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Antoine Robidoux, Kingpin in the Colorado River Fur Trade, 1824-1844

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Of all the men engaged in the fur trade in the Far Southwest few, if any, were more important than Antoine Robidoux. As trapper and trader he was a leader of mountain men for some twenty years, from 1824 to 1844. Sometime before 1840, as recorded by Bidwell, "he had gone to Santa Fe, thence to Arizona, thence to California, and up to Monterey." His glowing account of California as a "perfect paradise" influenced the organization, in 1841, of the first company of overland emigrants to that land of "perpetual spring," as he described it. Asked in a public meeting held in western Missouri in the fall of 1840 if there were any "chills" in California, a question which every "Missourian always asked about a new country," he answered that "there never was but one man in California who had the chills. He was from Missouri, and carried the disease in his system. It was such a curiosity to see a man shake with the chills that the people of Monterey went eighteen miles into the country to see him."¹ As interpreter and guide with the Army of the West he played an important part in the conquest of that land which was later to be his home for a number of years.

And yet one may search in vain for an account of his thrilling and active life. It is even with difficulty that an account of his movements may be pieced together from the chance remarks scattered here and there through the various books and documents relating to the western fur trade. But although a complete account cannot, at present, be given, yet a few outstanding points may be mentioned which may serve as a sort of framework upon which to build as new information comes to light.

But before taking up the work of Antoine Robidoux it might be well to state that there were six Robidoux brothers—Joseph, Francois, Isidore, Antoine, Louis, and Michel, all sons of Joseph Robidoux who, with his father, Joseph Robidoux, came to Saint

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¹John Bidwell. *California 1841-8*. Ms. in Bancroft Library, p. 5-6.

Louis from Canada in 1770. The brothers were born respectively in the years 1783, 1788, 1791, 1794, 1796, and 1798. Of these, several were prominent frontiersmen. For a number of years Joseph operated a trading post for the American Fur Company at what was known as Blacksnake Hills on the Missouri River, at which place he later founded the town of St. Joseph. Louis was a trader in New Mexico for a number of years before he moved to California in 1844. Shortly after coming to California he purchased the Jurupa rancho, where he settled with his family and became a man of considerable wealth and influence. Michel, or Miguel as his name appears in the Spanish documents, led a party of trappers down the Gila River in 1826. This party, of which James Ohio Pattie was a member, was attacked by Indians and all massacred except Robidoux, Pattie, and one other companion.²

Our story begins on September 20, 1824, when Robidoux with a small company of trappers set out from Fort Atkinson, a military post on the Missouri River near Council Bluffs, for Santa Fe. The event was chronicled by James Kennerly, who was located at the time at Fort Atkinson, and who entered in his journal on that date the brief note "Robidoux Party started for St. Afee today."³

Later in the fall or winter the small group was met on the Colorado or Green River by another small party, among whom was William Huddart. The account of this meeting was printed in the *Missouri Intelligencer* April 19, 1825, shortly after the return of Huddart to Missouri. The article runs: "William Huddart who went to Santa Fe in one of the trading companies last summer has just returned, having left Taos on the 12th of January last. He gives the following particulars: On the 24th of August he, in company with fourteen others, left Taos for the purpose of trapping for beaver, and traveled west thirty days. On Green River (probably the Rio Colorado of the West) the company separated, and nine ascended the river. Our informant was among those who remained; and in a few days they accidentally fell in with five other Americans, among whom was Mr. Rubideau. Two days after this, a large party of the Aripehoes [Arapahoes] attacked them, killed one person by the name of Nowlin, and robbed the others."⁴

On October 3, 1831, William Gordon, who had been engaged in the Rocky Mountain fur trade since 1822 and who had been asked for information regarding that trade, made a report to the Secretary of War in which he stated that in 1824 "eight of Nolidoux [']s men were killed by Comanches." This may refer to the experience of Robidoux's party while on its way to Santa Fe.⁴

²Joseph J. Hill, "Ewing Young in the Fur Trade of the Far Southwest," *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, XXIV (1923), p. 8-21.

³H. C. Dale, *The Ashley-Smith Explorations*, p. 291.

⁴U. S. 22nd Cong., 1st sess., Senate doc. 90, p. 83.



ANTOINE ROBIDOUX

Further details regarding the activities of either group are not known. Huddart, as we have seen, returned to Missouri in April, 1825. Robidoux did not return until the 30th of August. It is under that date that Kennerly entered the brief note in his journal: "Robidoux Party arrived from Tous."

For the next eight years we have, as yet, no documents which contribute any information concerning his movements. It is Kit Carson who continues the story. Carson had been in the mountains two years following his return from California with Ewing Young in 1831. It was October, 1833. He had come to Taos and disposed of his beaver for a good sum, "and everything of mountain life was forgotten for the time." But when his money was all spent it became necessary for him again to turn his face toward the mountains. In Taos, he says, he found Captain Lee, a partner of Bent and St. Vrain, who was purchasing goods to trade with the trappers in the mountains. "I joined him," Carson states, "and in the latter part of the month of October [1833] we started for the mountains to find the trappers. We followed the Spanish trail that leads to California till we struck White River, took down the White River till we struck Green River, crossed Green River to the Wintey [Uintah], one of its tributaries. There we found Mr. Robidoux. He had a party of some twenty men that were trapping and trading. The snow was now commencing to fall and we con-

cluded to go into winter quarters. We found a place that answered every purpose on the mouth of the Wintey."⁵

Their winter's camp, apparently, was located on the site of what became known as Fort Robidoux on the Uintah. It is possible that this event may be regarded as the founding of that trading post. Carson's statement seems to indicate that there was no fort there at the time they selected the place for their winter quarters. But frequent references to the post thereafter lead one to conclude that it was more or less a permanent institution from then on until it was destroyed by the Ute Indians in 1844.

In addition to this post, Robidoux also established one on the Gunnison River a short distance below the mouth of the Uncompahgre. The town of Roubideau and Roubideau Creek still mark the site of this old trading establishment, the ruins of which were noted by Gunnison when he passed the spot on September 17, 1853. E. G. Beckwith, the journalist of the expedition, recorded on that date, "We crossed the point of land lying between the Uncompahgra and Grand [now known as the Gunnison] rivers, reaching the latter at Roubideau's old trading fort, now entirely fallen to ruins. * * * A mile below the fort we crossed the river at an excellent ford; the bottom being a mile in width, and covered with abundant grass."⁶

From these two forts, Robidoux sent out trapping parties down the Colorado as far as the Gila, as well as to the various streams in the closer vicinity of the posts. To these trading establishments free trappers frequently made their way to trade their furs, collected on independent trapping tours, for new supplies and for the luxuries of trapper life.

The Robidoux posts, also, served as general outfitting depots not only for the trappers resorting there with furs but, also, for many an unfortunate trapper who suddenly found himself relieved of both horses and furs by the treacherous Indians. Ruxton, in his *Life in the Far West*, has given us an account of an incident which may be taken as a more or less typical case. In speaking of the adventures of La Bonte, after a skirmish with the Digger Indians possibly in the summer of 1834, he says, "La Bonte now found himself without animals, and fairly 'afoot'; consequently nothing remained for him but to seek some one of the trapping bands, and hire himself for the hunt. Luckily for him,

⁵Kit Carson's Story as Told by Himself. Ms. in Bancroft Library, p. 18-19. cf. Peters, *Life and Adventures of Kit Carson*, p. 70-71. The date is given in both references as the fall of 1832, but it is evident from the context that 1833 is correct.

⁶E. G. Beckwith, "Report of Explorations for a Route for the Pacific Railroad . . . near the 38th and 39th Parallels of North Latitude," p. 56. *Reports of Explorations and Surveys to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean*, vol. 2, pt. 1 (1855).

he soon fell in with Roubideau, on his way to the Uintah, and was supplied by him with a couple of animals; and thus equipped, he started again with a large band of trappers, who were going to hunt on the waters of Grand [Colorado] River and the Gila."

The expedition on which La Bonte now set out is of considerable interest. The leader of the party apparently was no other than Joe Walker although Ruxton simply refers to him as "Walker, the captain of the band." The trappers made their way down the Green and Colorado rivers to the Gila, where they spent some time trapping along its various tributaries. Then, "following the course of the Gila to the eastward, they crossed a range of the Sierra Madre, which is a continuation of the Rocky Mountains, and struck the waters of the Rio del Norte, below the settlements of New Mexico. On this stream they fared well, besides trapping a great quantity of beaver."

After spending several weeks on the lower waters of the Rio Grande del Norte they set out toward the north passing Socorro and Albuquerque, but "before reaching the capital of the province [Santa Fe], they struck again to the westward and following a small creek to its junction with the Green River, ascended that stream, trapping *en route* to the Uintah or Snake Fork, and arrived at Roubideau's rendezvous early in the fall, where they quickly disposed of their peltries, and were once more on 'the loose.'"⁷

In 1842 Joseph Williams, who had gone to Oregon the year before and who was now returning, arrived at Fort Bridger too late to make connections with the caravan of traders and trappers returning to St. Louis. He therefore set out for "Rubedeau's Fort" on the "Wintey River." Here he found Robidoux preparing to make a trip to New Mexico, and arranged to accompany him as far as Taos.

"We had to wait there for Mr. Rubedeau about eighteen days," writes Williams, "till he and his company and horse drivers were ready to start with us." This stay gave Williams an opportunity to study conditions at the fort, concerning which he says: "This place is equal to any I ever saw for wickedness and idleness. The French and Spaniards are all Roman Catholics; but are as wicked men, I think, as ever lived. No one who has not, like me, witnessed it, can have any idea of their wickedness. Some of these people at the Fort are fat and dirty, and idle and greasy." The delay was very disagreeable to him "on account of the wickedness of the people, and the drunkenness and swearing, and the debauchery of the men among the Indian women. They would buy and sell them to one another," he records. Being a Methodist preacher,

⁷G. F. Ruxton, *Life in the Far West* (1849), p. 98-104.

he says, "I tried several times to preach to them; but with little if any effect."

As a part of his cargo Williams informs us that "Mr. Rubedeau had collected several of the Indian squaws and young Indians to take to new Mexico. . . . The Spaniards would buy them for wives." On the second day of their journey "two of Rubedeau's squaws ran away," writes Williams, "and we had to wait two days till he could send back to the Fort for another squaw, for company for him."

On their way they passed "Fort Campogera [Uncompahgre], below the mouth of the Campogera River." This was Robidoux Fort on the Gunnison, already referred to. At this post Williams says that he "preached to a company of French, Spaniards, Indians, half-breeds, and Americans." Five days out from Fort Uncompahgre, Robidoux picked up a "wagon which he had left there a year before. He hitched his oxen to it and took it along." The party finally arrived at Taos in the latter part of August, 1842.⁸

Robidoux remained in New Mexico a little more than a month disposing of his goods and obtaining supplies for the coming year, and, on October 7, set out on his return journey to his fort on the Uintah. It so happened that a New England traveler, Rufus B. Sage, was at Taos at the time, and being desirous of a trip in the mountains, accompanied the Robidoux party. We are thus favored with an account of this expedition and are given a little glimpse into the mountain life and activities of Robidoux. "Our party," to quote Sage, "consisted of three Frenchmen and five Spaniards, under the direction of a man named Roubideau, formerly from St. Louis, Mo. Some eight pack-mules, laden at the rate of two hundred and fifty pounds each, conveyed a quantity of goods; these headed by a guide followed in Indian file, and the remainder of the company, mounted on horseback, brought up the rear. Crossing the Del Norte, we soon after struck into a large trail bearing a westerly course; following which, on the 13th inst. we crossed the main ridge of the Rocky Mountains by a feasible pass at the southerly extremity of the Sierra de Anahuac range, and found ourselves upon the waters of the Pacific. Six days subsequent, we reached Roubideau's Fort, at the forks of the Uintah, having passed several large streams in our course, as well as the two principal branches which unite to form the Colorado. This being the point of destination, our journey here came to a temporary close."⁹

⁸Joseph Williams, *Narrative of a Tour from the State of Indiana to the Oregon Territory, in the Years 1841-2* (Cincinnati, 1843), p. 38-40.

⁹Rufus B. Sage, *Scenes in the Rocky Mountains* (1846), p. 178. Solomon P. Sublette in a letter to his brother William, written just after his return from Taos and dated October 31, 1842, says: "Mr. Rubidoux made a very good trade last year. Goods was very scarce there when I left and it is too late to get in this fall. There was some talk of him a getting an outfit of Bent and St. Vrain and return immediately to his post." (Sublette Collection, Missouri Historical Society. Courtesy of LeRoy R. Hafén.)

For some cause or other, Sage makes no mention of the Uncompahgre post, although it is quite probable that the party passed that place on its journey to Uintah.

In discussing the latter fort and its trade, Sage says: "Roubideau's Fort is situated on the right bank of the Uintah, in lat. 40° 27' 45" north, long. 109° 56' 42" west. The trade of this post is conducted principally with the trapping parties frequenting the Big Bear, Green, Grand, and Colorado rivers, with their numerous tributaries, in search of fur-bearing game. A small business is also carried on with Snake and Utah Indians, living in the neighborhood of this establishment. The common articles of dealing are horses, with beaver, otter, deer, sheep, and elk skins, in barter for ammunition, fire-arms, knives, tobacco, beads, awls, etc. The Utahs and Snakes afford some of the largest and best finished sheep and deer skins I ever beheld—a single skin sometimes being amply sufficient for common sized pantaloons. These skins are dressed so neatly as frequently to attain a snowy whiteness, and possess the softness of velvet. They may be purchased for the trifling consideration of eight or ten charges of ammunition each, or two or three awls, or any other thing of proportional value. Skins are very abundant in these parts, as the natives, owing to the scarcity of buffalo, subsist entirely upon small game, which is found in immense quantities. This trade is quite profitable. The articles procured so cheaply, when taken to Santa Fe and the neighboring towns, find a ready cash market at prices ranging from one to two dollars each."¹⁰

Sage remained at the Uintah post some ten days. While there "a trapping party from the Gila came in . . . bringing with them a rich quantity of beaver, which they had caught during the preceding winter, spring, and summer upon the affluents of that river and the adjacent mountain streams. They had made a successful hunt, and gave a glowing description of the country visited."¹¹

Two years later, Fremont, on his return from Oregon and California, stopped at the Uintah fort, June 3, 1844. He refers to it as "a trading post belonging to Mr. A. Roubideau, on the principal fork of the Uintah River, situated a short distance above the junction of the two branches which make the river. It has a motley garrison," he says, "of Canadians and Spanish engages and hunters, with the usual number of Indian women." In a footnote he reports the rumor which later came to his attention that "this fort was attacked and taken by a band of Utah Indians since we passed it; and the men of the garrison killed, the women carried off. Mr.

¹⁰Sage, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 198.

Roubideau, a trader of St. Louis," he adds, "was absent, and so escaped the fate of the rest."¹²

On the 31st of August, 1844, when at Fort Bridger, James Clyman met Robidoux who, he says, was there "from the Arkansas with horses and mules and other articles purposely to catch our trade." It was some such excursion as this, possibly this very one, which saved his life when his fort on the Uintah was destroyed by the Utes.¹³

According to Mrs. Orral Messmore Robidoux, Antoine Robidoux returned to St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1845.¹⁴ The next year he became interpreter and guide for Kearny in his march to California with the Army of the West. While thus employed he was wounded in the battle of San Pascual on December 6, 1846, by a lance thrust in the spine, from which he never fully recovered, and for which during the last few years of his life he received a small pension from the government.¹⁵

As already stated, it is impossible to give a detailed account of the movements of Robidoux from the time that he first visited the Colorado River basin in the winter of 1824-5 to the time of the destruction of his post in 1844, but enough, perhaps, has been said to indicate that he was one of the principal characters in that trade. Operating the two posts in the Colorado River basin, he was looked to as a leader in the trade of that region during that entire period.

¹²J. C. Fremont, *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains* (Washington, 1845), p. 278-9. cf. *Niles Register*, vol. 63, p. 148 (May 10, 1845). A letter of Andrew W. Sublette to his brother William, dated at Taos, October 20, 1844, says: "The Youtou Indians are at ware with the Spaniards and whites. A Spaniard come in a feu days Since who was trapping with Rubadoux where he found them all killed five or six Spaniards and one American. From there he came to this place without shoes coat or no provisions which took him 14 days . . ." (Sublette Collection, Missouri Historical Society. Courtesy of LeRoy R. Hafen.)

¹³Charles L. Camp, *James Clyman, American Frontiersman* (San Francisco, 1928), p. 94.

¹⁴Orral Messmore Robidoux, *Memorial to the Robidoux Brothers* (Kansas City, 1924), p. 190.

¹⁵U. S. 34th Cong., 1st sess. House Report 157, serial 868, and U. S. 36th Cong., 1st sess. House Report 378, serial 1069.

Lyon], a military post on the Arkansas River, two hundred miles south of Denver. The soldiers are glad of the change but now the Indians are hostile, some of the roving bands, I dread going on the frontier. But this is the fate of the soldier.

Dec. 19. Again we are to move, are to start tomorrow. Sam [Samuel Harris, a brother-in-law] sold out his home and is going to join an Iowa regiment in his native town, Grinnel, Iowa, so Dora [sister of Mrs. Sanford] and I are again to be separated—perhaps forever. It is thought we will remain at the Post during the war,



MR. AND MRS. BYRON N. SANFORD
From daguerreotypes made in 1860

but who knows how long that will be? We are going to Mrs. Woodrow's tonight and join the companies that will camp across the river from there tomorrow. [The spot occupied by this camp is on the same ground where the Russell brothers discovered gold in Dry Creek about July 1, 1858.]

Sam has been employed to take me and what few things we have in his wagon, as there is no other transportation for the officers' wives. I am the only one in two companies. They are Infantry and of course By [Byron, Lieut. Sanford] has to be with his company. It is dreadful to start on such a trip at this season of the year without tents and very poorly supplied. I suppose Uncle Sam's soldiers fare better in the East. "Little Mrs. Sanford"

Life at Camp Weld and Fort Lyon in 1861-62 An Extract from the Diary of Mrs. Byron N. Sanford*

Edited by ALBERT B. SANFORD¹

Camp Weld, December 1, 1861. We hear that our Company with Co. C is to be sent to garrison Fort Wise [later known as Fort

*Mrs. Sanford was born at Rising Sun, Indiana, Dec. 17, 1838. She was married to Byron N. Sanford Feb. 14, 1860. Shortly after their marriage they left for the Pike's Peak region. Mr. Sanford received his commission as lieutenant in the First Colorado Regiment of Volunteers from Governor Gilpin, while mining at Gold Hill, Boulder County, in the summer of 1861. The First Regiment was stationed first at Camp Weld, now within the limits of Denver. It is at this point that we begin our quotations from the diary.

¹Mr. Sanford, Assistant Curator of History of the State Historical Society, values among his most cherished possessions the engaging diary kept by his mother during the pioneer days of Colorado.—Ed.

[not related to the author of the diary], so called to designate her from "Big Mrs. Sanford," I suppose, will go with me for company. The wives of some of the privates are going. Dora is to remain with Mrs. Woodrow while Sam is gone. [Mrs. Woodrow was the mother of Mrs. Nienheiser, now one of the prominent members of the Pioneer Woman's Aid Society of Denver.]

The hospital accommodations at Camp Weld are rather limited. I went the other day to see twenty-one soldiers who had been stricken with snow blindness while on a scouting trip. The poor fellows are in a darkened room. The surgeon said they must have shades made of green cloth to wear over their eyes. I went to all the stores but could not find any kind of green cloth, but I had a dark green satin parasol, almost new, cut it up to make all the shades possible for the afflicted soldiers. . . .

Dec. 28. Colorado City [site of present Colorado Springs]. We started from Denver the day after Christmas. I will not dwell upon my parting with Dora. Our trip thus far has been quite pleasant. Minnie ["Little Mrs. Sanford"] and I sleep in the wagon and are comfortable. By and Sam make their beds underneath and say they never slept better.

The day we left, the boys bought a guitar and presented it to me. I have since found out it was contraband—taken from a rebel saloon keeper in Denver. Of course I cannot restore it and may as well enjoy it. There are a great many rebel sympathizers in the country. We are laying over here for half a day so the men can visit the soda springs near by [Manitou Springs]. Only a few families here and houses mostly shanties. Country around seems adapted to cattle raising.

Last night we stopped at what is called "Dirty Woman's Ranch" and really it could have no more appropriate name. Minnie and I go into houses and cook the meals when we can. As we entered the door of this place the woman was pelting something with a broomstick. A young pig had wandered into the kitchen and got his head fast in a cream jar. It fitted pretty close and in frantic efforts to get loose, rolled over and over the floor, while the youngsters, who swarmed, it seemed, scampered under the beds as the mother pounded and yelled until, at last, jar and pig rolled out into the yard. We made our coffee and drank it with a meager lunch, deciding we had scant time to cook. We gave the youngsters some cookies as they gaped at us in wonder, paid the "Dirty Woman" for her trouble and returned to camp, where the boys had a rousing fire of pine logs and seemed very happy. . . .

The roads are very good, the scenery all the way from Denver fine, especially along Monument Creek, where there are all sorts of wonderful formations of the rocks, for which, I suppose, the

creek derives its name. All the creeks and places here have significant names.

January 5, 1862. We are now at Fort Lyon. The weather turned quite cold before we got through. The last day's trip Sam drove ahead of the command and arrived at the Post at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the companies not arriving until late in the evening. The "regulars" who have been garrisoned here had to join their regiments in the East and Volunteers are in command, Major Logan having charge. By is Acting Quartermaster. The fort is situated on the Arkansas River on level land. Our quarters are of stone with large, deep windows and lovely white pine floors. We are to occupy Captain Martin's quarters. He is a very affable gentleman and has left us a number of things to furnish our room. Gave us a good dinner. . . .

It looks lonely here with hardly a tree in sight and back as far as the eye can reach, a level plain. Coaches pass through from the Missouri River to New Mexico. There is a sutler's store where canned goods and general supplies are kept, but no vegetables, not even potatoes, just ordinary soldier rations. Henry is still our cook and I am indebted to him for some delicacies, such as snow birds and meadow larks broiled on toast. . . .

January 15. I am becoming reconciled—I might as well. Besides, I have found some very pleasant neighbors, Colonel Boone's family. He is Indian Agent, elderly, and has a young wife and two daughters, young ladies, Maggie and Mollie, the former being nearer my age, and I like her very much. [A. G. Boone was a grandson of Daniel Boone of Kentucky fame.] We spent the evening with them recently—Captain Sanborn, Lieut. Bonesteel, By and myself. They played cards and drank applejack. Of course I neither played nor drank, but ate an apple without the jack. Was certainly joked about my strict temperance and Methodist scruples, all of which did not hurt at all.

I spend many leisure moments trying to learn accompaniments on the guitar with Maggie's help. Henry, the cook, is my most appreciative listener. He stood by the door today as I was trying to play and sing and said, "If Henry was in his grave and the missus would sing, Henry would come to life again." Had not known of possessing such marvelous power. If he had said it made his hair rise on his head, I should have been equally complimented—and believed him.

Feb. 14, 1862. . . . There are fears that the Indians here will become hostile and join marauding bands. There is a large camp of them, getting their supplies, I suppose, and I am nervous all the time, knowing their treachery.

By and I went by invitation to see John Smith, the Indian interpreter, at his home near us. He is married to a squaw but they live quite civilized and have a half-breed baby boy named after Governor Gilpin. The squaws are very fond of money and make moccasins for sale. I thought of buying a pair, but, dear me, could not afford five dollars. I was admiring them when John called By outside, put a five dollar gold piece in his hand and told him to hand it to "Zerepta," as he wished to make me a present. By followed instructions, when she immediately handed the coin over to John. I wore the moccasins home and am wearing them all the time, as I have no other footwear.

The Fort has been full of Indians all day. I have had to lock my doors or they would fill the room. My windows are high up from the ground but they manage to darken them with their dirty visages. I have taken my journal to write, that seems to amuse them. One squaw has lifted her pappoose high up above the rest to attract my attention. It has the desired effect, for I turn to admire the tawny thing with its tously head and dusky wondering eyes. One little piccaninny at Boone's and this little creature are all the innocents I have seen since kissing little Franky [her sister's baby] at Denver.

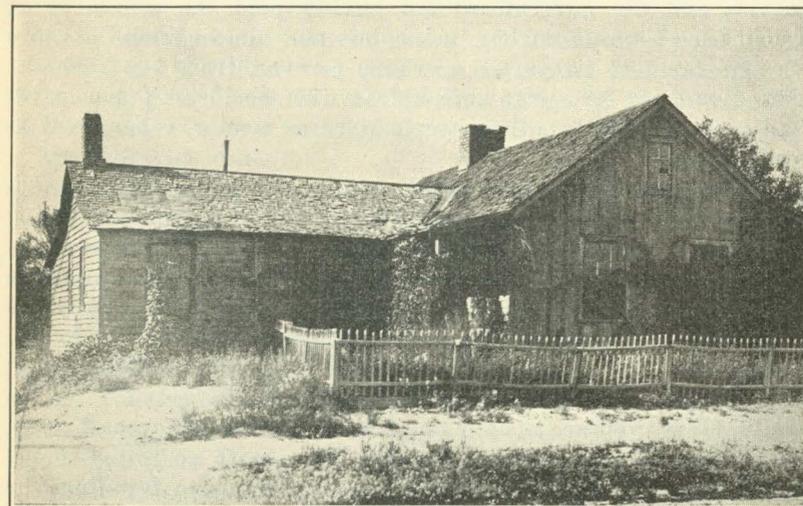
There seems to be a commotion. Ah, I see; an old "buck" has come and is perched on the shoulders of a squaw, peeking in at the topmost pane. He is making all sorts of signs and grimaces, wants to get inside, but I am impervious and turn my back on the scene, hoping they will soon take the hint and leave. Tomorrow soap and water will be in requisition to erase the maps of United States from the glass. . . .

Feb. 28. Well, I have done something I never expected to do. I played cards, but trust the motive will make it all right. I have been considerably exorcised over the Captain, Lieut. Bonesteel and By going to the sutler's to play for cigars, and sometimes, I hear, for wine. I expostulated with them, time and again, when Captain Sanborn said, "Mary, if you will learn to play the game of cribbage, I'll promise not to go there again. You know we have no amusements and have to do something." We are here like one family and it seems like keeping my own boys out of mischief. It is a mathematical game and, I confess, find it pleasant, but it is seldom I yield my scruples and I shall only play in our own quarters. . . .

March 1. I come with tearful eyes and saddened heart tonight, my journal. Only yesterday I thought this was to be our home for some time, but alas, we know not what a day may bring forth. Dispatches have come by messenger that the Texas Rangers are marching north to take Fort Union in New Mexico. Our whole

regiment is ordered to go at once on forced marches. The news came at four o'clock in the afternoon while the companies were on dress parade. By seven in the morning they will be on their way. They go to reenforce General Canby.

It will be a long, rough march over plains of sand and cactus—maybe on to certain death, for the rebel forces outnumber ours two to one. Our companies are to meet the regiment from Denver at Hull's Rancho, forty miles from Colorado City on the Arkansas River, where they cross and go south.



ONLY REMAINING BUILDING OF CAMP WELD
This building was at the southern end of "Officers' Row," now the corner of
W. 8th Avenue and Vallejo St., Denver

The women of the company will be sent to Denver. I have no time to write more. Farewell, old fort. May I never see you again as the wife of a soldier.

March 8. Denver. I am at Mrs. Sopris' home in Camp Weld. After a long, hard tramp, I am alive and ready to write a few of the incidents of the last ten days. The evening we received the news of departure from Fort Lyon, John Smith came and said I could go to Denver in their ambulance, as he and Mrs. Squaw Smith were going. I was almost frantic until then for there was no room for me anywhere else and I could not stay there. By was detailed by Major Logan to go to Denver to attend to something.

At seven o'clock our boys marched from the fort. Two teams hauled the women and children with their belongings and at nine o'clock A. M. the ambulance pulled out, carrying By and myself,

John and Zerepta Smith, with little Governor Gilpin. We camped the first night, By and I sleeping in the ambulance, while John and his squaw made their bed underneath.

We had an early start, arriving at Hull's Ranche about noon, to find the other eight companies already there. Another messenger had arrived to hurry forward the troops, so By was ordered to go with his company. John Smith, hearing the late news, put back to the fort and I had to be transferred to one of the wagons and only an hour to make further arrangements.

We had used up all the money we had when we went into the service and the government not having paid the men at Fort Lyon, here I was, homeless, moneyless and almost friendless in a strange land, to be parted, perhaps forever, from my husband. But it was not for me to shrink from the sacrifice. Other wives had to do the same, other hearts were as tender, other lives as sweet as mine.

I shall never forget when we came to say goodbye. There in the midst of a thousand men, with swollen eyes and almost breaking heart, I stood by my husband's side, wishing for one moment in private where I could throw myself into his arms and abandon myself to my grief. I felt I could not endure it, until I saw the tears trickling down By's cheek. Then all the heroic in my woman's nature revived, and I turned to be the comforter. At that moment, Captain Sopsis came up and said, "Don't feel so badly, Mary, you are not the only one." I told him, very briefly, how I was situated, when he said, "You are to go to my home. I will write to my wife," and hurriedly penning a few lines, he was gone. [Capt. Sopsis was a prominent Colorado pioneer. He was subsequently mayor of Denver.]

Here I am, taken in by dear Mrs. Sopsis until something else turns up. She keeps the "Officers' Mess" and I am to assist her some in the dining room, or not do anything unless I choose, but I feel so much better to be employed. . . .

Camp Weld is now occupied by the Second Regiment, Colorado Volunteers. I find a few old acquaintances but my nearest and dearest friends are gone. . . .

March 15. . . . Governor Gilpin took dinner with us today. He is a bachelor, very grave and gentlemanly, but very absent-minded. While he was busy talking with someone, I dropped my spool of thread, which rolled under the table. He got on his knees, secured the spool, handed it to me without a word and kept on with his conversation, not for a moment stopping to acknowledge my profuse thanks.

[After the New Mexico campaign, Lieut. Sanford joined his wife at Camp Weld, where he was acting quartermaster for two

years. From here he accepted a position in the United States mint at Denver in 1865, where he served faithfully for forty years. Mr. and Mrs. Sanford continued to live in Denver and reared their family here. Mr. Sanford died in November, 1914, and his wife's death occurred early in January, 1915.]

Old Julesburg and Fort Sedgwick

MRS. C. F. PARKER*

Old Julesburg was a historic place. Real history was made in and about the old town. The first Julesburg had its origin in a trading post established in the late fifties on the South Platte River, at what was called the "upper" or California crossing on the Overland Route.

This trading post was established by a Frenchman by the name of Jules Reni, or we find it sometimes "Beni." He was a real frontiersman, for in those days there were few evidences of the white man on the western plains except the long trail over which the Mormons, the Forty-niners and fur traders traveled. Over these routes freight wagons passed to California and the West, but real settlers were very few.

This trading post was situated about a mile east of the mouth of Lodgepole Creek. This was a favorite camping ground and crossing place for the Sioux and Cheyennes, particularly the latter, for many years. The valley of the Platte River was a famous hunting ground, first for the Indians who claimed it by inheritance, then by the white men, who found it abounding in buffalo, antelope, beaver and wild horses.

When Jones and Russel Co. abandoned the "Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express" route between Leavenworth and Denver, which was laid out south of the Platte in the spring of 1859, they were forced to move it to the north, along the old road on the south bank of the river from Fort Kearney to Denver. Among other stations put up along this road one was built at Jules Reni's trading post. Jules was put in charge of this and he was also made agent for the Pony Express division for twenty-five miles northwest, called then "Jules' stretch."

This was called a home station. It was also the end of the division, a junction on the stage line, and having a telegraph office in the southeast corner of the station, it made in the early 1860s one of the most important points on the Overland Trail. After the

*Mrs. Parker, of Julesburg, Colorado, has for a number of years been collecting data on the history of Old Julesburg and vicinity. Her worthy work in local history is of value not only to her home city, but to the state at large.—Ed.

discovery of gold in the Rocky Mountains in 1859, the Denver route, about 200 miles in length, of which Jules station was the end, was much used.

Soon about a dozen other buildings were built around the station, such as blacksmith shop, warehouse, stable, billiard saloon, and large boarding house for stage travelers. There was always the saloon, and at this one, particularly, vile whiskey was sold at "two bits a glass." Roads being long and transportation high, it was mixed with water to make it go as far as possible.

The town that sprang up came to be called Julesburg. From the first it was a wicked little place, for all the hard-boiled adventurers gathered here from East and West to gamble and rob stage and mail coaches. It came to be looked upon as the toughest town between the Missouri River and the Mountains. Ben Holladay tried to change its name to "Overland City" after he took over the route because of the bad reputation; but the reputation stuck and so did the name.

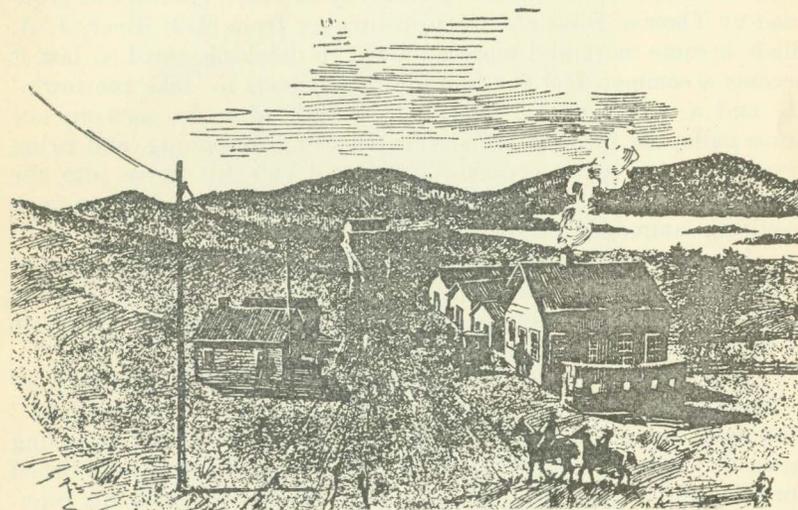
A man by the name of Williams managed the Express line, but trusted his men too far and as a consequence much express disappeared and the company nearly failed. Ficklin was then appointed as manager. Ficklin put Jack Slade in as Division Superintendent of the Sweetwater Division, extending from Julesburg to Rocky Ridge on Lodgepole Creek. Slade found that Jules was robbing the company (so the story of Frank A. Root goes, and as he was in the express business at an early date, I take it to be reliable). There were innumerable tales about Jules and Slade.

Jules was forced to pay back what he had been found guilty of taking, and though he resented it, he had it to do. He was very indignant and determined on revenge, so one day he shot and disabled Slade. Ficklin was on the telegraph line and got the news. The next stage brought him to the scene to hang Jules, which he promptly did. Fortunately, or unfortunately, for Jules, someone came along and cut the rope before he had quite passed out. Jules made himself scarce in those parts for a time, but bent on revenge he went on up the Rocky Ridge road with several of his friends and took his spite out on the stage company's property.

By this time Slade had recovered. When he found that Jules was in the neighborhood he asked Ficklin to put him on the Rocky Ridge Division. Knowing every foot of ground there, he soon found Jules, and with a party of western outlaws, caught him unawares. Slade is said to have tied him against the corral, cut off his ears and nailed them to the fence in plain sight, then nipped him with one bullet after another until he was wounded in many places. He begged to be killed outright, and when Slade had demonstrated till he thought Jules was satisfied with what he could do

with a gun, he killed him and left him there for the remainder of the day; then he superintended the burial. One ear he left nailed to the fence as a warning to robbers and outlaws. He dried the other ear and carried it in his pocket; he frequently used it by way of persuasion when things didn't come his way fast enough. When it was thrown on the counter the drinks flowed quickly and freely.

Mark Twain in his book, *Roughing It*, recounts stories and incidents during a trip by Overland stage in the early days. He says as he neared Old Julesburg, stories of Slade were heard on



JULESBURG IN 1865
(From an old sketch)

the coaches and at every corner, and that "Slade was feared from Kearney west more than the Almighty."

Slade made a good division superintendent. He made such a reputation in dealing with Jules that the gangs of robbers and outlaws which visited the stage line in the vicinity of Julesburg thinned out and peace reigned to some extent; but the reputation clings to this day. Notwithstanding the reputation Jack Slade made as an outlaw hunter, he too went wrong. In making history for the Overland Stage line he shot down too many men and drank too much bad whiskey. It went to his head and to his heart and he did many cruel things.

The stories of Slade are many and varied. There are no two alike. In the days of slow ox teams and stagecoaches, history was being made rapidly and to the rough, desolate western plains country came writers, story tellers, adventurers, and newspaper men.

All gathered stories to tell and all told them differently. Whether it was a news article in a newspaper, or a dime novel about Deadwood Dick, or a play by Buntline featuring Buffalo Bill, Tarbeaux and Dashing Charlie, people devoured it.

Stories of Old Julesburg or "Overland City," as it was called for a time, were a "scoop" for press writers. Often a coach stopped at Old Julesburg with a writer sitting on top, anxious to be on the scene to see life as it was lived on the plains and anxious to use his pen and imagination as well. So many bits of history told by them can be picked up here and there in unexpected places. For instance, we find Slade's last history in *The Vigilantes of Montana* by Thomas Dinsdale. "On returning from Milk River, J. A. Slade became more and more addicted to drinking, until at last it became a common feat for him and his friends to 'take the town.' He and a couple of his dependents might often be seen on one horse galloping through the streets, shouting, whooping, and firing revolvers. On many occasions he would ride his horse into the stores, break up bars, toss the scales out the window and use very insulting language to those present."

It was a custom when shop keepers knew he was spending the evening in town to close the shop and put out the lights, that he might not be tempted to "shoot up the place." When he was sober he would pay for his riotous destruction.

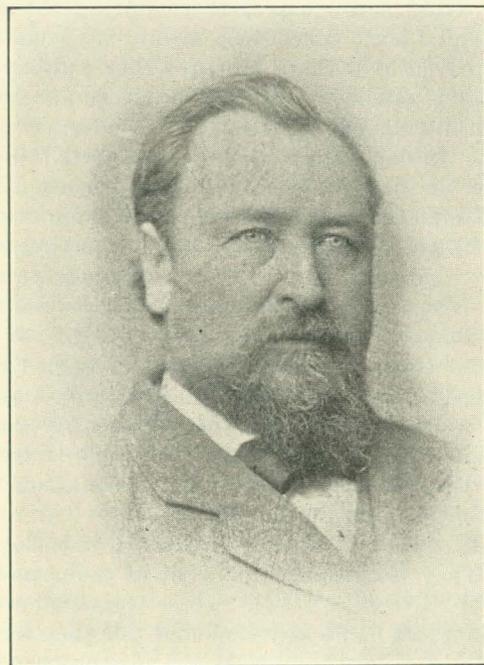
One day he gave one of his friends a beating. He had been on a drunken spree all day and had made the town "a perfect hell." The next day he was arrested for tearing to pieces and stamping upon a "Writ of the court," which the Vigilantes had established for trial and punishment of crime. The Vigilantes knew his reputation and knew the time had come when either he or the Court would rule; if he was dealt with at all, it must be final or his vengeance would fall upon the committee. Slade had many friends who begged for his life, but the miners at Virginia City, Montana, were of one mind: they wanted him hanged, and the committee left it to their hands. Though the leading citizens regretted that such severe measures had to be taken, he was hanged, and so two of the outstanding pioneers who made the reputation of Old Julesburg notorious passed over the Divide. The fame of the little city grew till 1865, when the Indians burned it to the ground. The story of three other Julesburgs is another tale. Closely connected with the history of Old Julesburg is the history of

FORT SEDGWICK

In the early '60s, with the great Civil War in progress, the nation was so anxious and torn with heart-breaking difficulties in the more settled portions of the Union, that the growing Indian

troubles in the West did not attract as much attention as they would have done at another time.

In 1863 the travel over the Overland Trail through the Platte Valley had been so heavy and the inroads upon the game, which the Indians thought belonged to them, were so great that they began seriously to object. Many were the invasions on trading posts and travelers and upon the very few ranches that were being established. The Indians were numerous and powerful at this time, though there were a great many fortifications along the lines



CAPT. N. J. O'BRIEN, WHO ESTABLISHED FORT SEDGWICK

of western travel, still there were miles and miles of unguarded roads, besides country which had never been explored.

It was thought best to further protect western travelers and settlements from the Indian invasions. Twelve companies of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry were sent out on this mission in September, 1863, with Captain N. J. O'Brien as Captain and senior officer. These companies traveled from Fort Kearney along the Platte Valley, strengthening fortifications and building new ones. Here during the summer of 1864 there was little ox team travel over the Platte Valley, for Indian scares had discouraged it. The Smoky

Hill Route had its troubles, too, and as a fort was much needed at Old Julesburg, General Mitchel decided to put one there. Captain O'Brien and his company were ordered to pick out the place and make the necessary arrangements.

They came down from Fort Laramie, where they had been, and camped near Julesburg station, under disadvantages. There was no wood about the country nearer than Ash Hollow, so to Ash Hollow they went for cedars to burn. They took a guide, four teams, a howitzer and thirty men, for use in case of an Indian attack.

They saw a fire arrow signal twice during the night. They camped there and Lieut. Ware, who always used his saddle for a pillow, was deprived of it that night, for they saddled their horses to be ready to go if attacked. In place of the saddle he used a sack of bacon, which during the night a wolf pulled out from under his head. But the Indian attack that was expected did not come. After spending the day getting wood, they cooked a little supper and started out with their loads. It took until ten o'clock that night to get out of the gulch. Here they camped, making a quadrangle of their wagons that they might have their wood for protection in case of attack. The next night they arrived in Julesburg with their wood and had a good cooked supper, the first for some time.

About a mile west of the station a man named Samuel Bancroft had started a ranch. He had an adobe house and storeroom and two good wells, just opposite the mouth of Lodgepole Creek, on the south side of the South Platte River. The telegraph station was used and Captain O'Brien got permission from the Government to buy this ranch and fortify it.

They went to work at once to enlarge it, to make a sod corral with stables. They telegraphed for a lot of cedar posts from Cottonwood Canyon, 105 miles away. These were sent with an escort of soldiers. Bancroft had a sod plow and this they used to cut sod for the thick walls. Everybody worked and soon they had quite an imposing array of fortifications, mostly sod, and fireproof.

At the stage station there was a great quantity of shelled corn, stored for the time when the stages could start running again, but as yet they were not running, so the fort, which at first was called "Camp Rankin" and then Fort Sedgwick,¹ took over and paid for a large quantity of corn. They put up the hay on the ranch so their horses were provided for for the winter.

There had been an order from General Mitchel that no wagon train should proceed over the trail unless there were a hundred armed men with it, because of Indian depredations between Kearney and Fort Sedgwick. It was, therefore, some time before such a

¹Data furnished by the War Department, Washington, D. C.—Ed.

large train gathered at Julesburg, and when it did come they were instructed what to do in case of an Indian attack. They were escorted by the soldiers past a dangerous place in the road called "Devil's Dive" (now the Italian's Cave), a few miles east of Old Julesburg. This was a frequent place of attack both by Indians and outlaws. From this point on there was an open road where they could see far ahead. Gen. Mitchel soon had the stages running again in twos, fours or sixes and they were full to overflowing to Denver, but as yet they could not run up the Lodgepole route.

One day when some soldiers were scouting about they found sixteen deserted emigrant wagons all parked in a quadrangle as was the habit in those days; tongues propped up with the neck yoke and harness on the tongues. Harnesses were rather rotten, proving they had been there some time. The grass had grown tall about the wheels but nothing could be found to identify the travelers who had left them there or nothing to tell their story.

By November, 1864, the ranches began to be occupied again and the Indian scare seemed over. Soldiers were stationed about every twenty-five miles along the road to escort mail trains and stages and a few wagon trains.

The Sioux were trying their best to keep their young men from raids. It was easier to feed and clothe the Indians than to fight them. According to Eugene Ware, the Cheyennes used the least judgment and were unreliable; the Arapahoes came next. The most reliable and dependable were the Brule Sioux. Spotted Tail was their chief. If they made any promises they kept them. Spotted Tail ("Shan-tag-alisk") had a daughter who loved a white soldier and because her love was not returned, she died of a broken heart. Before she died she told her father of her love for the white people and her desire to live like them. She made him promise he would live at peace with them. Always when he spoke in council he spoke of her and his desire to fulfill his promise to her. Captain O'Brien had many evidences of his friendship. Often if he knew of bands of Indians that were not under his control making trouble, he sent warning to Fort Sedgwick.

On January 7, 1865, some Indians were seen around Julesburg and a squad of soldiers pursued them and soon the whole garrison, about sixty men, were out. The number of Indians kept increasing until there were about a thousand Cheyennes and Arapahoes against sixty soldiers. About fourteen soldiers were killed, some of the best men and officers. There were, however, fifty-six Indians killed.

Immediately Gen. Mitchel ordered O'Brien and all his able men to join him in an Indian campaign to the south. It was bitter cold January weather. They marched far down into what is now

Kansas but found no large Indian trails, only a few scattered ones. General Mitchel was greatly disappointed not to find where the Indians had gone. They were out in the bitter weather twelve days.

He decided on a prairie fire to burn them out. This was arranged by telegraph. At sundown prairie fires were to be simultaneously set from Fort Kearney to Denver. Ranchers were instructed and orders carried out. Small bales of hay bound with chains were fired and dragged while burning along the ground till the fire connected with the one ahead and at dusk the whole country was ablaze and the next morning the sun rose on black desolation. This forced the Indians to the north of the Platte River, where they wanted them.

When O'Brien and his men arrived at Cottonwood, now Fort McPherson, they found trouble around Julesburg, news having arrived by telegraph. He and a few soldiers set out for Fort Sedgwick. When they arrived in sight of the fort they saw Julesburg station and the little town about it in flames. Under cover of the smoke they were able to get very near to the fort before they were seen. They made a dash for it, using their howitzer, and the fort answered in the same way. The Indians cleared the track. The Indians were too numerous for the little band of soldiers to battle.

All night, February 2, 1865, the Indians danced about the big fire they had made by cutting down ten miles of telegraph poles. All night they carried away corn, flour, whiskey, and all kinds of supplies which were stored at the station. They killed cattle and had a barbecue and shrieked and yelled terrifyingly. The fire spread and the Indians danced about it in great numbers. It was estimated that about five thousand Indians were assembled. Suddenly, near morning, no Indians were in sight and the watching force at the fort thought there was to be an attack, and had everything in readiness, but dawn came, showing the Indians had slipped away under cover of darkness.

The sun rose on the smoking ashes of the little town of Old Julesburg. All that was left was the reputation. Since that time three other Julesburgs have been established, two flourished and died, the last one lives.

Fort Sedgwick was kept up as a fort for a number of years, but there seems to be little account of Indian fighting in the years that followed. The fort was abandoned in May, 1871. The Government Reservation was turned over to the Interior Department and later was occupied by settlers.

The Tyler Rangers; the Black Hawk Company and the Indian Uprising of 1864

JAMES F. WILLARD*

The story of the Indian troubles of the year 1864 occupies a large amount of space in the early annals of the Territory of Colorado. In this story the battle of Sand Creek is of major importance, not only because of the crushing blow dealt the Indians, but also because of the acrimonious discussion that arose over the conduct of Colonel John M. Chivington and the troops that he commanded. So much attention has been paid to this outstanding event that the historians of Colorado have overlooked the activity of a company of rangers that was organized at the same time (August, 1864) as the small army that finally surprised the Indians at Sand Creek. This little troop, recruited by Clinton M. Tyler of Black Hawk, would seem to be worthy of notice, even though its career was far from spectacular.

After it had been decided to attempt by armed force to put an end to the Indian outrages on the Plains, Governor John Evans issued a proclamation calling for volunteers. On the thirteenth of August, Hal Sayre, then at Central City, recorded in his diary, "Rec'd Recruiting Commission from Gov. Evans to Recruit men for the Third Colorado Cavalry at about 5 P. M. it being Saturday. Got out Posters and gave notice of a war meeting at the Montana Theatre tomorrow."¹ Like word would have reached Black Hawk at the same time. In the latter mountain town Clinton M. Tyler, commissioned by Governor Evans as Captain, organized a company of rangers numbering in all ninety officers and men.² Like the larger body that was later commanded by Chivington, they were to proceed to the Plains to protect the people from the Indians.

With three exceptions the members of the company were enrolled at Black Hawk on the fifteenth of August. On the same day they were mustered into service by Judge Backus.

We have no contemporary description of the appearance of the hastily recruited company, as it set out for Denver on the fifteenth of August. The Muster Roll of the company, however, contains a report of an inspection made at a later date by Major General Henry M. Teller. It reads: "Discipline: Good. Instruction: Fair.

*Professor Willard, of the University of Colorado, is a consistent collector and an excellent editor of source material for Colorado history. His previous contributions to the *Colorado Magazine* appeared in the issues of May, 1929, and March, 1930.—Ed.

¹Ms. diary of Hal Sayre loaned the writer by Robert Sayre. Hal Sayre kept a diary of the campaign that culminated at Sand Creek.

²The information about this company is taken from its muster roll now in the possession of the University of Colorado Historical Collections.

Military Appearance: Good. Arms: Good, found by themselves. Accoutrements: Various, found by themselves. Clothing: Poor, found by themselves."

The officers of the Rangers were: Clinton M. Tyler, captain; Isaac Whiteer, first lieutenant; Holden R. Eldred, second lieutenant; Edward B. Stillings, third lieutenant; Erasmus Garrott, surgeon, and George Bruce, ensign. All these, save the surgeon, were enrolled at Black Hawk. Dr. Garrott was enrolled in Denver. All of the officers received commissions from Governor Evans. There were five sergeants and six corporals. The privates numbered seventy-three. Of the latter, seven did not complete their service with the company; one was discharged on the twenty-fourth of August, and the remainder between the thirteenth and twenty-fifth of September. No reasons are given for the release from duty.

What Captain Tyler's company did after the fifteenth of August is best described by the record on the Muster Roll:

"The Co was organized on the 15th of August 1864 marched to Denver on the 15th & 16th 40 miles 17th & 18th spent in Denver drawing Armes and Subsistence. On the afternoon of the 19th the Co left Denver and marched 10 miles on the Cutoff 20th marched to Box Elder scouting party 10 miles on right flank 21st marched to Living Springs Scouting party Started for Hd Waters of Bijou 75 miles from road 22nd marched to Bijou Scouting party returned with relics of Hungate family 23rd marched to Junction camped at Douglass Ranche 24 marched to Godfreys ranche Scouting parties out 10 to 15 miles on both flanks. 25th main Command marched to Valey Station 26 marched 18 miles. Strong scouting party left morning of 25th to examine a series of Small Springs formally much frequented by Indians 35 or 50 miles from road returned evening of 26th 27th marched 20 miles 28th camped below Julesburg Col. 29th camped 4 miles above Buck Eye Ranch 30th camped at Beauvais attempt made to run off stock was repulsed 31st remained at Beauvais. sent out strong scouting party which crossed to North Platte visited Ash Hollow and was absent 5 days Suffered last two days for want of provisions

"Sept 1st marched to Alkali 2nd marched to 6 miles above Ofallons Bluffs. Strong scouting party out on North Platte to support scouts sent out 2 days previous 3rd marched to Fremonts Springs 4th 1 mile above Morrows Ranch one of scouting party got in with information of the rest attempt made to drive off stock in the night was repulsed. 5th command moved to Morrows ranch scouts all in 6th command drawing supplies at Cottonwood N. 5 [?]-Strong scouting party left for republican 8th Scouting party reach Republican 10th main command started for

Republican leaving dismounted men to guard Waggons 11th Scouting party came in 12th main command met by Genl Michell's command same day Pawnee Indians attacked scouting party of 5 men with Sioux Guide held them at bay on hour until Genl Mitchell's arrived 13th Command returned Platte camped at Cottonwood 14th drawing supplies 15th marched to Morrows Ranche 16th camped at Freemonts Springs recieved information of the Burning of Bakers Ranche & a Stage Station made forced March camped a few hours at Ofallons Bluffs and reached Stage Station nigh of the 18th Scouting party struck fresh trail of about 50 Ponies orders from Genl Mitchell not to follow 19th information reed of band of Sioux crossing at Beauvais command halted by order of Genl Mitchell when on the march to intercept them 20th reached Beauvais. broke camp for home. Morning of 22nd reached Julesburg. 25th 4 miles below Junction Ranche 26th 6 miles below Freemonts orchard 27th Eagles nest 28th OK House 30th Denver turned in Armes & Transportation Oct 14th Co reached Black Hawk relieved from active service by order of Maj Genl Teller"

On the return of the Company to Denver it was addressed by Governor John Evans. His address is printed in the *Rocky Mountain News* of September 30, 1864, and reads:³

"Capt. Tyler, officers and men of 'The Tyler Rangers,' Col. Vol. Militia:

"Gentlemen—On your return, in behalf of your fellow citizens of Colorado and common country, I greet you.

"While a whole regiment of patriotic citizens have nobly responded to our country's call and volunteered in the United States service for one hundred days to fight the hostile Indians of the plains, clothed, subsisted, mounted and equipped at Government expense, with the necessary attendant delays, you have mounted and equipped yourselves, under my proclamation calling for your service and were more promptly at the point of danger. A more noble and patriotic service than yours has not been rendered by any body of men at any period in the history of our country.

"On the 15th of August, only four days after the issue of my proclamation, you had enlisted, mounted and marched from Black Hawk your full company of men. On the 19th ult. you left Denver for the scene of Indian depredations and hostilities—as well appointed and efficient a company as ever engaged in the defense of this country.

"On the march from here to the Junction you opportunely

³The State Historical Society of Colorado called my attention to this address and supplied the text.

placed yourselves in that position where your presence materially aided in preventing one of the most extensive and horrible Indian massacres ever planned by brutal malice and savage barbarity.

“On the second night, after your march from Denver, I received the most reliable information through friendly Indians coming directly from their camp, near the head of Beaver Creek, of the presence there of from 800 to 1,000 warriors of the Confederate tribes of Sioux, Chyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowa, Camanche and Apache Indians. Also, that they had agreed to divide into four parties for the purpose of a general attack upon the settlements about equidistant from their general rendezvous, extending from a point on the Platte River below the Junction, for about 100 miles to Fort Lupton, a short distance below Denver—also along Cherry Creek to its source, about fifty miles; also along the Fontaine qui Bouille and the Arkansas about 100 miles. Their plan was to divide into four parties, about 300 to go toward the Junction, 100 toward Fort Lupton, 250 to Cherry Creek and about 300 to Fontaine qui Bouille and the Arkansas River. These parties upon approaching the points designated were to divide into small bands and spread along those isolated settlements, and, at the dread hour of the night, to murder the inhabitants and plunder their houses and steal their stock. And, but for the timely warning and vigilant preparation for defense, there is not a doubt but Colorado would have been the scene of the most horrible Indian massacre that has occurred in the history of any country in the world.

“At midnight I sent a telegraphic dispatch to the Junction, directing that the settlements should be alarmed, and notifying them of your presence in the neighborhood. A dispatch, by messenger, was sent to Captain S. E. Browne, then in command of his militia company on the Boulder, ordering him to move his command at once to Fort Lupton, to which he responded. From military district headquarters was dispatched a messenger up Cherry Creek, at the head of which Capt. A. J. Gill, with his volunteer militia company, sent out scouts and protected the settlements. The military express also went to the settlements on the Fontaine qui Bouille where two military companies were put on the alert, and from thence to Pueblo, where Lieut., now Colonel, Shoup had a detachment; and down the Arkansas to Camp Fillmore, garrisoned with another detachment of the First Regiment of Colorado Volunteer Cavalry. And thus by being defended by militia and United States Volunteers of the First Regiment of Colorado Cavalry and by being timely placed on the alert, this extensive line of settlements was preserved from the contemplated surprise, and its horrible consequences.

“The Indians made their appearance at the appointed time at various points as foretold. On Cherry Creek, they killed one man and shot their arrows into a number of cattle. Below Fort Lupton they killed one man, between Latham and Fremont's Orchard they stole one hundred and fifty head of horses and mules. Many parties of Indians at different points were seen skulking in the bluffs, and their trails were distinctly seen by yourselves. But, finding the people aroused, and the soldiers near and patrolling the principal points for their attack, their plan or surprise was frustrated and they retired to their safe haunts in the wilderness of the plains. Your timely presence between their general rendezvous and the Platte at the Junction doubtless saved that extensive line of settlement from molestation.

“Nor is this all. After rendering this important service with unprecedented energy and courage, you pressed your way three hundred miles down the line of our communication with the States to the place where the greatest depredations were being committed. Thence under privation and difficulties you courageously pursued the hostile savages to their haunts on the Republican, but to find that they had fled before your march to regions beyond your means of subsistence to pursue them, and for want of supplies, you were forced to return; having thus accomplished a march that would do credit and add lustre to the fame of the most valiant veterans of the army. You have returned. Under these circumstances let the mean and groveling spirits that would cast obloquy upon the gallant militia of our Territory receive the righteous indignation of all good men, which they deserve—while the militia, and particularly the ‘Tyler Rangers,’ shall live in the praise and gratitude of all our good and true, loyal and just citizens.

“All honor to the Colorado volunteers, both of the United States Army and of the militia.”

At the time when the company was mustered out the officers and men had, with the exception of the men discharged, served one month and twenty-nine days. The salaries remind us that military service was not an employment that was attractive from a financial point of view. Captain Tyler was to receive \$70 a month; the first and the second lieutenant, \$53.33; the third lieutenant, the surgeon and the ensign, \$16. The monthly salary of the first sergeant was \$24; of the other sergeants, \$20; of the corporals, \$18; and of the privates, \$16. The three higher officers were allowed in addition \$23.60 for “servants pay,” and \$90 for subsistence. The lesser officers, the non-commissioned officers, and the privates were each credited with \$6.88 for “servants

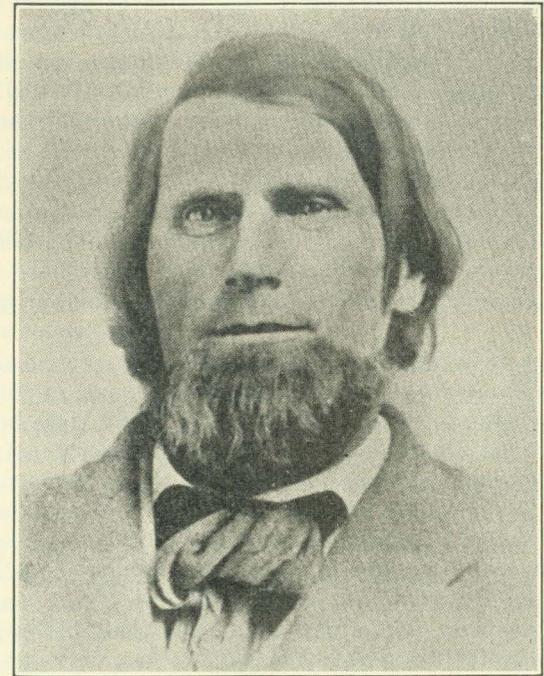
clothing" and 40 cents a day for "use of horse and horse equipments."

On the second page of the Muster Roll is a statement signed by "Sam. H. Elbert, Secy and Acting Governor of Colorado Ter'y" which brings the official story of Captain Tyler's company of Rangers to a close: "I hereby certify that this Roll shows the true statement of Capt. C. M. Tylers Company Colorado Militia called out by order of Gov. John Evans of Colorado Territory and that it was necessary for protection from Indians and that the services were performed as stated and that all officers connected with the Company and Maj. Genl. H. M. Teller were duly appointed and commissioned by the Governor of Colorado Territory."

While it is clear that the company of Rangers led by Captain Tyler engaged in no battles with the Indians, it is equally clear that it added materially to the safety of the inhabitants of northern Colorado. Hal Sayre, in the diary already referred to, records that he arrived in Fort Lupton on the ninth and "Found Fort full of families who had collected there for protection." The feeling of apprehension to which this bears witness, a feeling amply justified by the situation described in the Governor's address, must have been considerably allayed by the presence in the district of this body of stalwart Black Hawk citizens.

of Kit Carson, and after the death of the more noted plainsman, by request in Carson's last will, he became executor of Carson's estate and protector of his children. Finally, in his last and more peaceful days, he was a ranchman and sheep owner.

The wife, a lineal descendant of prominent Spanish ancestors living in Taos County, New Mexico, was Remulda Luna, a daughter of the wife of Charles Bent (by a former marriage), the first appointed Governor of New Mexico after General Kearny had proclaimed that province a part of the United States. She was a niece also of Kit Carson's wife, "Aunt Josepha." She was at the Bent home in Taos on that terrible night and day, January 19, 1847,



THOMAS O. BOGGS

Thomas O. Boggs, Early Scout and Plainsman

ALBERT W. THOMPSON*

In unmarked graves, some four or five feet apart, in what is known as "the old cemetery" in Clayton, New Mexico, rest the remains of two persons who, in life, contributed much to the times in which they lived, the so-called early days of Colorado and New Mexico.

One, the husband, was the son of a Missouri governor, a great-grandson on his mother's side of Daniel Boone. He was a scout, bearer of important dispatches across the plains just after the American occupation of New Mexico in 1846, an Indian trader, fighter, and interpreter of their dialects, and widely known among them as "Wahk-po-hum," or "White Horse." He was an employe of the Bents of Bent's Fort fame, a business associate of Maxwell, a relative by marriage and a boon companion for years

*Mr. Thompson, who has long interested himself in early history, came to southern Colorado and northeastern New Mexico in the eighties and took part in much of the pioneer development of the region. He was for a number of years a neighbor and close friend of T. O. Boggs, and from him obtained stories of the experiences of the old frontiersman.—Ed.

when the newly appointed Governor, on a visit to his home from the capital in Santa Fe, was barbarously assassinated by insurrectionists. With escape despaired of, she held in her arms and lap the wounded executive as the miscreant Tomisito proceeded to scalp him, despite her entreaties and protestations. Later with Mrs. Bent and Mrs. Carson, who were present in the turmoil, she escaped from the fury of the mob through the interposition of a friendly native. The writer recalls the emphasis of her relation of that

night and the heroic part she then played, as it was detailed to him years ago. On such occasions, though more than half a century after its enactment, she would cover her eyes with her hands as the appalling scene in all its brutality was reenacted.

Thomas Oliver Boggs was born August 22, 1824, on the Neosho River, Indian Territory, among the Osage Indians. The exact site is unknown. His father, Lilburn W. Boggs, was at that time a member of the Indian trading firm of Choteau, Ballio & Co., in charge of the post of the American Fur Company. He was a man of much prominence and once held the gubernatorial office of Missouri. He was twice married. His first wife, by whom he had two sons, Angus and Henry C., was Julia Ann Bent, a daughter of Judge Silas Bent of St. Louis, and sister of the Bent brothers, Charles, William, and others, builders of Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River. After her death, L. W. Boggs married Panthea Grant Boone, grand-daughter of the redoubtable Daniel Boone. Of this union ten children were born, seven boys and three girls, of whom Thomas O. was the eldest.

In 1846 Governor Boggs left Missouri and trekked across the plains to California, his caravan being just ahead of the Donner party. He settled first in Sonora, where he lived till 1851, and from thence moved to Napa Valley, four miles above the present city of Napa. He was several times elected to the legislature of California.

Thomas O. Boggs spent the years of his boyhood and early manhood with his uncle, Colonel Albert G. Boone, at Independence, Missouri, where the latter had a trading post. Here he received a fair commercial education, of the kind and character offered by this growing settlement and supply point for Santa Fe caravans on the Missouri. The business brought both uncle and nephew in contact with the Pawnees, Delawares, Foxes, and Wyandottes, and was probably lucrative. Acquiring here a knowledge of Indian customs and language, Boggs joined, in 1843 or 1844, a caravan westbound from Independence. It is not improbable that this migration was encouraged by the brothers of his father's first wife, the Bents. At any rate, he was employed at their frontier fortification on the Arkansas in 1844.¹ In that year Boggs made his first journey into New Mexico, visiting Taos, where he remained for two weeks, sent thither by his employers, the Bents. His mission finished, he returned to the Arkansas.

In 1845 William Bent dispatched his brother George into New Mexico and accompanying him was Boggs. After some time they returned with a great number of animals, which later were sent

east to Missouri, where they were profitably sold.² This and future enterprises of the same sort, are said to have been the beginning of the Missouri mule market, which made the state famous in after years.

Trips to Taos, where the Bents maintained in the '40s, according to Boggs, "a large establishment," were frequently made by Boggs. He writes of being in charge of a pack-train thereto, and presumably from Bent's great base, the fort on the Arkansas (some six miles below the present city of La Junta), for Taos at that time vied with Santa Fe as a high point of commercialism, though the caravans of Gregg and others had long since wended their way across the mountains and into the capital of the province. At Taos Boggs met men of prominence, Kit Carson and others, between whom a friendship sprang up which was to be lifelong. Lucien B. Maxwell had recently entered into the employment of his father-in-law, Judge Beaubien, and like Carson, Boggs and St. Vrain, was then a not unwilling employe of those who needed scout duty. This future owner of the great Grant (Maxwell Grant), on reaching Taos in July, 1843, sent thither by Colonel Fremont from Pueblo on the Arkansas, found that Beaubien, from whom the Colonel had expected to secure needed provisions, had recently suffered in the "tumult" of that year, raised by the "Civilized Indians," and had been obliged to make his escape to Santa Fe. Those were troublesome and insecure times.

A mutual acquaintance first arising in Taos, brought about the marriage of the young step-daughter of trader Charles Bent, Miss Luna, and Boggs. They were wedded in 1846, amidst settings befitting the occasion, and with many festivities. The bride was young, comely and had good social position. She was not much younger than her aunt, Mrs. Carson, with whom, to the end of the latter's life, she was to be companion and intimate associate. For a time immediately after this marriage, Boggs resided at Bent's Fort. "I took my wife to Bent's Fort," he says, "from there returned to Taos with the families of Charles Bent, Kit Carson and my own. Was in Taos when war was declared between Mexico and the United States."³

About this time, important events were transpiring in the West. On July 31, 1846, General Kearny, after his march from Ft. Leavenworth, reached Bent's Fort, and on August 18th entered Santa Fe, which accomplished, he continued on west. Of this march and subsequent developments we are not here particularly interested, except that this subjugation called for scouts and couriers, those who could be trusted to perform necessary and hazardous

¹A dictation of Thos. O. Boggs to J. G. Grayson in 1885. The original manuscript is in the Bancroft Library, University of California. A photostat copy is among the collections of the State Historical Society of Colorado.

²Kansas State Historical Society Collections, Vol. XV.

³Boggs dictation, *op cit.*

duty. And so Carson and Boggs were drafted, Carson guiding Kearny to California, and Boggs, with his knowledge of the plains and Indian languages, available for a cross-country march. He was probably in Santa Fe from his home in Taos, where he had left his family with his wife's relatives, much of the time immediately after the American occupation.

In the possession of the writer is a dictation which Boggs gave him in 1889. It details his experiences on an overland trip as a bearer of dispatches from army officers in Santa Fe in 1846 to Ft. Leavenworth, and is in part as follows:

"I was 22 years old [he begins] when I was selected to carry government messages from Army headquarters, Santa Fe, to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. Kit [Carson] had gone on to the coast with General Kearny and had been in New Mexico this duty would, unquestionably, have devolved on him. Officers at Ft. Marcy [Santa Fe] sent for me, and after a few minutes conversation it was decided that I should at once select such men, animals and accoutrements as I might need for a six weeks journey, and get away as soon as I could for Ft. Leavenworth. I accordingly picked eight men to go with me, two Mexicans, two young fellows who had come out with the infantry, and four soldiers. We were well mounted on government mules, two for each man and a couple for pack animals. Provisions were limited; corn for the animals, some flour, bacon and coffee for ourselves. Game was abundant, on which we expected to exist principally, and on the morning of December 19, 1846, our buckskin pouches containing the valuable correspondence securely sewed and made up like a pack, half on each side of the animal, were thrown onto our mules, our personal baggage was lashed to the animals we were not riding, and amidst the salutation of the garrison we were off.

"Everything went on pleasantly for a time. Christmas we spent on the Rayado and January 1st found us near the Colorado line and well on our way. The trip as I had planned it was to strike the Arkansas about where La Junta now stands, follow the river down to a camp of the Osages, which I believed to be near the present western Kansas boundary, then work on to a Caw village near Council Grove, and here take on an Indian guide across country north, to Ft. Leavenworth.

"All went well until we had about reached the eastern line of Colorado when one night, scudding clouds appeared, then others, until the stars were obscured and we got ourselves in readiness for a storm, which we imagined might be short if one came upon us. In this we were mistaken. We were that night, January 8, 1847, perhaps, camped on the banks of the Arkansas, a bare, unsheltered place, not a vestige of cottonwood or sandhill to shelter us from the

cutting blasts that were soon to reach us from the Pikes Peak country. About midnight snow began to fall, and the weather grew colder and colder, a piercing wind sweeping down from the north. The first grey light of morning found us under a foot of snow, everything covered beyond recognition, and no prospect of a letup. All day the snow continued to fall, and a more disconsolate day I never passed; and at nightfall we doubled up as best we might, in a compact body to keep from freezing, for even our buffalo robes and blankets were hard and stiff, and poorly served the purpose intended of them.

"I slept but little this second night, and when at last the first streaks of dawn began to lighten things a bit, I threw the snow from my bed, and crawled out into the storm, which had abated somewhat. A desolate sight met my eyes. Several of our mules were dead, lying about in the snow near camp and along the river bank, and the remaining ones were not to be seen. They had drifted off and wandered from camp.

"About noon of this day, the storm having passed, the sun shone, and the following morning broke as quiet and calm as one in April. Then we began our reorganizing, and by and by were ready to start eastward, this time on foot. All surplus baggage was left, and the messages, bedding, our rifles and food were distributed to the men. The snow, one to two feet deep, impeded our advance and wore out the boots of the men, necessitating halts to improvise footwear. Finally, after two weeks wandering, half frozen and nearly starved, we stumbled upon a camp of Osages with whom I was acquainted and gave ourselves up to the hospitality of this then friendly tribe. They had plenty of meat which they rationed out to us, aided us in making moccasins, and supplied us with a few ponies when we were rested sufficiently to go on. We followed the river down to a Caw village and here secured guides, two Indian boys, who escorted us across country to Ft. Leavenworth. This we reached about February 10, 1847, when I delivered my messages to the commanding officer of the fort, Colonel Wharton. After a halt of a month or more I led out a train, bound for Spaulding & Fisher's trading post, near where Pueblo, Colorado, now stands and, an uneventful trip following, about May 1st rode into the fort at Santa Fe.

"And [concluded Boggs] what do you suppose I found there to welcome me on my return? My pet mule which I had ridden out of Ft. Marcy the December before, and which was lost in the blizzard on the Arkansas. She had drifted onto the trail (Santa Fe) later to be picked up and brought back to army headquarters, the only one of all our animals, so far as I ever learned, that survived the storm through which we fortunately passed."

One who now, seated in a luxurious Pullman, travels from Santa Fe eastward, by the Rayado where Boggs and his little band in the discharge of duty, spent Christmas, 1846, over Raton Pass, and from thence eastward along the Arkansas, and perhaps in sight of the very spot where these hardy men lived through the blizzard of early January, 1847, and from whence they started, burdened with mail and necessary impedimenta, may, if in a contemplative mood, picture another journey as it was performed over eighty years ago.

Soon after his arrival in Santa Fe, Boggs proceeded to Taos. "Joined my family and found that everybody had been robbed, and many of the heads of families had been murdered." However, his wife and associates were safe, though they had been through trying times since he last saw them. Historians seem to agree that had he and Carson been in Taos earlier in that year, the insurrection might have been averted and the spirit of rebellion quelled—a matter of conjecture, of course. Here he remained till 1848, when he was again in scouting duty, "most of the time associated with the command of Colonel Beale of the First Dragoons, fighting the Apaches, Navajoes, and Utahs."

About 1850, with Mrs. Boggs, he moved to California, and for the next five years remained there, locating at Bodego, during which time, so he states, he made overland trips. In 1855 he returned to Taos, where for some years he was associated with Lucien B. Maxwell, in merchandising, freighting, and filling contracts at Government posts. This engagement lasted nearly ten years, and was finally dissolved.⁴

In 1865, Carson, Boggs and others, through their wives, laid claim to the Vigil Land Grant, of undetermined area, lying on the south side of the Arkansas River, and at the mouth of the Picketwire [opposite present Las Animas]. Here, in 1866, Boggs erected one or two large and commodious buildings, adobe and two stories in height, portions of which are still standing. The place, or settlement, took the name of Boggsville, by which it is now known. Here, he states, he had several encounters with Indians, and did, occasionally, at least, scout duty. In a cave on a draw, tributary to the Cimarron River, in Cimarron County, Oklahoma, some forty miles northeast of Clayton, New Mexico, the writer noted recently a number of inscriptions cut in the rock, and among them "T. O. Boggs 1868. Penrose Pirates." General Penrose was then commanding officer at Ft. Lyon and presumably had sent a company south to guard the Santa Fe Trail, which lay only a mile or two from the "Pirates'" rendezvous, against the Indians, who, in that memorable year, were especially troublesome all through the Southwest.

⁴Ibid.

In the early part of 1868, Kit Carson, long the friend and associate of his nephew-in-law, Boggs, removed from Taos to Boggsville and after a brief residence there, was taken to Ft. Lyon, where he expired May 23rd.⁵ Interment was made next day at Boggsville, though early the next year, probably in January, and when the weather was cold, Carson's remains, and those of his wife, who had preceded him in death by a few weeks, were, in accordance with a wish expressed some time prior to his decease, that he be buried in Taos, to that place transported. This was performed in January, 1869, L. A. Allen, a former employe of Carson's, and one other man, driving the wagons containing the caskets and baggage.⁶ In Carson's will, executed a few days before his death, occur these words: "Lastly, I hereby appoint Mr. Thomas O. Boggs of Pueblo Co., Col. Ter. my administrator, to carry out the provisions of this, my last will and testament." It was accordingly performed.

Boggs continued to reside, following the vocation of ranchman, at Boggsville, until 1876. The claims in and to the Vigil Grant amounted to naught, and neither the Carson heirs nor Boggs realized from this, because of lack of confirmation of title; and in the year above, the latter and his family, with a retinue of Mexican employes and servants, left the Arkansas, seeking new homes in northeastern New Mexico, where he settled on the Tramperos and other streams in what is now Union County.

He trailed from Colorado several bands of sheep. These, I was informed, did not belong to Boggs, but were the property of Senator G. M. Chilcott, who had let Boggs have them on a share basis. James McDonald, an early settler of Pueblo and an attorney, removed about the same time to New Mexico and seems to have been interested with Boggs in these. With most of northeastern New Mexico then unpopulated and at his command, Boggs, for a number of years, engaged in sheepraising, but with no great success. In 1882-83 he sold watered lands that he laid claim to to a recently formed cattle company, receiving, it is said, \$10,000 therefor. Like so many of the frontiersmen, he lacked thrift and the ability to save, and in 1886, when I first met him, he was living in Springer, New Mexico, with his wife and a daughter of Carson's, Josefita. His possessions then were few, and his credit far from good. With a son, Charlie, who was shot and killed on a ranch on the Pennavetitos, northeastern New Mexico, in 1887, he was interested in a couple of thousand sheep which he had on share. After the founding of Clayton in 1888, he removed to that town, where a

⁵See my article, "The Death and the Last Will of Kit Carson," in the *Colorado Magazine*, Vol. V, 183-191.

⁶Interview with Sergeant Luke Cahill of Denver in 1928. George Thompson of Las Animas, Colorado, says (in the *Colorado Magazine*, Vol. IV, p. 179) that this brother-in-law, W. K. Irwin, hauled the Carson remains to Taos.—Ed.

son-in-law, George A. Bushnell, administered to his necessities. There, surrounded by friends and acquaintances, he passed way September 29, 1894.

I recall my first meeting with Boggs, in the early spring of 1886, in Springer, where with a friend I, as a very young man, spent the night at his home. As a raconteur he was charming. His voice was low and gentle, his manners equally mild, and altogether he was decidedly pleasing. We sat up to burn midnight oil as he recounted experiences in days then long past and recalled his association with Carson, Wootton, Maxwell and Owens, and his recollections of the Bents, St. Vrain, Kearny and others of pre-American occupation days, names that now illuminate the pages of southwestern history. Next morning, appreciative of my interest of the night before, as I was leaving he said, "In yonder room is a big box of Kit's things, letters and papers and I do not know what all. If you want them, come back, look them over and take what you please." I did not then accept, but some years later I inquired what he had done with the Carson box. "Oh, the Bancrofts wanted them," he said, "and I let them go." Today these "things of Kit's" are, as I have been told, in the Bancroft Collection, University of California, and of very great historical worth.

Mrs. Boggs outlived her husband a dozen years, dying January 13, 1906. Her relations of early life in Taos and on the frontier, were ever of the greatest interest and I was in the habit of drawing her out in some of the most lucid of these—the night of January 17, 1847, when she and others witnessed the death of Governor Bent, of the frantic attempts as the Indians stormed the doors of the room which the little band occupied, to dig through the adobe wall which separated this from one adjoining with spoons, a poker or anything else at their command, assisted by a female peon, or servant of the family, and of their finally crawling through an opening which they had made, drawing the already wounded Governor after them, only to see the fiends descend from the roof above them, and complete the deadly work. And later, the arrival through the snow of the soldiers from Santa Fe, the trial and execution of the murderers, and, finally, resumption of tranquillity.

Boggs, as I have intimated, was a mild-spoken, gentle and generous man, qualities that were ever attributed to Carson. He neglected, in later life at least, the ethics of good business, and failed to provide for old age. His environments were not in this line. With the blood of Daniel Boone coursing in his veins, he was a lover of nature and the out-of-doors, and acted well his part in the building of the Southwest. This should be given proper recognition and his sepulcher appropriate marking.