Bennington, Vermont, 1859-1860, (Denver: A. J. Luddett Press, 1907 [?]), pp. 73-74.

⁹ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), November 28, 1861, p. 2.

In December 1860 Langrishe remodeled and enlarged the Apollo, and he renamed it the People's Theatre. The improvements were needed and welcomed; the heating had been and still was a problem, causing the audience to shiver in shawls and overcoats. Later, stoves were installed in the dressing rooms and, no doubt, "put an end to the blue noses and chattering teeth we have noticed on that stage in previous winters."¹⁵

But Langrishe was not happy to play above the saloon. His plays were legitimate and needed a proper house. Since the Platte Valley Theatre had closed in late 1861 and was suitable, Langrishe and Dougherty bought it in 1862. They renamed it the Denver Theatre, and it served as the best legitimate



The Denver Theatre stood on Sixteenth near the Pacific House, the latter hotel being at the northeast corner of Larimer and Sixteenth.

theater in Denver until it burned in 1877. This separation of the saloon and the theater was a significant step toward gentility.

The opening of the Platte Valley on October 26, 1861, under its original management, had been a grand social occasion. The company performed *Richard III* to a packed house; but that the sole object of most of the theatergoers was not Shakespeare can be seen in this snippet: "Let us rally to the new theatre to-night. A look at the elegant interior arrangements of the house will alone pay for the visit." On the following page

of the paper appeared this item: "Directly opposite the box-office in the new Theatre, a well-furnished saloon has been fitted up."¹⁶ The event was a conspicuous social occasion. "The representation of the ladies was unusually large, and we noticed a general attendance of our fashionable and F.F.'s."¹⁷

Langrishe had better order in his theater than most. There was a house rule against swearing, which did not prevent the audience members from frequently voicing their views, but they were usually genteel about it. The troupe never performed on Sunday, and Langrishe donated the proceeds of monthly benefits to Denver's poor relief fund. He and his troupe were generally solid citizens and an integral part of the community.

Byers said of Langrishe's great popularity, his "affable, unaffected and gentlemanly manners and mode of driving business with all classes of the public have procured for him a peculiarly popular reputation."¹⁸ He was a man for all needs of the theater. He managed the company, produced and directed the plays, and often took the leading roles. He played many roles well but was best as a comedian, his "ludicrous facial expression" fitting his comedy roles. The *News* reported that his "homely mug" drew "salvos of applause whenever it appeared behind the footlights."¹⁹ His versatility and good humor were amply illustrated when Mrs. Langrishe fell ill prior to her performance as Judy O'Trot in *Uncle Pat's Cabin*, and Langrishe played the part to everyone's delight.

During his years in Colorado, Jack Langrishe had good times and bad but remained loved and respected by Denverites because of his personal magnetism and professional ability. He was very popular with Denver citizens because he was as one of them. He dressed as they did and lived as they did, with little show or ostentation. It is perhaps this fact which explains his huge following. Also, it may help to explain why a decline in popularity greeted the theater when Langrishe began to use the star system in about 1865. Langrishe and his troupe were "home folks," worthy of support, but the outsiders did not merit such boosting. Nonetheless, Langrishe's own popularity was real, a success which may be attributed also to the fact that he was the first to bring the trappings of culture.

Langrishe appears in his portrait a dark, sober, and fairly handsome man with a receding hair line. He carried himself

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, October 26, 1861, p. 2.

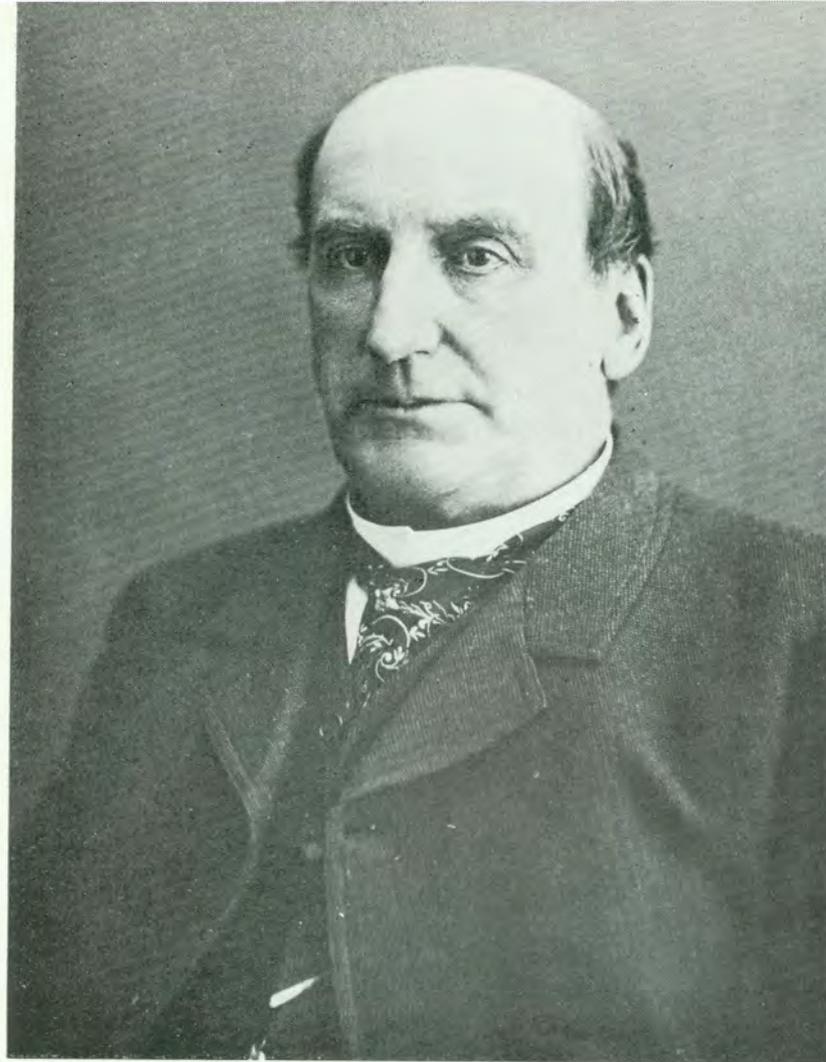
¹⁷ *Ibid.*, October 28, 1861, p. 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, April 8, 1861, p. 3.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, October 25, 1865, p. 4.

hair, which she wore pulled back in a severe and practical knot, was dark, as were her slightly asymmetrical eyes, a characteristic which gave her an unkempt look. Her lips were usually set in a determined line. A contemporary described her as "a fat, frowsy woman—and her voice was as coarse as any I've ever heard issuing from a feminine throat. She would have blended perfectly with a washtub and iron or a kitchen range."²⁰ For all of this, hers was a compelling personality. She was as respected and loved as her husband and has been referred to as a "sensible" lady.²¹

In this portrait which may show her made up for a part, Mrs. Langrishe appears gentler than her description, though still "frowsy."



John S. Langrishe, in a photo of about 1880.

erectly. His attire was generally that of the miners in town—slouch felt hat, dark suit, and boots. In this respect, he was at variance with many theater people, such as Thomas Maguire of San Francisco, who was quite a dandy.

Jeannette Langrishe was an indomitable lady, who although rawboned and coarse of voice and mien, played many roles well. She appears singularly ill-suited to the roles she favored, such as Parthenia and Ophelia. She was not beautiful. Her

²⁰ Samuel J. Klein, *Recollections and Comments* (Los Angeles: Privately printed, 1924), p. 61.

²¹ Frank C. Young, *Echoes from Arcadia* (Denver: Privately printed, 1903), p. 34.

The Langrishes were so respectable and so affable that they paved the way for the acceptance of the entire company. As Denver society became more settled and as the frontier influence diminished, the acceptance of stage people was to decline; but there was little organized objection to the theaters, and the church groups did not feel inclined to quash the theater so long as it did not "get out of hand."

The plays presented by Langrishe are indicative of the tastes of the time and the preferences of the miners. Shakespeare's tragedies were performed, of these *Othello* being the most often done. Melodrama was popular; a contemporary speaks of these as "good old orthodox melodrama, such as our fathers loved, with its heroine and its villain, its sharply contrasted lights and shadows, and its certain final triumph of virtue."²² Often the plays were exotic in location and romantic in emphasis. Both Shakespeare and the melodramas were overacted, since the candles and the gas lamps provided but little light; so actors played with ample gestures and flamboyant movements. Comedies and farces, which served as afterpieces, were similarly exaggerated.

The repertoire of the Langrishe company was huge, and the players must have had tremendous stamina to put on a different show each night for a period of months. The company introduced new works often, keeping up with the theaters in St. Louis. Plays which were especially popular were the *Lady of Lyons*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Drunkard*, and adaptations of Scott's and Dickens' works. When the original enthusiasms of the mining audiences had fallen off in 1866, Langrishe used a bit of sensationalism. His production of *The French Spy*, a spectacular in which Marietta Ravel and Jeannette Langrishe played a shapely spy, was popular but brought criticism from Byers as unworthy of the talents of the troupe.

If time permitted, a little singing and dancing filled the bill. Curiosities were sometimes billed with trained animals being a popular feature. *Mazeppa* involved horses on stage, and Scott's *Lochinvar* or *The Bride of Netherby* utilized Dougherty's trained horse Waverly. The climax required Waverly to swim into a torrent to save the heroine. How the company conjured a raging torrent on the stage of the Denver defies the imagination.

One locally written and produced play was Mike Dougherty's *Pat Casey and His Night Hands*. Pat Casey of Central City was

²² *Ibid.*, 32-33.

a real miner who had stumbled on a rich lode and thereafter lived very ostentatiously, much to the annoyance of the locals. After several successful performances, Casey lost his Irish temper with Dougherty and declared that the play had better be stopped or he and his hands would "shoot 'em up." Dougherty went on with the show but only after reserving the first five rows and inviting the Elbert Guard, the local militia company, to attend the performance.²³ The play itself was not only very funny but also very risqué and drew sharp criticism from Byers. The ladies did not attend.

Critical acclaim, especially in Byers' *News*, was usually very enthusiastic. Before 1865 the criticism was not analytical. Almost every play was praised, as was *Love's Sacrifice*:

The play was exceedingly well performed. Mr. Pauncefoot's Elmore was perfection itself according to our conception of the character. Mr. Richmond's personation of the rival merchant was quite as good. Mrs. Langrishe as Miss Elmore, the heroine of the play, elicited oft repeated applause.²⁴

During seasons before 1865, which were notable successes for Langrishe and Dougherty, the company began road tours of the mining camps as the miners began to move out to the mountains each spring. They also established theaters in most of the towns. Central City was the first and most important stop, where by 1865 the company drew enough people to stay all summer. They played to huge audiences at the Montana Theatre. Other stops included California Gulch, Georgia Gulch, Delaware Flats, Montgomery, Georgetown, Parkville, French Gulch, Buckskin Joe, and Fairplay.

When the houses in Denver began to fall off by 1865, Langrishe and Dougherty tried the star system. However, importing big names was unsatisfactory for it cost a good deal and did not produce the uniformly good theater of the early sixties. In 1866 the audiences were unenthusiastic. They wanted variety shows and burlesques, which later were supplied by the beer halls. A review of 1866 read: "The play might . . . as well have been given in a church yard, to an audience of tombstones."²⁵

There are several reasons for the theatrical decline in the mid-sixties. An economic depression contributed, but placer mining was disappearing, as the free gold seemed worked out. The town lost its boom atmosphere and its excitement. As the vitality ebbed, the interest in theater did too.

²³ Elbert Guard MSS in the State Historical Society of Colorado Library, Denver.

²⁴ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), January 22, 1864, p. 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, September 29, 1866, p. 4.

It is significant that as the adventurous placer-mining boom passed and the big mining companies moved in with laborers, the popularity of the theater declined. It rose again when leisure, wealth, and conscious culture came to the young cities. Denver became a young city quickly, but there was an interval when the theater was not significant in Denver after the placer boom had passed and before Denver could really be called a city.

A decline, similar to the one in Colorado, may be seen in the San Francisco theater in 1854. After the boom years from 1849 to 1854, placer mining played out and a depression resulted. Maguire's Jenny Lind Theatre declined in popularity. Consequently, Maguire, more entrepreneur than devoted thespian, resorted to burlesque and minstrel shows to fill his theater. It was not until some years later that he could again present legitimate theater on a regular basis. By about 1870 San Francisco had become a city, culturally self-conscious and ready for the "better things of life."

Late in 1871 Langrishe and his company traveled to Chicago and played with much success but misfortune too. The great fire of October 21, reportedly started when Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over a lantern in a westside barn, destroyed almost all of the town, including Langrishe's theater and props. He began again with flair and resilience. When they heard of the disaster, the citizens of Denver staged a benefit for him and wired him several hundred dollars. Langrishe hired the Globe, the only auditorium left standing by the blaze and produced plays only a few weeks after the fire. Most notable were a production of Augustine Daly's *Divorce*, which had just opened in New York, and a revival of *The Black Crook*, an extravagant, ballet-musical melodrama featuring a large ballet company clad in flesh-colored tights and fabulous scenes of murky caverns, turreted castles, and the realms of the netherworld. *The Black Crook* was such a success that Langrishe renamed his group The Black Crook Company and toured New England, Pennsylvania, California, Nevada, and Mexico with the play.

The company returned to Denver on February 5, 1876. But Colorado no longer seemed promising, so the players left again. Langrishe toured Montana, making his headquarters in Virginia City; Utah, with Salt Lake City being his major stop; Wyoming, especially Cheyenne after the Union Pacific Railroad made the town a boom area; and the Black Hills, a fabulous new boom area. They spent three successful years at Deadwood,

²⁶ Leadville Weekly Herald, November 15, 1879, p. 3.

South Dakota, where Langrishe not only built three theaters but also contributed to a daily newspaper, the *Black Hills Pioneer*.

In 1878 the discovery of silver at Leadville began another boom. When H. A. W. Tabor, the new and fabulous millionaire, owner of the Matchless Mine and many others, built a lavish opera house, he hired the unbeatable Jack Langrishe to run it for him. The Tabor Opera House was large, seating 880 people. The decor was gold and white with scarlet plush seats and scarlet hangings. The curtain was painted with an improbable scene with mountains and a castle. To top off the marvel was a picture of Tabor himself.²⁶ The theater was typical of the conspicuous enjoyment of large and garish opera houses of the mining frontier, and the self-consciousness that went into their building reveals much of the desire for elegant culture by less than elegant gold and silver miners.



The grand opening of the opera house in November in 1879 was planned to be a great social event. Langrishe was to star in *The Serious Family* and *Who's Who*. The occasion was marred, however, by public alarm over local lawlessness, including a double lynching.

When Langrishe left Leadville, he returned to Denver where he built a theater on Sixteenth Street to replace the burned Denver Theatre. He played there for a few years and also engaged successfully in mining at Idaho Springs. After H. A. W. Tabor built his opulent opera house across the street in 1881,

The interior of Denver's Tabor Grand Opera House.



Langrishe played in Tabor's house from time to time but never managed it, and no resident stock company was regularly employed.

In 1885 Langrishe left Denver and headed for Wardner, Idaho. There he edited the paper and rose to local prominence, being elected justice of the peace and Idaho state senator. His death in 1895 ended the life of one of the most influential men on the mining frontier.

Langrishe, in his career, illustrates the cultural pattern of the mining frontier. His first theater, the Apollo in Denver, was part of a saloon and before his arrival was devoted to rough entertainment consonant with the roughness of the frontier. But miners accepted legitimate drama enthusiastically in this setting. Within a year Langrishe moved the theater from the saloon, and the audiences followed. He was not, as Maguire of San Francisco, strictly an entrepreneur. He loved the frontier; he went from one to another as they opened and built theaters. When the frontier era was over, he left Colorado and the stage, an action which is especially curious when his successes in other areas such as Chicago and New England are noted. He was not forced by age to retire; he seems, indeed, to have quit when the frontier passed because it had passed.

The boom town theater was by no means mature, and it may not have been very good by mature standards; but it seems to have been as exciting as the boom itself. Langrishe and his company with their performances probably took on the spontaneity of the new, raw area. This very spontaneity may have given the frontier drama the aura of genuine art which the later self-conscious efforts of the growing city lacked. Whether this be true or not, the fact remains that Langrishe was the founder of Colorado theater and, as such, contributed to the remarkable phenomenon that was frontier culture.

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A Gauge of Popular Taste in Early Colorado

BY VIRGINIA McCONNELL

Contrary to the belief held by many historians that Shakespeare (and even opera) was common fare in frontier theaters, the theatrical productions in early Denver and Colorado's mining camps indicate a strong preference for melodrama, low comedy, and farce. The popular Langrishe Theatrical Company's presentations provide a convincing example of this taste and its decline.

Managers of theatrical troupes were not slow to follow the goldseekers to the Rockies, Colonel Thorne's company, which played at the Apollo in October 1859, being the first of these nomadic thespians to reach Denver. Apollo Hall, built during the summer of that year on Larimer Street, was a rowdy saloon and gambling house with an amusement hall on the second floor.¹ Here Thorne presented Shakespeare's *Richard III* and the farce *Luck in a Name*, according to the *Rocky Mountain News* of October 6, 1859, but this fare and what followed were not well received, and the audience fell off continuously during the run.² The *News* apologized for the inauspicious reception, adding: "We are sorry to say the audience was somewhat disturbed on Tuesday evening by the pranks of a drunken man."

When Thorne left Denver after a week, apparently somewhat piqued by his poor reception, the Haydee Sisters took over the management of the hall and produced plays. These sisters, who had come to Denver with their stepfather, one of Denver's new businessmen, had had acting experience in Missouri. On November 6 they opened and were joined two days later by Mike Dougherty. The bill was *Perfection* and *Omnibus*,³

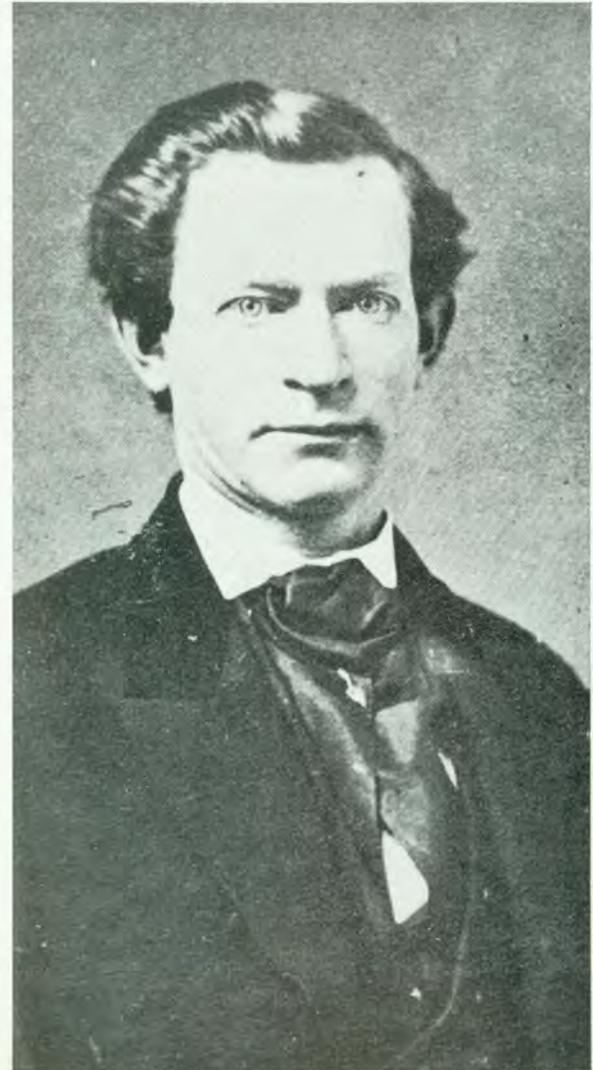
¹ Madelyn Leora Garner, "The Early Theatre in the Rocky Mountain West" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Denver, 1935), p. 86.

² *Ibid.*, 87.

³ *Ibid.*, 90. Information which follows throughout the article, on the classification of types of dramas and their frequency of performance in contemporary New York theaters was obtained primarily in George C. D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (15 vols.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1927-49).

the former being a period piece popular in New York and the latter being an old Irish farce.

Dougherty, a low comedian, had been snared from his Central City placer for a six-night stand with the Haydees and later was to become a partner of John S. Langrishe. Dougherty first appeared on the stage in Philadelphia in 1854 as Bill Downton in *The Drunkard*, ironically as later events proved. He



excelled in Irish roles and songs and generally was thought to be of Irish birth, despite his having been born in Pennsylvania.⁴

Dougherty's immediate success in his engagement with the Haydees resulted in two benefits being tendered him with standing room only. His reception seems to have been in response to his impersonations of Irish characters and especially his song "Paddy's Wagon." It was a popularity which he never lost. While much of this acclaim was produced by his own style and charm, Irish themes and characters were overwhelmingly popular throughout the American entertainment scene at the time. They were not confined to the frontier, but they may have been received especially well in Colorado because of the number of Irish laborers who had come to the mines.

During the winter of 1859-60 the Haydees expanded theatrical activity in the region by initiating performances in Golden and Central City, leaving minstrel groups and variety shows to provide the bulk of entertainment in Denver. Before long, in addition, amateur theatrical groups began to present plays, including the first drama written in Colorado, Steinberger's *Skatara, Chief of the Utah Indians* (1861),⁵ a romantic piece about the West's noble savages. *Skatara*, not well received when first produced, was an instant success when burlesqued by the irrepressible Dougherty with a new title, *Scatterer, the Mountain Thief*.⁶

In August 1860, Jack Langrishe⁷ came to Denver with George McArthur of his theatrical company to survey the possibility of bringing the troupe there.⁸ When a month later the entire group arrived in Denver from Fort Laramie, it is reported, one pair of mules was pulling not only the troupe but all of the wardrobe and stage properties as well.⁹ Since the party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Langrishe, Miss Mary Sullivan, Mr. George McArthur, Mr. J. C. McKibben, Mr. Raymond, Mr. L.

⁴ Melvin Schoberlin, *From Candles to Footlights: A Biography of the Pikes Peak Theatre, 1859-1876* (Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1941), p. 27.

⁵ LeRoy R. Hafen, *Colorado and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1948), I, 262.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ A clue to additional information about Langrishe is found in the *Leadville Herald-Democrat*, December 22, 1895, p. 28: "Judge Rollins was in Wisconsin in the early 50's, and recalls the session of the legislature in which Mr. Langrishe parted with the name of Ford, and by law was allowed to assume the one by which he was known so well. Mr. Rollins asserts that in those days he was billed as John Ford Langrishe. Mrs. Langrishe was Jeanette Allen, a granddaughter of General Ethan Allen, the Green Mountain hero of the Revolutionary War." *The Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 6, 1881, p. 1, described Langrishe's successful, prolonged engagements at Forts Riley, Kearny, and Laramie prior to the company's coming to Denver.

⁸ Garner, "The Early Theatre in the Rocky Mountain West," p. 92.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 92. However, the *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 6, 1881, p. 1, reported that there were two wagons and several mules.

Watson, Mr. Harry Collins (a tragedian from the eastern theaters who played the heavy roles), and Mr. Harry Richmond (Denver's first leading man), one must assume that some walked. In Denver the troupe was augmented by John Wanless and Richard Johnson, who had been playing at Central City's Olympic Theatre, and local amateurs also were to be pressed into service as needed.¹⁰

The Langrishe Theatrical Company opened at the Apollo with a comedy *His Last Legs* and a farce *The Youth Who Never Saw a Woman*, a bill whose reception was so good that the original plan to play in Denver for only six nights was extended to two weeks and finally indefinitely. The theater's seats and benches were easily filled,¹¹ and Langrishe soon had to hire a cashier-ticket taker and a prop man.¹² At the second performance a play very popular in New York at the time, *The Toodles*, was presented. It was accompanied by the farce *The Artful Dodger*, interspersed with songs and dances.¹³

Rocky Mountain News reviews were ecstatic about the new company. On September 27, 1860, Langrishe was compared to John Drew, Chanfrau, and assorted other idols. After Mike Dougherty joined the troupe, sometime early in 1861, the combination of popular actors, respected plays, and well-accepted plays kept the company in command of the region's theater against all comers.

Plays performed by Langrishe's company during that first successful winter indicate the kind of fare which won Denver's support. The selection was varied and broad, many of the plays being those which currently were popular in New York. The majority were melodramas, comedies or low comedies, and farces. Serious drama was uncommon, and Shakespeare was rare with the exception of *Othello*. In fact, the plays performed most often clearly distinguish the Denver theater from eastern and St. Louis repertoires, where serious drama and Shakespeare more commonly appeared on bills.

Some of the first season's plays were *The Stranger*, a very sad melodrama popular in New York at the time; *Lucretia Borgia*; *Napoleon's Old Guard*, a French drama; *Magic Charm*, a Yankee comedy; *Black-Eyed Susan*, an Irish comedy; Payne's

¹⁰ Schoberlin, *From Candles to Footlights*, p. 44.

¹¹ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 26, 1860, p. 2. The reception during the next weeks was so good that Langrishe was prompted to build a house on Fifteenth Street near the corner of Welton; *ibid.*, September 6, 1881, p. 1.

¹² Frank W. Zern, "Early Day Show Houses and Actors," *The Trail*, III (October 1910), 17.

¹³ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), September 26, 1860, p. 2.

Orphan of Geneva; the very popular and gory *La Tour de Nesle*, which had played and played in New York. Other plays which were popular in New York and which were done by Langrishe that first winter were *Camille*—almost inevitably; Bulwer-Lytton's *The Lady of Lyons*, which Mrs. Waller had played in New York and which was to appear and reappear over the years on the Langrishe bills; *Ingomar*, summoning up the ancient and mysterious; the thrilling *Corsican Brothers*; and Boucicault's comedy *London Assurance*. Others were *Alice*; *Miser of Marseille*; *Why Won't She Marry?*; *Dead Shot*; *The Secret*, or *Hole in the Wall*; *Beacon of Death*, or *Child of the Ocean*; *The Factory Girl*, or *All that Glitters Is Not Gold*; Madame Célèste's *French Spy*, naughty though it was; Louise H. Medina's *Nick of the Woods* or *The Jibbenainosay*, in which Harry Richmond performed a tour de force by playing six characters. This typical fare of the season was interrupted with a performance of *Othello* and another of Sheridan's *School for Scandal*. Every program was accompanied by a favorite farce of the day.¹⁴

In the spring of 1861 Langrishe and Dougherty opened a run in Central City which met with success similar to that in Denver. The engagement, advertised by a small band which played as it rode up and down the streets in a wagon,¹⁵ opened with *Lucretia Borgia* and the troupe's new dancing star Mlle. Henrietta. In April Dougherty was able to oversell the house for his performance in *Uncle Pat's Cabin* and *A Glance at New York*, although Jack Langrishe stole the show by playing Judy O'Trot, a character recurring in a number of Irish plays, for Mrs. Langrishe who was ill.

The success of the performances in the mining district is explained in part by Hal Sayre's reminiscences. Noting first what fine, respected people the Langrishes were as citizens and neighbors, Sayre goes on to describe Langrishe's acting. Sayre says that Langrishe could play any kind of role but was best as a comedian. He could "keep the house in an uproar for several minutes without uttering a word. His facial expression was truly wonderful."¹⁶ There are additional references from other sources which mention Langrishe's ability to captivate with a

¹⁴ See contemporary local newspapers for these and other theater bills; see also the Lynn Perrigo collection of items on mining towns, Western Historical Collections, University of Colorado Libraries, Boulder.

¹⁵ Lynn Perrigo, "The First Two Decades of Central City Theatricals," *The Colorado Magazine*, XI (July 1934), 141.

¹⁶ Hal Sayre, "Early Central City Theatricals and Other Reminiscences," *The Colorado Magazine*, VI (March 1929), 51.



In this retouched photograph Jack Langrishe is shown in costume for the role of O'Callaghan in *His Last Legs*.

well-timed wink or with the twinkle of his eye, methods which succeeded in winning the approval of his audience but which do not testify to a critical discrimination.

After the Central City engagement, the troupe was again in Denver for about six weeks and then set out for a summer tour of the Blue River district. The company had done stands in Golden City and Nevada City which were successful but short. Now Langrishe had more permanent plans for Blue River as he built log theaters in each town—Parkville, French Gulch, Georgia Gulch, and Delaware Flats—all called the People's Theatre. In addition, he gave one performance in California Gulch that year and added the South Park towns of Montgomery and Laurette (Buckskin Joe) to his People's Theatre circuit in 1862. Plays which were bound to please the mountain rustics included *The Dumb Boy of the Pyrenees* and *Nature and Philosophy*.

During the summer of 1861 Harrison's company played Central City; and the Pioneer Company, which succeeded the Haydees and was the competitor of Langrishe in the Blue River camps, was in Denver.¹⁷ However, neither of these rival troupes built up the kind of following that could give Langrishe real competition when he returned to Denver and Central City. In November Langrishe was in the latter town again, giving successful performances at the People's Theatre of *La Tour de Nesle*, *Sweethearts and Wives*, *Foundling of the Battle Field*, and *Post of Honor*, gestures toward the fact of the Civil War now creeping in on occasion.

In the meantime, the Platte Valley Theatre, the first real playhouse in Denver, had been built at the corner of Sixteenth and Lawrence streets and had opened in October. (In 1862 Langrishe took it over, improving it and renaming it the Denver Theatre.)¹⁸ When the Platte Valley opened with *Richard III*, the production was disturbed by "much noise" from the galleries, indicating that the cheaper seats still were not entirely receptive to the Bard as yet, although the *Rocky Mountain News* sang the company's praises.¹⁹

The winter season and the summer circuit of 1862 witnessed a wide variety of plays again. Langrishe and Dougherty had an agent in New York who secured for the Denver company many of the latest plays—*The Mistletoe Bough*, for example, which was well received in Colorado while its popularity in New York was just beginning. The plays given in 1862 indicate less de-

pendence on Irish humor and more on sensation, mystery, the thrilling—perhaps due to an increasing proportion of women in the audiences as the little city of Denver grew. Among the ambitious productions of 1862 were *Corsican Brothers*; *La Somnambula*, a dramatization of a Bellini opera; an adaptation of Scott's *Guy Mannering*; Harris's *Ruthven the Vampire*, a new English gothic drama; the frontier drama *Fall of the Alamo* or *The Tale of Davy Crockett*; Sheridan's *Pizarro* or *The Death of Rolls*; *Camille*, as always; *The Lady of Lyons*, a perennial; and a spectacular *The Gold Axe* or *The Magic Wand and Fairy Palace of Pleasure*, which apparently turned the Denver Theatre into a palace of pleasure as it ran a record five nights, the usual custom being one-night performances only.

That the Central City audience required somewhat racier fare is indicated by comparing the plays produced there that season. After an opener of *Hamlet* and later on Scott's *Lochinvar* or *The Bride of Netherby*, the season warmed up with a naughty script *Mazepa* and again the popular *French Spy*, starring Mrs. Learned of the "Eastern theatre." The "horse opera" *Timour the Tartar* was complete with two horses on stage, while a benefit for Mike Dougherty at which he performed his own new play *The Fine Young Fast Denver Gentleman* as well as the new comedy *Every Man and His Own Wife* must have provided quite a romp for the Central audience.

With the singing of Mike Dougherty, billed as the "Miner's Pet," still in great demand, the early days of 1863 found him preparing a new *pièce de résistance*, an opera called *Pat Casey's Night Hands*. Although its performance in Denver was greeted with enthusiasm, its caricature of Pat Casey, a successful but illiterate Irish miner from Central City, resulted in trouble at the gold camp theater.²⁰ Despite the play's having been proclaimed fiction, only the presence of the Elbert Guard, called in when Casey summoned his night hands to attend with tomatoes and eggs, enabled the troupe to give its performance. The season at Central City then proceeded with more typical fare, such as Buckstone's *Married Life*, Taylor's *Our American Cousin*; *The Savage of Charbonniere*, Boucicault's *Willow Copse*, Milner's *Don Juan*, and Campbell's *Galley Slave of Lyons*.

In the spring the Langrishes went to the States to secure additional actors and returned with a noted comedian from Laura Keene's productions—John Dillon. George Pauncefort, the best-known star to come to the West until then, was the cele-

¹⁷ Edgar C. McMechen, "Art, Drama, and Music," *Colorado and Its People*, II, 444.

¹⁸ Jerome Smiley, *History of Denver* (Denver: The Times-Sun Publishing Co., 1901), p. 335, confuses the Platte Valley with Langrishe's People's Theatre.

See Schoberlin, *From Candles to Footlights*, pp. 70-72, 76-77, 94, 100.

¹⁹ *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), October 28, 1861, p. 2.

²⁰ Schoberlin, *From Candles to Footlights*, p. 104.

brated new romantic leading man, short and roly-poly though he was. (Harry Richmond had suffered a nervous breakdown and had left the company.)²¹ Thus augmented with these and others, Langrishe and Dougherty played at the Montana Theatre in Central that summer with new plays such as *Giant of Saint Michael*; *LaFitte, the Pirate of the Gulf*; and Edwards' and Wallack's *The Romance of a Poor Young Man*.

When the season opened in Denver for the fall and winter of 1863-64, however, the fare offered by the Langrishe troupe showed evidence of one change. While still performing a number of pieces of fleeting popularity, the company began to present more of the better known plays which have come out of the nineteenth century. This tendency probably reflects the repertoires of the new stars. Among these plays were Boucicault's *The Octoroon*, and, in response to local interest in this play, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Wallack's *American in Paris*; and Washington Irving's and J. H. Payne's *Charles the Second* or *The Merry Monarch*.

Schoberlin, the principal historian of the early theater of the region, refers to 1864 as the beginning of the demise of Langrishe's success and gives as cause the Civil War coupled with Indian troubles. Such does not appear to be the entire case, however, for Central City still was booming, and there Langrishe and Dougherty had the most successful season of any, according to historian Caroline Bancroft.²² The nightly receipts were bigger than ever—often three hundred dollars and the season lasted from early April until November with such fare as *Pike's Peak Gold Fiend*, *Lone House on the Bridge of Notre Dame*, and *American in Paris*.

In mid-November the troupe returned to Denver for the winter, again to one of its best seasons.²³ At that time Dougherty was unable to open, but after a week (perhaps drying out?) he had recovered sufficiently to make his first appearance.²⁴ He seems to have been with the troupe continuously during the following two months.

Plays of that season were *Mr. and Mrs. Peter White* and *Pride of the Market*, which together with music and dancing made up the opening bill; Brougham's *Irish Immigrant*; *Black-Eyed Susan* or *All in the Downs*; *Everybody's Friend* by Stirling

²¹ *Ibid.*, 113.

²² Caroline Bancroft, *Gulch of Gold: A History of Central City, Colorado* (Denver: Sage Books, 1958), p. 164.

²³ Garner, "The Early Theatre in the Rocky Mountain West," p. 104.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

Coyne (and one wonders that the playwright's name was permitted during the gold years); a unique addition to the usual fare—Mlle. Ravel's ballet *Robert and Jacques*; Boucicault's *Old Guard* and *Avalanche* or *Under the Snow*; Buckstone's pantomime of *Don Juan*; and the Indian drama *Wept of the Wish-ton-Wish*, the most successful play of the season. There also were the old standbys *Omnibus*, *The Maid of Croissey*, *His Last Legs*, and *Serious Family*, with farces still being coupled with comedies and melodramas on a bill. This representative listing of plays indicates that the company had undergone no drastic change in the type of entertainment offered.

On February 21, 1865, a benefit was tendered Mike Dougherty, who was returning to the States; and four days later the famous partnership of Langrishe and Dougherty formally was ended.²⁵ However, after the troupe returned to Central City in late spring, they were rejoined by Dougherty. But it was to be a short reunion. On July 4 Central City celebrated in its usual ebullient style with the prodigal Dougherty very much in the center of the fun and drinks at the local saloon. But shortly after the evening's theater—*Asmodeus* and *The Gentleman in Black* (a portentous enough title)—Dougherty died of the alcoholism which may have been the cause of difficulties with Langrishe but which in no way had impaired his immense popular following. Almost everyone in Central City is said to have turned out for his funeral.²⁶

In November the company reopened in Denver with a new emphasis on the plays presented. The 1865-66 season included two Shakespearean offerings—*Macbeth* and *Othello*, Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, *Joan of Arc*, *Rob Roy*, *The Octoroon*, *London Assurance*, and a number of other attempts in the direction of better drama, interspersed with contemporary material. There also was a prevalence of horror plays such as *Wenlock of Wenlock* and *The Spectre*. Although it is possible that the selection of plays was determined in part by the death of Dougherty and a consequent reluctance to do some of the old comedies, it is more likely that the plays were suited to the acting of George B. Waldron, a tragedian who had arrived from California. Schoberlin describes him as being next to Langrishe "the most important figure who influenced territorial Colorado theatre."²⁷

Nevertheless, during the winter following Dougherty's death, receipts dropped off seriously. Although the entire region was

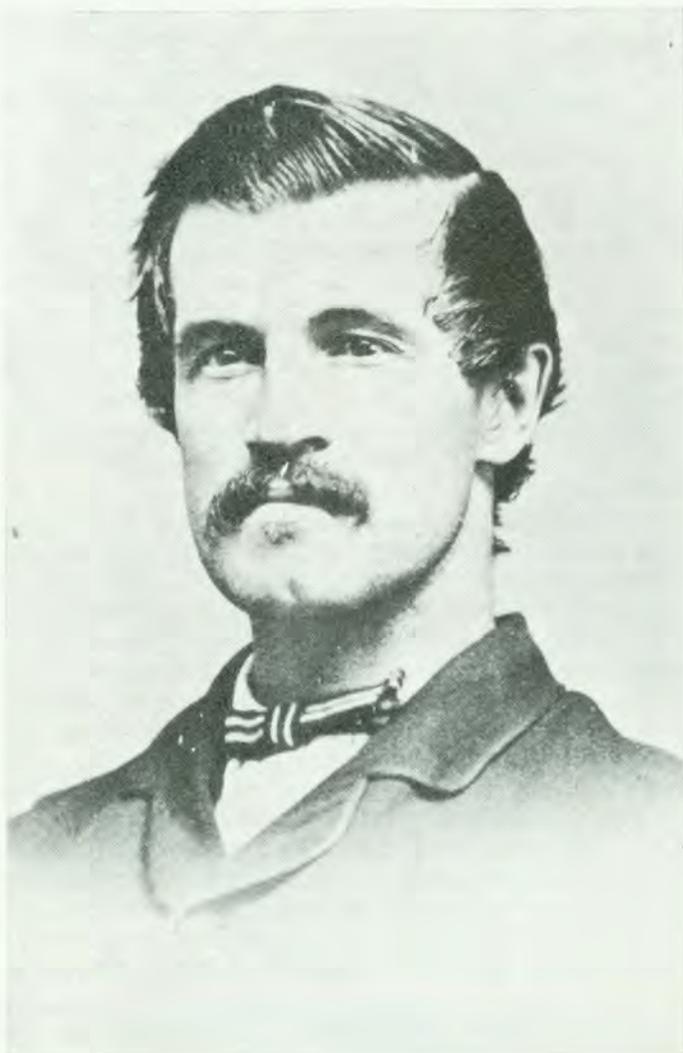
²⁵ Schoberlin, *From Candles to Footlights*, p. 138.

²⁶ Bancroft, *Gulch of Gold*, p. 189.

²⁷ Schoberlin, *From Candles to Footlights*, p. 167.

in the economic doldrums, the Denver audience apparently was becoming more critical and may have become generally less receptive. For example, the *Rocky Mountain News*, which once had championed everything which the company offered, now began to assert its opinions of the plays and the cast in authoritative tones. At the close of the 1865-66 season it commented that Richmond (who had returned to the company) should "remember the division line between pride and vanity," that

Leading man
Harry Richmond
once played
six roles in
Nick of
the Woods.



Miss Clifton had "few superiors" but seemed "rather hefty" for the love scenes, and so on.²⁸

In the fall George Waldron left the troupe, but the season went on. *Henry IV* and *School for Scandal* were the two presentations of our traditionally recognized drama, the remainder being made up of plays which were typical of the Langrishe company. In addition, beginning early in the year 1867, the plays were supplemented with variety acts in an apparent effort to draw in the popular audience. However, after an appearance in Boulder, the company departed Colorado in June 1867 for an engagement in Salt Lake City.

With that event the end of Langrishe's heyday in Denver is marked; for, although the troupe returned in ensuing years, it never met with the old success. The best of the comebacks was to be in 1869 when George Waldron was Langrishe's star again as well as his assistant.²⁹

In January of 1871 the company returned to Central City, opening in *The Master of St. Tropez* and *The Persecuted Dutchman* with Miss Hickley of New York and G. W. Thompson as stars. But, as the season was failing financially, Langrishe added a new sensation in March—Mlle. Ravel, pantomimist, tight-rope walker, and ballet artist, in an act which according to the *Denver Tribune* of March 15, 1871, "at one time was not only an indelicate but licentious exhibition of almost semi-nudity," but which in Mlle. Ravel's hands became "a model representation of exquisite art to which the most prudish of the prude could not object."

When the troupe returned to Denver for several days in 1876, opening with the old favorite *The Lady of Lyons* and *Honeymoon*, *Divorced*, the engagement was sufficiently well received that a circuit was organized. But the preceding years had broken Langrishe's monopoly in Colorado. With the arrival of railroads, which reached even into the mountains, touring troupes from many directions had been able to present a new kind of theater to the people in the outposts of civilization. Denver audiences especially had been exposed to serious drama and opera with increasing frequency, and their taste had become more sophisticated.

Nevertheless, when H. A. W. Tabor opened his opera house in Leadville in the fall of 1879, he did not cater to this new taste found in Denver but brought Langrishe back to Colorado

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 175.

²⁹ Bancroft, *Gulch of Gold*, p. 228.

for the first thirteen weeks.³⁰ Tabor mistakenly thought that Langrishe still was the man to fill a house in a booming mining town. Unfortunately, the opening night of the plush new theater was not well attended due to circumstances beyond Langrishe's control—a lynching.

Subsequently Langrishe did better but not well enough. He based his drawing ability on the old fare—plays whose titles had appeared again and again on the bills of the early successful years. Even *Ireland As It Was* was presented with Langrishe and Mrs. Langrishe once again playing in the old favorite roles of Ragged Pat and Judy O'Trot. However, despite the use of the once-successful formulae in a boisterous boom town, new conditions prevailed, and there were many empty benches during the engagement in Leadville.

In part the problem may have been the result of the breaking up of the Langrishe company in recent years. Such stars as George Waldron, Harry Richmond, Annette Ince, and others whom Langrishe brought in earlier in the decade were gone; in Leadville it was up to the Langrishes themselves and Phosa McAllister to perform the starring roles. But even more convincing, in view of Langrishe's experiences in the later 1860s, is the argument that taste had changed while the bills of the Langrishe Theatrical Company remained comparatively static. An occasional token offering of significant drama was insufficient to win the support of "Society" as Colorado became more sophisticated; and taste for casual entertainment, in the meantime, was as inclined to change in two decades as is the taste of the fickle public today. A Mike Dougherty might have been able to keep pace with these popular changes.

But Langrishe's farewell to Colorado was to be on a note similar to that of Colonel Thorne's in 1859. Popular frontier theater of Colorado had come full circle well within Langrishe's career, while grander and more pretentious fare already was taking his place.

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³⁰ Dorothy M. Degitz, "History of the Tabor Opera House in Leadville," *The Colorado Magazine*, XIII (May 1936), 82.