GENEALOGICAL CHART
OF THE
LARIMER FAMILY
WITH THE
MMASTERS AND ALLIED ANCESTRY
NOVEMBER, 1918.

EXPLANATION
CIRCLES denote individuals. Marriage is indicated by a line within the circle. Circles with bars have been born to the mother before her marriage to the father. Circles without bars have been born to the family after the marriage of the parents. The marriage line connects the cis. The line may be broken; in this case the number following the dash indicates the number of years between the marriage and the birth of the child. The number following the dash is the number of the birth of the child.

Squares denote places. Marriage is indicated by a line between the squares. The line may be broken; in this case the number following the dash indicates the number of years between the marriage and the birth of the child. The number following the dash is the number of the birth of the child.

PLACES of birth, marriage, and death are shown in the accompanying notes.

LINES connect children with their parents, and each generation. Generation is determined by the number of grandparents. Generation is determined by the number of grandparents.

NUMBERS are used to denote the order of birth of children.

When an individual's name is not placed in the circle belonging to him, his parents' names are given. In the case of couples, the husband is always placed in the circle belonging to the family, his wife in the circle belonging to the mother. If the wife's name is given, it is the name by which she is known. If the husband's name is given, it is the name by which he is known.

When the proper name is given, the style of birth of any person in the line of descent is not shown, although it has been substituted for the style of birth in the line of descent.

COMMISSIONED OFFICER, U.S. Navy
BORN IN THE GREAT WARS 1914-1918.
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<td>1893</td>
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<td>Wm. H. H. Larimer died at his home in Kansas City</td>
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INTRODUCTION

No one can read this book without feeling some thrill of admiration for the great courage and energy of my grandfather, William Larimer, Jr., or appreciating the hardships he must have suffered,—going as he did after middle life from a position of influence and comfort in Pittsburgh to become a pioneer in the West.

I also feel sure the reader will see that the good wife, the silent partner, was a real heroine. It was she who gave up her fortune and comfort to rescue her husband from his financial reverses and remained behind in Pittsburgh and in Leavenworth to raise, educate and discipline the large family of children while her husband went into the far West to recoup his losses.

I, therefore, wish to pay a tribute to my grandmother, Mrs Rachel McMasters Larimer, by declaring her an equal participant in all that is commendable in her husband’s efforts, as narrated in the following pages.

W. L. MELLON.

PITTSBURGH, PA.,
November, 1918.
GENERAL AND MRS WILLIAM LARIMER
From a Daguerreotype, 1853
PREFACE

SOME years after the death of William H. H. Larimer, his daughter, Mrs George W. Gallagher, gave many papers left by her father and grandfather to her cousin, William Larimer Mellon of Pittsburgh, a grandson of General Larimer, that he might have them examined to see if they would be worthy of publication for circulation in the family. This volume is the outgrowth.

It appears that Mr W. H. H. Larimer, during the later years of his life, would spend many moments in writing reminiscences of his travels over the plains, including the founding of Denver. These experiences, written at such odd moments, were frequently duplicated and sometimes triplicated on loose sheets and sundry scraps of paper in such a way that it was often difficult for the Editor to determine the sequence of the pages or the chronology of the events narrated, or to weave from them one consecutive narrative. The Editor believes, however, that he has done so correctly by the aid of collateral information and that while here presenting something from which duplications have been eliminated, he has nevertheless omitted no important parts of the different records, nor made any unwarranted interpolations.

A severe part of the task has been the insertion of dates, as they had to be gathered in most instances by deduction from a great mass of correspondence in which allusions had been made to the same or contemporary events, thus requiring critical analysis as well as laborious research to identify and establish dates and occurrences beyond controversy.
While it is but human for the participant in a great undertaking (the greatness of which is often not anticipated at the time) to magnify later the importance of his own share and minimize that of his associates, the Editor believes that no claim is herein made by or for General Larimer and his son that is not fully justified by facts of record. In matters of opinion, based on hearsay evidence or tradition, the Editor has followed as far as possible, and always in essential detail, the written statements of these two eyewitnesses and participants. A close investigation of their fidelity to truth as manifested by intimate letters to wife, children, brothers and sisters, establishes the credibility of their testimony, even in matters most likely to be partial to their self-interests, to be on a par with the credibility of any other recorders.
THE ADAMS COUNTY HOME OF THE LARIMERS (1771)
Village of "Two Taverns," Mount Joy Township, Adams County, Pennsylvania
CHAPTER ONE

Ancestry—Genealogical chart—Biography of General Larimer from 1809 to 1855—Financial reverses—Migration from Pittsburgh to Nebraska

In *The Larimer, McMasters and Allied Families* compiled and edited by Mrs Rachel H. L. Mellon, daughter of General Larimer, and printed by her for private circulation in 1893, will be found on pages 15–41, inclusive, her researches on the origin of the Larimer family in America. It is not necessary, therefore, to repeat the history of this family in the present book. But for convenience of reference, and also for showing at a glance the ancestry of the two members of this family who were active in the founding of Denver, and whose memoirs are herein written at greater length, the Editor has inserted as a frontispiece a chart on which may be found the names, dates of birth, marriage and death of the ancestors of General William Larimer, and of his wife, Rachel McMasters, and also of the descendants of these two for the four following generations.

General William Larimer was born on the 24th of October, 1809, in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, at the old homestead of the Larimer Family in Circleville. His early life was spent on the farm. He had only an ordinary county schooling. Although he became a good penman, he often stated that he learned to write on a barn door.

His first business venture on his own account was contracting for the furnishing of stone for the old Philadelphia Turnpike. From the earnings thus acquired he started a store near the old home. In this he placed his brother Hamilton (seven years younger than him-
self in charge, so that he could continue to give personal attention to his contracting work and to the running of a freight service. This part of his business was in partnership with his friend and neighbor, John Irwin of Irwin, Pa. Their company was known as the Conestoga Wagon System. By means of wagons and six-horse teams they carried goods between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia as early as 1830, which would have been when the subject of our sketch was only twenty-one years of age and many years before a railroad was projected over the same route.

Mr Larimer also engaged in the selling of horses, which he took in droves across the mountains from Western to Eastern Pennsylvania.

At Larimer Station, after the Pennsylvania Railroad had been constructed, he and John M. Covode organized the Westmoreland Coal Company, which is still one of the largest in the State.

He was described at this time as a very handsome young man with good habits, and plenty of confidence in himself. He succeeded in winning the admiration of Miss Rachel McMasters.* At the age of twenty-five they were married. About this time he entered into partnership with John McMasters, in the wholesale grocery and produce business. They did very well, but owing to some incompatibility of dispositions, Mr Larimer sold his interest in the store to his brother-in-law and took in exchange for it real estate. This increased in value very rapidly and proved subsequently to have been a profitable exchange.

The Old Eagle Hotel, on the site where now stands the Seventh Avenue Hotel, in Pittsburgh, was then owned by his father, and William took charge of the business there. He had many patrons who had been his friends and customers when he was running freight across the mountains. Back of the hotel he had a large yard and stables and his house was headquarters for changing money and making loans. Finally he engaged in banking as a definite

*Rachel McMasters was the daughter of John and Rachel (Hughey) McMasters and the sister of Mary (Mrs B. F. Jones), Eliza Ann (Mrs Hugh D. King) and John and Thomas McMasters of Turtle Creek, Penn.
A Conestoga Wagon

Style of wagon used by William Larimer, Jr., in his first business enterprise in transporting goods across the Allegheny Mountains.
business. His banking establishment was located on Fourth Avenue at numbers 66 and 68 where the Continental Trust Company at number 220 is now situated,—the system of numbering on this avenue having been changed at some date subsequent to 1872.

Mr Larimer was the first President of the Pittsburgh & Connellsville Railroad, now a part of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad system; and was Treasurer of the Ohio & Pennsylvania Railroad, now the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago.

He also invested heavily in, or acquired by virtue of his business as a banker, interests in sundry other local companies and in California gold mining enterprises and overland transportation companies. He was the leading spirit in organizing the Youghiogheny Slack Water System and was its principal stockholder.

In religion, he was a Presbyterian. He was an earnest advocate of temperance and a strict abstainer himself. He identified himself with the anti-slavery movement as an active Abolitionist, and assisted in the organization of the old Liberal Party and supported Birney for President in 1844. From this time up to the defeat of John Scott in 1852, he acted with the Whig party, and took quite a prominent part in the politics of Pennsylvania, and at one time was vigorously advocated by more than thirty papers of the State for the gubernatorial nomination but lost it in the convention by the treachery of some delegates who were committed to his candidacy.* He was made Major General of the Pennsylvania State Militia in 1852, and it was from this appointment that he acquired the title of General which clung to him through the rest of his life.

Up to this time he had acquired considerable wealth, indeed, a large fortune for those times, being uniformly successful in all his enterprises. But during the year 1854 there was a general business depression throughout the entire country and in some parts it approached a panic. Fortunes were lost through no fault of the loser. General Larimer was so heavily interested in financing the Youghio-

*See chapter XII of The History of My Life by Samuel Young.
gheny Slack Water System and other projects that he was among those whose fortunes dissolved almost over night, and in the following year he, therefore, determined to start his career anew in the West. Thus in the spring of 1855 we find him in Nebraska taking claims on La Platte River, laying out a town, becoming President of the Town Company, and beginning to help boost the West by farming and by inducing others to buy land on which themselves to raise crops.

His letters from the latter part of May, 1855, until 17th February, 1857, are dated from Council Bluff and La Platte. While these letters are full of enthusiasm and hopefulness, they show, nevertheless, that he was still worrying over the financial losses left behind him in Pittsburgh, the inability to collect claims which he had against others, and the defending of himself against unjust charges and unjust claims, which were made against him, in many cases, by others who were so hard pressed with misfortunes that they did not scruple, sometimes, to take undue advantage of those who might be somewhat less unfortunate than themselves.

These letters show, moreover, that General Larimer was a man of integrity and scrupulous in his endeavor to meet fairly every indebtedness left behind him, but that he could rise to great heights of indignation against those who were trying to take undue advantage of him.

His business affairs had been left in the hands of Thomas Mellon, Esquire, a lawyer and later a judge at Pittsburgh, and who still later became the head of the Mellon banking institution now so prominent in the business affairs of Pittsburgh.

A few extracts from some of these letters are here inserted merely to throw sidelights on the financial stress of those years, both in the life of General Larimer and in the history of Pittsburgh and the country.

PACIFIC HOUSE
COUNCIL BLUFF 23 May 1855.

Dear Sir:

I have desired to write you for some time still putting it off until I could give you some idea of the time you may expect me home.
I am still uncertain what to say on the subject. I have taken two claims at La Platte, Nebraska Territory 15 miles below here and we are laying out a town. I am elected President of the Company, and secured 1/3 of the town. My claims are one in John's name and one in my own. I hold a transfer of my claim to a friend here which I can record at pleasure if any one troubles me from home. I have made known my true situation here to those interested but it is not proper that the public should know it. I am therefore a land holder in Nebraska in my own name to the extent of a claim which is not yet paid for nor will it be until the land is surveyed and in market. I wrote to Mrs. Larimer yesterday to see you about the laying off of the farm into lots of 5 acres each. If any want more they can take as many 5 acre lots as they want. The piece next the village* I want laid off in small lots I would say, not over 60 feet front. I think 30 feet along the main road† better and in that case persons can take one or more to suit. My interests prompt me to remain here for sometime yet. I can do well by remaining here for sometime. If I leave my claim and John's I may have them jumped as they call it here.... I like this country very much indeed, I have written so much about it to Mr. Larimer that I dislike to repeat the old story to you but suffice it to say that I think I can make a big raise here in a few years. I hope Mr. Mellon that you will take care of my interests. I confided my all to you for the benefit of my creditors and feel assured you will give it attention. When I left home you had so many things on hand that I fear you cannot give my business full attention. You must lay aside any thing that interferes. I want to divide all I have; the toil of the best part of my life to my creditors.... I have quite a chance to be elected to Congress from Nebraska this fall; if so the mileage alone for the two sessions amounts to $10,000. It is worth looking after besides it gives me some little importance both here and particularly at home. I am fully impressed that my chances are equal to any other. Down at La Platte where I stay, I am a great favorite. ... Give my kindest regards to all my creditors as they enquire for me. Call and see Gen. Robinson also Mr. Larimer.

Thos. Mellon Esq.,

Pittsburgh, Pa.,

Yours very truly,

Wm. Larimer Jr.

Council Bluff, 31 May 1855.

Thos. Mellon Esq.

Dear Sir: I wrote you a short time since and have thought that the best thing for you to do is to divide as much of my property as will divide for instance the N. America Copper stock. If fairly explained, I feel confident it would be taken. At even a low price, if my creditors got it, it is much the better. I do not mean to give some

* Meaning East Liberty, now a part of Pittsburgh.
† Now Larimer Avenue.
all the stock, let some one find the exact number of creditors and distribute them from one share and upward. There can certainly be no objection to this. That would be very satisfactory to me; if the stock is taken below its value and it should run up to what it once was and over, all the better for them and very pleasant to me. I also hope to have the farm divided in the same way. I intend going home this month June, and we will see what is best to be done. I hope you will not sell any thing until I come. I am delayed longer than I expected here. I am very anxious to be out of my troubles at home. I shall never rest until I have all arranged and released. I hope to be able to get free some day and at present I feel somewhat like an exile. I feel confident I can do well here, I have things in train for considerable show at least. One of my ideas is to get released after all is arranged and every thing exhausted. I can give them lots in La Platte City, this I write for your private ear. I can give them all plenty of lots in addition to the town plan of say 1000 acres. I have two shares claiming one in John's name and one in my own, in all say about 1000 acres in the town that will every foot be in the city, only think what a chance I have to get out of Limbo. La Platte City may or may not succeed but one thing certain, Mr. Mellon, it has more natural advantages than any other point in the Territory. You ask why. I will tell you in a few words and leave you to draw the inference. There is but one large river in the Territory, Platte River and some of the old maps call it Nebraska river, it runs clear up to the Rocky Mountains passing Fort Laramie and on to the Pacific. The Platte Valley is well timbered which I am sorry to say is not the case in Nebraska, or Kansas either everywhere for a long distance particularly on one side of the Platte River (north side) the land offers every inducement to settlers, and I say, the Platte Valley is the best and will be settled first. La Platte City is at the junction of these rivers Mipomi and Platte. We have what is rare on the Mipomi River a good landing. We have a situation for a city, large enough to build a Philadelphia, certainly. Mr. Mellon the most beautiful land you ever saw. Now my plan is this: I intend to live in La Platte City. I intend to open up a large farm. I can raise hemp, corn or anything: it is certainly the richest land I ever saw, the grass there this day is up to the shoulders of the horses, and will be as high as a man on horseback. I will go on with the farm and if the land is ever wanted for a town it is ready. Still we have abundance for a large town without touching what I intend farming. I intend not only to farm simply but I will open a Commission House. I expect to supply the Territory with iron nails, lumber etc., this will not only be profitable in itself but will be the great means of building up the city. If I go there I can build the city if I do not go only to sell lots as the city may never rise. I can do all I say with but little means I will sell every thing on commission or so start at least. I
have been working very hard and I am too nervous. I can scarcely write. I have been chopping, plowing, planting, building claim houses, and fence. Day before Yesterday, Tuesday I took a Yoke of oxen, and a wagon, and hauled and built into the fence 300 rails, from 2 o'clock P.M. before sunset. I had not far to haul the rails, still I had to gather them up through the woods. You would have smiled to have seen me driving the oxen. In addition to my La Platte matters I have a very important property here on the river, a Steam Boat Landing. I purchased the Warehouse 30 by 60 and 20 acres of land for $450—in such payment as suits me, and when paid I get the deed. The man I bought from took quite an interest in me. He told me the warehouse would pay it self this season and he would wait for it. I agreed and I find his words came true. I have now Commissions enough contracted for to more than pay it beside the man that attends to it. I give him a share in the commissions. The warehouse is now full of sacks of corn to the roof awaiting the arrival of steamers. I have the exclusive Commission business of Council Bluff, and this alone I consider a fortune. I intend this point for John. It can be carried on without any money except his boarding. I have also secured 200 acres of land adjoining the 20, which will make a nice town site, or a good farm, the land is now under fence. With 75 acres in a good State of Cultivation, it is to cost for the whole $1500. This I can easily pay for out of Sales at La Platte City. We have now sold considerable, and should I fail to secure it at a given time I only loose $100 forfeited; but I feel and know I can easily meet the payment when it comes due. I can say to you that here I can have 200 acres to cut into City lots, and from all appearances of the Commission business, ten warehouses next year will not be able to do the business. This is about the first shipment of corn from this country. Here, too, is a great place to sell Pittsburg Manufactured articles. I will go myself to La Platte in order to get the town started. This place will take care of itself. There is a new map getting up here that will show my property or rather my wife's in its true position. There is to be an Avenue from the City to the river called Larimer Avenue. I mention all my private matters to you as not only my assignee but attorney. I do not want you to speak of any thing of mine here except La Platte City that is now the place of all places in Nebraska. The impression should be truly that I have taken a claim there and laid out the city, as the land is not in market. Yet every one knows that I have all to make and no investment to loose. I have laid the foundation for something handsome in this Country. I will go home soon and see what can be done there. I fear no man or lot of men, if men want to put me on the bench, I will go. I can give a full and true account of all my affairs and as there has been such a squinty (?) that way I almost
want to go on the stand but the man that brings me there will find it an unprofitable investment.

Your friend Mr. Z. W. Shields is still here. I am sorry about Mr. Shields goods being so long delayed.

I hope, Mr. Mellon, you will think over my matters and get me out the best possible way. I am working hard here and deserve success. If it should never come, I will live in hopes if I should die in despair. Give my respects to the R.R. party tell them that I wish to be particularly remembered to all of them not forgetting Mr. Negly and his interesting lady, also the East Liberty people generally. By R.R. party I mean W. P. Baum & Co. . . .

Thos. Mellon Esq.,

Pittsburgh, Pa.

Yours truly,

WM. LARIMER JR.

The General had left behind him in Pittsburgh his family consisting of wife, seven sons and two daughters. The sons were: John McMasters, William Henry Harrison, Edwin King, Thomas McMasters, Cassius, Joseph McMasters and George; the daughters were: Annie Eliza and Rachel Hughey. These ranged in age from nineteen years to a babe in arms. His journey westward alone, had been to found a home for these in the new West. With that push and energy and indomitable resolution which characterized him through all his career, he had soon established a house and a reputation which presaged success in any business that he should undertake. Therefore after only a year's effort he decided it was time to have them join him.

Mrs Larimer with her nine children accompanied by her sister, Martha, and her husband, the Reverend Watson Hughes, with their six children making a party of eighteen boarded the steamer "Empire City" at Pittsburgh in October, 1855, to make the trip from Pittsburgh to St. Louis en route to join the General at La Platte.

It is at this point that the narrative of Mr William H. H. Larimer begins.
Birthplace of General William Larimer, Jr. (October 24, 1809)

On Old Greensburg Turnpike, now Lincoln Highway, Near Larimer Station, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.

Built about 1790: old log house now modernized by weather boarding.
CHAPTER TWO

General Larimer's family joins him in Nebraska—By river from Pittsburgh to St. Joseph in 1855

The opening to settlement of the vast country beyond the Missouri River took its beginning from the Act of Congress known as the Douglas Bill, passed May 30, 1854. This bill organized the Territories of Kansas and Nebraska, which included all the hitherto unorganized country from what is now Oklahoma on the south to British America on the north; and from Missouri and Iowa on the east to Utah and Oregon on the west, so far as was included in the territory of Louisiana as acquired from Napoleon Bonaparte by treaty signed May 3rd 1803. But it was the financial depression and the panic of 1857 and 1858 which “inspired so many with a willingness to seek new homes and fortunes farther west.”

Over this vast expanse of country roved tribes of wild, uncivilized, and for the most part hostile Indians, subsisting on the millions of buffalo and other game which roamed the prairies.

At the time this Bill was passed, I was studying geography in one of the schools of the City of Pittsburgh. With my atlas before me, I could trace the boundaries of the new territories and note the names of the various tribes of Indians and the location of mountains and rivers depicted as accurately as could be expected in view of the limited survey that had been made up to that time. I remember well that Kansas, well over to the Rocky Mountains on the west and southward to Texas and northward far up into Nebraska, was dotted off and called the “Great American Desert.”
No other Territories ever organized by Congress excited so much interest in the American people as Kansas and Nebraska. The two States of Missouri and Iowa, separated from this more western country by only the Missouri River, demanded its settlement, and the spirit of expansion brooding in the minds of the rapidly increasing population of the whole country inspired it.

For reasons to be inferred from the preceding chapters, early in the year 1855 my father conceived the desire to see the new country. So, by rail and stage, he made the trip from Pittsburgh to Council Bluffs, which was then the most promising town on the Missouri River north of St. Joseph, and which he found to be the great outfitting point for people starting across the plains. The Mormons and the emigrants to California and Oregon nearly all started from Council Bluffs by the trail leading up the Platte River valley. Across the Missouri from Council Bluffs was the beautiful little village of Omaha, well located, with bright prospects, and settled by as virile and intelligent a class of people as ever migrated to a new country. Most of the men of the town were young, and fresh from colleges, and the society of the town was fully equal to that of towns in the Eastern States. Omaha was the capital of the Territory and the largest town in it. Here, in and around Omaha and Council Bluffs, father made some investments. One of these was in the Council Bluffs Lower Steamboat Landing, another was in a farm which, in a few years, the Missouri River claimed as its own and now, after many years, goes to make Lake Manawa.

But at that time my father was so well pleased that he decided to make his future home in this vicinity, and with this object in view he selected a place on the bank of the Missouri on the north side of Platte River near its mouth on a beautiful plateau of wild prairie. Here he laid off a town to which he gave the name of La Platte. The location was selected with the expectation that a transcontinental railroad would boom it some time in the future, as it seemed to him to be the most natural starting point for any such road to the far west. The life of the town was brief,
however, as will be explained later. He also took up some claims on the broad prairie and constructed a sawmill and a house for his family when they should arrive from Pittsburgh.

Meanwhile, after being in the west only a few months, the report came that, in the Elk Horn Valley on the far frontier, Indians had opened war on the few settlers who had ventured that far. So my father organized a company from the settlers around La Platte and was commissioned Captain of the La Platte Guards by Governor Izard. He proceeded to the assistance of the settlers, making his headquarters at Fontanelle, where most of them had congregated. Scouts were sent out and the country was thoroughly reconnoitred, but not an Indian was to be found. A cow with an arrow in her side was the only trace of Indians seen. Remaining in that country only long enough to satisfy himself that all danger to the settlers had passed, he and his company returned to their homes and disbanded.

He next decided to have his family join him at La Platte. Mother and we children were to go by steamboat down the Ohio River to Cairo and up the Mississippi to St. Louis and St. Joseph (which was the head of navigation on account of the low water in the Missouri), thence by stage coach to Council Bluffs.

The Steamer Empire City, J. J. Vandergriff, Captain, was selected for our trip to St. Louis from Pittsburgh. A trip on a good steamboat in those days was an event never to be forgotten, especially by a youngster of fourteen. Railroads had not reached the standard of today; there were no trunk lines and no sleeping coaches and no attempt at making connections with other roads. But in the west there were few railroads of any kind, even without conveniences. On the other hand, steamboating had reached what then seemed to be the acme of perfection in safety, convenience and comfort; and while it did not maintain this supremacy for many years, steamboating was, at the time of which I am now writing, the most pleasurable way of making a journey. We thoroughly enjoyed our trip from Pittsburgh to St. Louis in October 1855.
After a few days’ delay at St. Louis, we boarded the steamer New Lucy for St. Joseph. This part of the trip, though full of mishaps and delays, was even more interesting than the first part had been. The river was low and full of snags and the New Lucy was one of the largest steamers in the Missouri service. While the lighter draught steamers had the advantage of ours in speed, there was none superior in appointments for comfort and pleasure, and time was not much of an object to us.

Sometime during our first night after entering the Missouri the boat struck a snag on the starboard side. The snag passed entirely through the lower guard and came out on top of the boat. It tore up quite a number of state-rooms and created a panic among the passengers, many of whom were sleeping on the cabin floors. The chairs in the cabin had life preservers attached to them and men and women could be seen running around in fright, each with a chair in hand, expecting the boat to go down, and ready to plunge into the water to swim for safety.

Quiet was restored after a while when the Captain announced that there was no danger as the snag had in no way injured the hull of the boat. It proved to be a large cottonwood tree and some time was taken to chop it off at the water’s edge so as to free the boat.

Wood was used as fuel and at frequent intervals were woodyards, where the boat would tie up long enough to take on a supply. The whistle of the boat in approaching these yards brought everybody who were within hearing, both blacks and whites, to the banks of the river. We could see them coming out of the woods in every direction. The blacks would sit on the bank and gaze at the passengers; but as soon as the gangplanks were shoved out, the whites would rush on the boat and take up headquarters at the bar, while a few would take a game at cards with some of the professional gamblers who made their home on the boat.

Hemp was one of the leading crops of the Missouri River bottoms in those days. At most of the woodyards and landings large quantities of bailed hemp were piled
awaiting shipment on the down-river boats. The ox-team, which has almost passed into history, could be seen at all these landings, with the old-time Missouri negro slave unloading wood or hemp. The passing of a boat attracted as much attention in those days as the railroad trains do now in our remoter country regions. Snags and sandbars made navigation difficult and the channel was likely to change at every rise in the river, new sandbars forming and old ones being washed out.

Kansas City was known as Westport Landing and was composed of only a few warehouses on the bank of the river. But it was a rather busy place in the boating season as most of the Santa Fe and New Mexico traffic passed through this point and long trains of freight wagons could be seen loading goods for the plains of New Mexico on almost any day. But as for railroads, the nearest one was the Missouri Pacific which in the fall of 1855 had been built only as far as Hermann, Mo., by Commodore Garrison its founder.*

Most of the country between the mouth of the Kaw River and Leavenworth was occupied by Indians of the Delaware, Wyandotte, and Shawnee tribes. Six miles south of Leavenworth was the town of Delaware, which has now passed out of existence. At the time of which I write it was a rival of Leavenworth, as also was the little town of Kickapoo about six miles north of Leavenworth. The latter, when I first saw it, was more like an arsenal than a trading center. Every person on the street seemed to be prepared for war, with revolver and bowie knife in belt. Free State and Pro Slavery were the questions at issue, however, and not danger from Indians. Each man had taken sides and each faction was contending for the control of the country. Missouri was well represented and the contest was hot.

Our stay at Leavenworth, however, was not long and

* On the opening of this road in the fall of 1855, an excursion party made up mostly of railroad officials and their friends from St. Louis, celebrating the occasion by a ride over the road, met with a sad accident. The bridge over the Gasconade River gave way and the train went through, killing many and seriously injuring many more, most of them prominent people.
our next stopping place of importance was St. Joseph, where we were detained for several days while trying to arrange for a special stage coach to Council Bluffs over Rock Frost's popular stage line.

We spent our time at St. Joseph very pleasantly at the Edgar House which was kept by a man who had given his name to the hotel. It was said to be the best hotel in the town and I have no doubt it was but to us it seemed quaint and old fashioned, run in the southern style of hospitality and with all employees of the negro, slave variety. Even the dining room was served by negro girls—slaves too, of course.

St. Joseph was the most prosperous town we had seen on the Missouri River. There were many good mercantile establishments and in every way it seemed to be prosperous and growing. It was settled almost entirely by southern people, mostly from Kentucky who emigrated to this country about 1843 bringing their slaves with them.

It is not difficult to understand why Missouri wanted Kansas to be a slave state, for she could not have long maintained slavery with Kansas free on her west and while bordered also on the north and east by free States and herself settled by people of whom the majority were opposed to slavery. Many were the discussions of these questions at our hotel in the evenings when the old settlers and pioneers congregated in the fashion followed in all parts of the country in those days, when such gatherings took the place of the newspapers which are so common now. Of all those who were to be seen here nightly during our stay, there was one whom I shall never forget, old Joe Roubidoux, a man fond of his cup. After imbibing a little he was equally fond of entertaining his audience with frontier stories of Indian lore, and with Indian songs and dances, while relating his many adventures on the plains, trading with the red men. To my boyish mind a doughty hero was he.

At last our arrangements were completed. The stage was to leave St. Joseph at the very unreasonable hour of three o'clock in the morning. It would have been a bright,
clear morning, had it not been that the full moon was eclipsed. *

A few miles out from St. Joseph there was camped by the road side a band of Pottawattomie Indians. All was silent save the barking of dogs and the rattling of the coach over the rough road, and we took care not to disturb them.

It had been our intention to continue by stage coach to Council Bluffs, but my father intercepted us at a little town on the Iowa side called St. Mary which we reached on the second day (October 26th,† 1855.)


† This date is known only by aid of the lunar eclipse mentioned above.
CHAPTER THREE

Arrival in Nebraska—A Prairie Fire—The severely cold winter of 1855-6—Wild game—Member of the Legislature—Woman’s Suffrage

MORE than fifty years have passed since I first set foot on Kansas and Nebraska soil, yet time has not diminished my memory to any great extent. The crossing of the river by ferry from the Iowa side to the Nebraska side is still fresh in my mind. I can almost reproduce my thoughts of that day. It was a transformation scene; from a luxurious home in my childhood days in the East, to a far western country, unsettled and with scarcely a sign of civilization. Grass, trees and the sky above were about all there was of it. Occasionally one could see a lone cabin with a little patch of sod turned over in an effort to find lodgment for a scanty crop of corn: no fences, no school houses, no barns, and no roads save a narrow trail through the tall grass running straight for miles to the objective point: no bridges across the streams, settlers far scattered; and many a claim held only by four logs placed together in the form of a square in imitation of a cabin foundation. Often the claimant had left the country or had only gone off to work hoping to make enough money to get something to eat while continuing the building of his cabin. Everybody who was old enough had taken up a claim and felt rich mentally while almost starving physically. Many were without any ability whatever to improve their acreage or build a cabin whereby to hold their claim, and the best they could hope for was a chance to sell or trade their squatter rights on the first opportunity that presented itself.
In different districts it was the custom to form claim clubs. All disputes between claimants were supposed to be referred to these Clubs for settlement. The mere foundation of a cabin was sufficient to hold a claim for a certain length of time but before the expiration of this time the occupants were supposed to complete their improvements to comply with the claim club laws and become actual settlers. Many claims were, of course, forfeited by non-compliance with these laws and could be "jumped", as it was called, by someone else. The lands had not at that time been laid off with section marks by the government but the settlers did the best they could to conform to the lines of the survey.

The country south of the Platte River was settled more rapidly than the country north of it, and many flourishing towns had sprung up on the banks of the Missouri.

The ferry landing on the Nebraska side was near Peter A. Sarpy's trading post. Mr. Sarpy with Commodore Decatur greeted us on our arrival in the Territory. Sarpy had been trading with the Indians at this post before the Territory had been organized and was largely interested in the American Fur Company whose forts and trading posts were scattered to the headwaters of the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers. Fort Union, at the mouth of the Yellowstone River, was one of their principal headquarters in the Northwest.

The house which father had built to receive us as a home was a large story-and-a-half building, built of rough cottonwood boards, battened on the outside and lined on the inside with canvas and papered over the canvas. It was probably the best in the country, but would have been more comfortable had it been in a milder climate.

It was unfortunate for us that we arrived so late in the year as we saw but little of the beauties and bright side of the country. The frosts had killed all vegetation and the sky was all aglow from the burning of the prairies. It was an ever existing menace that the tall, blue stem grass on the Platte and Missouri River bottoms was but waiting for someone to accidentally or maliciously touch
the torch that would set the whole country ablaze and make desolation for the long winter that was before us.

Only too soon did the danger come like a thief in the night, a great barrier of fire rolling straight for our home from the Platte River. Many feet high it towered in the air and for a long distance could its roar be distinctly heard as it lapped up all the dry grass and dead and growing wood in its path, while our frenzied horses in front of it with heads and tails in the air were fleeing towards home in the hope of finding safety. Over many acres the grass was higher than a man's head when sitting on horseback, but we had, previous to the actual approach of danger, taken the precaution of clearing off a great space around all our improvements by mowing the grass and plowing the land; thus placing a fire guard round about us.

The winter of 1855-56 was one that will never slip the memory of the pioneer settler of northern Nebraska and western Iowa. They were not prepared for its inclemency. Snow came early and often; and remained on the ground at a great depth all this winter with the thermometer registering from thirty degrees below zero to lower, most of the time.

We had a board fence of the ordinary height around our premises, but this was buried out of sight by the snow most of the winter, and on the snow had formed a crust so strong that we could lead our horses over the top of the fence. The ice on the Missouri River was thicker than the length of an ax handle, yet we had to keep a hole cut through as we depended on the river for water for our stock and other purposes.

The country was full of game. Deer, turkeys and prairie chickens, were very abundant and were hunted not so much for sport as for meat. Some of the mill hands would occasionally take a few hours off to go hunting, and the result would be two or three deer and all the turkeys they wanted. On one occasion some parties from the mill surprised a large herd of deer in the timber near Platte River. The deer, in their flight, attempted to cross the river on the ice. Many of them in their wild rush
dropped into an air hole. The men began shooting them, but on finding that the deer sank under the ice they got wild grape vines and twisted these around the necks of the swimming deer and held them above water to be shot and in this way prevented them from sinking. I have known hunters to run them with dogs on the snow. When the deer would break through their speed would be so checked that the dogs could run onto them. Many a time I have seen deer between Bellevue and Omaha crossing the road in front of me as they made for the timber and the hills or rough brakes of the river. I have also seen deer roaming over those portions of the country which are now within the limits of the city of Omaha.

I first saw Omaha from the hills south of the town. My impressions of this view have been lasting. Located as it is, on the prairie, the whole town was visible at a glance. Every house seemed to be built of wood and to be freshly painted white. In the distance it had very much the aspect of a military post. Its founding was auspicious; its citizens started with an enterprising spirit and pushed its progress with an energy and hopefulness that showed they expected it to be a city of large size and commanding influence in course of time, and many of them have lived to see their hopes and expectations fulfilled.

Short as the time was my father had already been long enough in the country to have become a member of the Legislature from Douglas County during this winter of 1855-56. When the legislature convened it attracted all the politicians and those who had axes to grind to the Capital of the Territory. Many men, young and old, who wanted to figure in the interest of themselves and of their country gathered here. The old Douglas House was their headquarters, and many were the exciting times and many were the deep laid schemes enacted within its walls. Charters for townsites of paper and for wildcat banks in towns and counties that were not in existence were nearly as numerous as the sands of the seashore. Many fortunes were made,—on paper.

But many serious bills were introduced and enacted
or lost. Among these was one for Women's Suffrage which my father championed, and he came very near engrafting it into the statutes of the Territory, too, for the bill had many friends, but as it also had bitter opposition it was lost for the time being. In an article entitled "Senator Sketches" printed in the Commonwealth of Feb. 8, 1870, in speaking of my father, will be found the following remembrance of those times:

"... He was elected a member of the second session of the Nebraska Legislature, in the fall of 1855. While in the Legislature he was instrumental in the passage of the bill giving the right of suffrage to woman, by nine majority, and the bill would have become a law but for the want of time. Ex-Governor Richardson, then a member of the council, admitted this. The passage of this resolution caused great excitement, and almost caused a mob. One Dr. Rankin, J. Sterling Morton, of Nebraska City, Captain Moore and Salisbury, of whom three were members of the House, procured a petticoat for Mr. Larimer's special benefit, but did not attempt to put it on him by reason of their fear of the laboring classes, who found an earnest friend and champion in Mr. Larimer. This ended his legislative career in Nebraska. In the spring of 1858 he removed to Leavenworth, where, with his family he now resides. In the fall of 1858 he was one of the pioneers to Pike's Peak. He built the first fire and the first cabin in Denver. After spending three years in Colorado he returned to Leavenworth. ..."
HOME OF GENERAL WILLIAM LARIMER, JR., UNTIL SPRING OF 1855
Now "Kenwood Lawn", Larimer Avenue, East Liberty, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
MEANWHILE it was a long, dreary winter at our house at La Platte. As already stated the winter was severely cold and the snow was deep and abiding, so that there was little moving around, and our only near neighbors were the Indians and the wood choppers at the mill. Most of these workers at the mill were French who were in the employ of the American Fur Company except in the winter. Every spring the Fur Company’s Boat would go up to the headwaters of the Missouri loaded with Indian goods for the various trading posts and with the French hunters and logmen and in the fall they would return loaded with robes and furs and likewise bring back the Frenchmen to spend the winter in the settlements of Nebraska. They were usually under contract with the Fur Company for one, two or three years, as the case might be. Our employment of them would be during their winter sojourn among us and they lived in a boarding house near the mill.

The Indians, however, we had always with us, though of course they were more bother to us during the bleak days of winter. They were our frequent, almost daily, visitors. They knew from our kindly treatment of them at first that we were not accustomed to dealing with Indians, so they rapidly became a greater and greater nuisance, begging for food and loafing around the fire, dirty and impudent. We would sometimes muster up
courage to tell them to go away and stay away, but it did little good as they were not sensitive to hints nor gentle commands. On one occasion several bucks came and made themselves at home around our kitchen fire and as occasion arose would spit on the stove and made themselves otherwise generally disagreeable. They paid but little attention to our wishes and whenever we would tell them to get out they would begin whetting their butcher knives on the stove and make sign language threats of scalping us, going through a very pantomime of doing it. As I was the nearest to being a man around the place, but too small to be feared by them, we had to send to the mill boarding house about a quarter of a mile away to get the men to come and drive them off.

Finally spring time of 1856 came, only to confront us with more trouble. The location of our house proved to be a bad one. All the deep snow to the north of us from house to mountains all up the river melted and the high waters came rolling down upon us. Though our location was the most elevated spot within a radius of a mile or more, it proved not to be sufficient. The waters entirely surrounded us for a mile or more in every direction; we were cut off from the mill and seemingly would be soon overwhelmed. All hands were set to building boats to enable us to save ourselves if necessary to leave our little island. But after a number of anxious days, the waters began to recede and after a while the river resumed its usual height. But the entire country that had been inundated was left in a very unhealthful condition and much sickness ensued. There were scarcely enough well people left to take care of the sick who were down with fevers and agues. In our own family of eleven there were nine sick at one time. With only two to wait on nine, we were not long in coming to the conclusion that La Platte was doomed as a town site and we moved back on the hills about two miles temporarily onto some claims we had there. One of our nearest neighbors in this new location was B. P. Rankin, who was the U. S. Marshal of the Territory. He lived on a claim near the Papillion and kept his prisoners
at Bellevue. There was no jail and it was claimed that he kept them chained to the floor of a cabin besides keeping a guard over them.

Much of the lumber used in the construction of the first capitol at Omaha came from La Platte and was cottonwood. Quite a great deal of this lumber was delivered by me as teamster. In this way I became well acquainted personally with Governor Izard, for there was hardly a day that he was not on the site inspecting the work, and not infrequently would he assist me in unloading the heavy planks. Governor Izard was appointed to his position from one of the Southern States. Although very few settlers came from south of Mason and Dixon's line, his southern birth in no way lessened his popularity, for his charming disposition made him many friends. When his term of office expired he returned to his southern home with the kindest wishes of all those who had had the pleasure of making his acquaintance.

Nebraska and Kansas were settled in manner quite unlike each other. In Nebraska the settlers confined themselves as closely to the Missouri River as they could find locations to suit their ideas and the settlements farther to the west and away from the river valley did not come until later. But in Kansas, on the other hand, settlers spread all over the State right from the start, so that one was as likely to find a clearing in the interior and far back from the river as he was to find one in the river valley. Thus some of the interior towns had their origin at the very start of immigration.

I remember making a trip myself in the summer of 1856 to the Elk Horn with a party of young men from Omaha who were locating a town site. The settlers in that neighborhood were very few and far between and on the particular claim where this town was being laid out there were no settlers at all, nor the least sign of civilization. Sumpter was to be the name of the town. In this case like many others, it was founded in hope: if the location should suit later developments it might become a great city, if not, it might cease to exist. I think the latter
was the case with Sumpter, however, so that I doubt if now it would be possible to even identify the place where it was located.

The fate of La Platte was not much better. The first winter and spring certainly did not leave its prospects very encouraging, and even we, the founders and owners of it, decided to abandon it and move to Omaha.

About the time we left La Platte and moved to Omaha, a wave of financial stress swept over Nebraska. What little money there was in circulation was in the form of paper bills issued by the wildcat banks which had sprouted up in every village. The City of Omaha also placed in circulation scrip in the shape of bank bills of small denomination which were made to pass in the stores and answer all the purposes of barter at home, but were not acceptable in the payment of debts far from their origin. For some reason immigration also stopped and no eastern capital came in for investment. Very little farming had been done so that there were no crops for export to the east, and what little real money had been in circulation with us was drained from the country by the freight charges of the steamboat companies or had gone to the St. Louis merchants in payment for flour and other necessaries.

Kansas did not suffer so much as Nebraska, since she was getting whatever immigrants were coming in from the East. So, around Omaha during our first year, about all the citizens could do was to sit in the grocery stores, whistle on drygoods boxes and discuss politics and the "hard times".

In Omaha we lived in a house that was framed in the City of Pittsburgh, then knocked down and shipped by steamboat to Omaha in 1856. It was set up on Cass Street between Eighteenth and Nineteenth Streets. In later years it was moved to Capital Avenue between Fifteenth and Sixteenth Streets where it remained until the fall of 1895 when it was torn down to make room for a more substantial building. This little house was one of the most comfortable homes in Omaha in those early days, and was sometimes the assembling place of many of the
most prominent citizens in Omaha. I remember one afternoon in particular when the little parlor was filled to its capacity with the most influential people in the city who had congregated there for the purpose of organizing the Republican Party of the Territory. Frement had been defeated: moreover, it was well known that citizens of Territories had nothing to do with making presidents, having no vote on such occasions, yet their motto seems to have been: "in times of peace prepare for war," so on this occasion they were anticipating the time when they might have a voice in the nation's affairs.

Some of the leading politicians of the city, though sympathizing with the movement, were slow about participating, not knowing how it would take with the people. But those who had gathered in our house went at it with enthusiasm and a full determination to make it a success. One outgrowth of the meeting at any rate was the *Omaha Republican* with Major Ed. Schneider as editor. This soon became one of the leading journals of the town and Territory.

During the winter of 1857–58 it was decided that as soon as navigation opened in the spring of 1858, we would change our residence once more: this time to Leavenworth, Kansas, where we had some interests.

On one of the earliest boats the family departed from Omaha, leaving me to settle some odds and ends of business and follow them on a later boat. My father had gone in advance of the family to prepare a home for them.

I did not tarry long. When I arrived at St. Joseph on my way down the river, the clerk of the boat came to me with a newspaper which contradicted an earlier report that had gained some circulation to the effect that my father had been killed by the accidental bursting of a cannon at Fort Leavenworth. As the first I had heard of it was this contradiction, I was not much affected by the news. My elder brother, John, however, who was in charge of the family on their trip down the river had heard the original report at St. Joseph likewise, but had never conveyed it to the other members of the family until he reached Leaven-
worth and found there was no truth in it. On the face of it, the story was improbable, as father had no occasion to visit the Fort or be placed in position to meet death in such a manner.

About this time Leavenworth was seeing prosperous days. The Federal Government was having trouble with the Mormons at Salt Lake and Johnston’s army had to be provided for, and the differences between the Free State and the Pro Slavery parties were nearing adjustment and a heavy migration from the Eastern and Northern States had begun. All these contributed to make business good and the town was improving and rapidly growing.

Messrs. Russell, Majors & Waddell had the contract for transportation of all government supplies to the military posts of the plains, including Johnston’s army at Camp Floyd and Salt Lake. The headquarters of this firm were at Leavenworth. Their business required many trains of ox-teams, miles of wagons and thousands of oxen and an army of teamsters and wagon-masters. Many of the teamsters were the sons of well-to-do farmers in Missouri.

Hundreds of troops were constantly stationed at the fort at Leavenworth. They were well equipped and mounted on the best horses in the country. Steamboats loaded with immigrants were constantly arriving, announcing their coming by firing a salute from a small cannon placed in the bow and making their landing with bands playing and deckhands singing. All the idle portion of the citizens would turn out to welcome the launching of the gangplanks. Something exciting was going on all the time. But at this time there were no railroads and no telegraph lines in the whole territory of Kansas.
MRS. WILLIAM LARIMER (nee RACHEL McMASTERS)
From Portrait by Dalmaigne, 1838.
CHAPTER FIVE

Discovery of gold in the Pike's Peak Region—Furor created by the news—Organized a party to cross the plains—The outfit—The Santa Fe Trail—Aubrey's long distance ride

On Feb. 17th, 1858, a party of Georgians and Cherokee Indians headed by William Green Russell, and a little later another party from Lawrence, Kansas, headed by J. H. Tierney, had started for the Rocky Mountains to prospect for gold. The former party arrived near the confluence of Cherry Creek and the Platte River on June 1st, and the latter party some time in August, 1858.

Not much was heard from either of these parties in the Mississippi River towns until about the last part of August or the first part of September, when a man by the name of King arrived in Leavenworth, Kansas, and claimed that he had been a member of the Lawrence Party.

My brother, John McMasters Larimer, was at this time engaged in banking and dealing in land warrants on the corner of Second and Delaware Streets in Leavenworth; and King, on his arrival, came into the bank with a goose quill well filled with flakes of yellow which he wanted tested. My brother pronounced it pure gold. King claimed that he had found it on a stream called Cherry Creek which emptied into the Platte River near the base of the mountains. I believe this was the first gold to reach the Missouri River from the Pikes Peak Region.

The sight of this gold and the stories he told of the country and the prospects of finding gold there in abund-
ance put all Leavenworth in excitement, and in spite of the difficulty of communication in those days, the rumor soon spread up and down the Missouri River. But in Leavenworth especially the whole population was feverish with interest, meetings were held on the street corners, bankers and merchants as well as loafers were anxious to start for the new gold fields. From all the talk and flurry, one would have supposed that at least half a thousand persons would be on the road in a few days, and that ultimately the whole city would be depopulated. But when a company was organized and names were handed in, all together not more than eighty enlisted for the trip, though some of the best citizens were among the number. Then came all the old pioneers and plainsmen, mountaineers and scouts, guides and teamsters, who had ever been a hundred miles west of the Missouri River and some doubtless who had never been out of Leavenworth County, telling their marvelous “experiences” with the hostile Indians, the blinding snowstorms, the devastating avalanches, and woodless camping places in desert plains swept by freezing blasts, and every other imaginable danger and hardship until our company was utterly demoralized and dwindled in numbers with every new rumor of possible disaster.

The proper season for camping out was drawing to a close: and how to get to Cherry Creek, and the time it would take, and what was to be done when we reached the place,—all had to be considered. It was very difficult to get any accurate information in regard to the country or the climate or methods of prospecting or of mining. We could find no one who had had any practical experience, notwithstanding the claims of some, so that the more we attempted to investigate the more we seemed to be plunging into uncertainties and taking risks not commensurate with the possible gains. We could read Col. Fremont’s sad experience in the mountains only a few years before. So it all came back to a question of how far we could trust in the tales told by this man King and in the glitter of his gold. That it would be midwinter before we could possibly
reach our destination tended to further reduce the number of those who had enrolled for the trip.

My mother was very much opposed to our going. She looked upon it as a venture with not much back of it, and with the season of the year against us. She had almost persuaded father to give it up. But as we had our outfit almost completed and were nearly ready to start, I could not think of backing down, and I said to father: "Then you stay at home and let me go"; but mother would not consent to that, and said that if I went, father would have to go to take care of me. So that settled it. Father was nearly 49 years of age, which was rather old to endure hardships when there was no occasion for it, but I was not yet eighteen.

In order that we might get some authoritative information about the country though which we might pass and the best route to be taken, I remember going with my father one Sunday to call on Mr William H. Russell, who was then well known throughout Kansas, as the head of the firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, Government Freighters, who transported the supplies for the Utah Expedition in 1857 and 1858 against the Mormons, and Harney's Expedition against the Indians. Mr Russell lived in Leavenworth not far from our home. We had a long talk with him over our proposed venture. He remarked that I was rather young for such an adventure though he did not discourage my going, but gave us all the information he could in regard to the plains. In regard to loading he cautioned us that about 1600 pounds was enough for four good mules at that season of the year. But no matter from what source we endeavored to get information, we could find no one who had ever been to Cherry Creek, nor could we keep up the enthusiasm of more than a few members of the party. So when it came time for starting only six persons answered the roll call. These were:

C. A. Lawrence. About the age of my father, and claimed to have been with Walker in Central America. (Lawrence Street in Denver received its name from him.)
FULSOM DORSETT, (Nephew to C. A. Lawrence) Native of Indiana and one of Kansas' Pioneers during the border troubles.

R. E. WHITSETT, Better known as “DICK” was a native of Ireland, had lived in Leavenworth several years—a jolly good fellow.

M. M. JEWETT, native of Massachusetts.

WILLIAM LARIMER, my father; and I, WILLIAM H. H. LARIMER, the youngest of the party.

Even after we knew who would go, it took us some time to prepare for the trip, as we knew full well that we had to provide everything we should need for at least eight months and perhaps longer.

Our outfit consisted of four yoke of cattle and a good, strong wagon, three ponies, a year’s provisions and a little of everything we could think of as likely to be needed during a trip of that kind and after reaching our destination.

The reason we had chosen oxen was because horses or mules would have required grain at that season of the year to make the trip successfully. It was out of the question for us to haul enough grain in addition to our other supplies; and we also thought there would be less danger of having oxen stolen by Indians or Mexicans. Buffalo were plentiful enough to supply the marauders with meat, whereas a good horse would be very tempting to both Indian and Mexican.

STARTING WESTWARD

The first thing we put into the bottom of our wagon was six light pine boards. We did not know just what we might want to use them for, but a fellow who was standing close by when we were loading them on the wagon remarked that they would be used for coffins. I do not remember that we had thought of that before his suggestion. While I pretended to take no notice of his remark, I felt as if there might be some truth in it, and there was many a time afterwards when I recalled to mind his jest, and wondered if it was about to prove true. We also took nails, and window glass, and mining tools, and the proverbial thousand and one other things. Our outfit seemed
W. H. H. Larimer & Folsom Dorsett Sr
Bot. of F. Brown & Longgood
Two Pairs Red & White oxen
Two Yokes & one Chain
Rec'd Payment, $150.00
Leavenworth City Sept. 18th, 1858.
BROWN & LONGGOOD
Paid by Larimer.

Rec'd Leavenworth City Sept. 20 1858
of W. H. H. Larimer Forty five Dollars
in full for Wagon and oxen.
45$ 2 Oct 1858.
W. H. EWING.
very complete. It took several days to think of everything and get it loaded.

But now the day set for starting had arrived. We were in for it. There was no backing out: I often felt as though I should like to back out, but youth and strength and bright hopes for the future, and a spirit of adventure, braced me up so that I was equally deaf to the entreaties of my mother and the persuasions of my friends, who said that my father would gladly abandon the trip if only I would give it up. To all my answer was: "No". It was the first day of October, 1858. It happened to fall on Friday, the so-called unlucky day. Was that to presage our failure? Some of the older members of the party may have been superstitious enough to think so, but neither Dorsett nor I had thought of it, and the rest made no mention to us about it but found some excuse to get us two to make the start as we were both stout-hearted and young.

So with a cheerful good-bye to our friends, we seized our ox-whips and with a gay "Hurrah" started off accompanied by a number of friends as far as Salt Creek Valley, a few miles west of the City where we made our first camp.

The travel had been slow, for the oxen were not well broken and our load was heavy. Moreover, when one is just beginning a trip with oxen he is likely to think he has traveled farther than he has. It takes many a whoop and many a slash of the whip and sometimes a few cuss words to get a mile, but we soon got so that we could make twenty miles a day or about two miles an hour. While this seems slow compared with the present-day methods of travel we thought that we were making very good time, indeed.

I had learned to drive oxen in Nebraska at our Mill, so that it was not new to me. Dorsett and I had it all to ourselves this first day, as the other members of the party planned to catch up with us later, which, of course they could easily do.

The first one to overtake us was Charlie Lawrence who came into camp at noon near Easton. It was not
until then that we learned that the rest of the party had thus intentionally, according to their notion of things, sacrificed Dorsett's and my "luck" for the entire trip. At Hickory Point, M. M. Jewett and R. E. Whitsett caught up with us.

Nothing of interest occurred before reaching Topeka. No part of the town was then on the north side of the river, and there was no bridge, so we crossed by a rope ferry and after experiencing much difficulty in pulling up the steep bank from the boat we camped near where the capitol now stands. At that time Topeka was not the capital of the Territory, however; that honor belonged to LeCompton. Topeka was a small place with no solid blocks of buildings, but here and there a store such as one would see in any small country town. It had taken us about four days to come here from Leavenworth, and we remained for a day or two, resting and completing our outfit, for experience in camping had taught us the need of some additional things. While waiting here our party was completed by the arrival of my father: he had left Leavenworth two days later than we.

We left Topeka on an afternoon, and that night camped on a little creek only a few miles out. Here we had our first frost. Everything in the morning was white and the air was crisp. I thought of home and wished I were there. Having been in camp and on the road about a week the novelty had commenced to wear off. I imagined winter was upon us now with a rush, and commenced to think of all they told us about freezing to death. But fortunately the day became pleasant and for some time the weather was as favorable for our trip as we could have wished.

From Topeka our route was southwest until we intersected the old Santa Fe Road which we then followed until we came to Council Grove, having passed through a number of small villages on the way.

Council Grove was a frontier trading post and the last post office where we could expect to receive any mail. To our pleasure we found awaiting us a number of letters
and papers. They were a great treat, for we knew they would be the last until sometime in the following spring. Council Grove was settled almost exclusively by Indian traders. Occasionally the Indians of the plains would wander thus far east, but for the most part the trading was done with the Kaw Indians. A few farms had been opened up on the creeks east of the town, but there was no sign of civilization whatever to the west. Here as elsewhere we made some purchases and secured all the information we could about the country beyond. The traders were glad to see us. Their wares were then nearly all Indian goods, bright colored prints, fancy bridles, saddles and blankets, beads and trinkets of various kinds, such as are now things of the past. Furs, robes and skins were brought in by the Indians to barter for these eastern products.

The traders were generally very quiet persons conforming their habits to those of the Indians. Their apparel was usually the buckskin trousers fringed on the side, moccasins and a beaded coat, though usually the latter was worn only on state occasions or when visiting. For a wife the trader had the best looking squaw of the tribe, very often the daughter of some old noted trader or Chief. The wife dressed in some bright colored calico with a pretty, high colored, usually red, handkerchief for head dress. Hers was the honor to have the prettiest "paint pony" that could be found. To all appearances both trader and squaw-wife were perfectly happy and contented. A trader's ranch was known from one end of the country to the other, and it was nothing unusual for their families to exchange visits on pony back over a distance of 150 to 200 miles. The traders were the big men of the country, the aristocrats of the backwoods.

Springs or creek crossings were the natural places on the highways for camping, and usually they were also the sites of little trading places or ranches, where some settler had decided to cease his westward wandering. The next such place we passed was called Diamond Springs. Here both wood and water could be had, but this was not
of much importance to us as we had been having rain and so were not suffering from thirst. Somebody think­ing to establish a ranch here had laid a foundation for a house, but afterwards seemed to have reconsidered the intention and passed on. As he was not around to enter­tain us we also passed on.

We were now on the SANTA FE ROAD, said to be the best natural wagon road, for its length, in the world. For a distance of over 800 miles from Westport or In­dependence, Missouri to Santa Fe, Mexico, not one dollar had ever been expended on it. Heavily loaded teams found no trouble in traversing it, except perhaps on an exceptional sand creek or hill where it might be necessary to double-up the teams. All travel from the Eastern States to Mexico and all freight and mail went over this road and it had the appearance of having been a satis­factory thoroughfare for many years and of being so for many years to come, though there was not a bridge or culvert throughout its entire length. The road was re­markable for its width, and the bed had considerable gravel in it, so that it packed easily and either shed or absorbed the rains quickly. We had considerable rain during our trip but experienced no trouble from mud.

The quality of this road has been partially shown by the exploits of a man named Aubrey, who rode over it on horseback from Santa Fe to Independence, a distance of 800 miles in 133 hours. An account of this ride is not with­out interest.

W. F. Aubrey was born in Canada of French parents and drifted to St. Louis six or eight years before the Mex­i­can War. He was a man of perfect physique and like the majority of adventurers in the far west soon became at­tracted by the adventurous life the great plains offered and entered on the exciting vocation of a Sante Fe trader.

After he had been on the plains for about ten years and had become one of the most wonderful horsemen in the whole country he made two remarkable rides from Sante Fe to Independence, Mo.; the first on a wager that he could make the trip in eight days and the other that
he could beat his own record. The amount of money on the former was only one thousand dollars, but on the latter a very much larger sum. Aubrey won both bets with an awful sacrifice of sleep and much physical pain. He rode a number of horses which were posted at short intervals along the lone route and on the first trip six of them dropped in their tracks under him as he rode them. He reached the plaza at Independence, a distance of 800 miles, with three hours to spare. On that first trip it is reported that he killed one horse very soon after he left the station and was compelled to walk and carry his saddle to the next station, which was in the vicinity of Council Grove, nearly twenty-five miles away.

The next wager was that he would make the next 800 miles in 144 hours or 45 hours less than his former trip. He rode his favorite mare "Nellie". The first day out from Santa Fe she fell dead after being ridden an incredible number of miles. He won the wager with eleven hours to spare or in only 133 hours, but he was nearly dead when his friends pulled him off his horse at the southwest corner of the plaza at Independence, where he immediately fell into a profound sleep, from which he did not awake for more than two days.

Aubrey did not return to Santa Fe after his last ride for over three years and almost at the very moment that he entered the quaint old city he was murdered. The affair occurred in a saloon where he had gone on invitation of an old friend, an ex-officer of the regular army. Aubrey said something that his friend did not like and he threw the liquid which he had just poured out into Aubrey's face. Aubrey drew his revolver but before he could fire he was stabbed to the heart with a bowie knife. Where he is buried is unknown to this day. Fifty years ago one of the finest boats on the Missouri was named for him.
CHAPTER SIX

The making of a corral—Buffalo hunting—Lost on the plains—An Indian camp—Indians attempt to steal our cattle—Allison’s Ranch—Mail and Stage Coach—The “wheelbarrow man”—The Oskaloosa Party—Another band of Indians

The next place with a name was Lost Springs, but true to name they were lost to us, we saw nothing but a mudhole by the side of the road.

Having reached the frontier we were naturally on the lookout for both Indians and buffalo. We could have done without the former but we were anxious to meet the latter, for salt meat was not palatable to us when we always had before our minds’ eye a fine buffalo steak fresh from the hunt and the redhot coals of a campfire. These visions had begun to come with the rising of hope. But thus far we had seen nothing of either Indian or buffalo.

Cottonwood was the next important camping ground, though there was nothing of commercial importance at the place. Here the first big Mexican mule-freight overtook us. It belonged to a man by the name of Parker, of Santa Fe. It was made up of twenty-six teams with twelve little Spanish mules to each team. The drivers were all Mexicans. For one who had never seen such a train before, it was truly interesting. We traveled in their company for several days. The speed and skill with which they hitched up and unhitched and corralled their mules were wonderful.

Perhaps I should explain how corralling is done. The first team which drives into camp takes its position a little to the left of the trail, the second team drives a
little to the left of the first and leaves the front wheel about three feet from the rear wheel of the first wagon. The third follows the second in the same manner and so on through the first half of the train, thus forming the left wing of the corral. Then the first team of the second half of the train swings to the right and takes position opposite the front wagon of the left wing, leaving a space of about fifty feet between the front wagons. All the other wagons of the second half swing in to the right in the same manner as the left wing formed, until the left and right wings together form a semi-circle. An opening is left in the rear about twice the width of the front opening. Then a chain is run through wheels to finish closing the space between the wagons. Thus is formed a pen into which the mules and cattle can be driven by stationing a man at each opening. It is customary to drive the mules into the rear opening as that is the widest. The stock soon get accustomed to this procedure and it facilitates hitching up when ready to start on the journey again. Once, some time after the date of which I am writing now, when I was in charge of some twenty or more wagons with five or six yoke of oxen to each wagon, I timed the teamsters in hitching and forming their train ready for travel and found that the leading team rolled out a fraction less than eight minutes after the order had been given to in-span, and all the other teams followed into the train with prompt regularity. I merely mention this actual test to show how expert “bull whackers” would become and what they could do with a herd of over 200 head of cattle. Of course the object of corralling was not alone the formation of a pen in which to confine the cattle to keep them from roaming away, but as a defensive barricade in case of attack by Indians.

The next streams we crossed were the Turkey Creeks. There are two or three branches of these creeks; some of them were dry. These creeks were always anxiously looked forward to by the camper, and although they are now in the heart of McPherson County, one of the best counties in the whole state of Kansas, and although
McPherson, the county seat and residence of 20,000 people, is now located not far from where we camped, yet there was then no settlement of any kind nor much sign of fertile soil. We were camping under merely the bare stars far out on the open frontier. At every camping place we were fortunate in having fine grass for our oxen. Although it was killed by the frost, it was still nutritious and kept our cattle in good condition for the work of the day.

Not long after passing the Turkey Creeks and about ten miles before we reached the Little Arkansas River, we saw the first buffalo. I can never forget the sight. We immediately pitched camp and made preparations for a hunt. Mounted on horses, my father and Jewett and Dorsett undertook to surround the herd; there were not more than a dozen of them. They were quietly feeding and it was not long before they occupied the center of a triangle formed by the three hunters, who began firing simultaneously and with the risk of hitting each other but fortunately with harm only to one of the buffalo, which fell dead not far from the camp. The other three of us took no part except as spectators, but we enjoyed the battle. One buffalo was all we needed for food, to be sure; but father, apparently, was not content, for we noticed that he took up the trail of the balance of the herd which had scampered off. We could see him in the distance hotly pursuing them. We watched him for several miles until he passed out of sight. It was nearly night, the sun reddening the horizon. His horse became tired, the buffalo increased the distance between them, and he finally concluded to give up the hunt and retrace his steps. But when he turned to go to camp he had no idea which way to go. His knowledge of the plains and the sign language of nature was not at this time sufficient to enable him to choose the direction, and in the excitement of the chase he had paid no attention to either direction or distance. He rode to the nearest mound that he might look into all directions, but not a thing could he recognize that would assist in finding camp. He at last made his best guess and started off. His jaded horse managed to
keep going but was of no assistance in retracing the route. The sun was now down and darkness reigned.

The other five of us had finished dressing the slain buffalo and while awaiting supper, were getting very anxious for his safety. So we made a signal fire out of buffalo chips on a little knoll near camp; it was the highest ground we could find anywhere near. Also every few minutes we would fire a gun. This we kept up for some time after dark. At last father saw the fire and made for it and it was not long afterwards until he came within hearing of the signal gun. This brought him into camp and we had a joyful reunion and over the festive board listened to the narration of his experience. As soon as he knew he was lost he began to suffer from thirst; then he began to be tormented with the recollection of an article he had read in the paper just before leaving home, giving the experiences of a man who had wandered from his companions on Smoky Hill River (only a short distance from our present camping place) and who had for several days subsisted on snakes, prickly pears, and whatever else he could get, until he finally wandered into a settlement and was saved.

Father's experience was worth much to us all, for never after that, when leaving the road, did we fail to pay close attention to directions and distances.

This buffalo meat was the first fresh meat we had had for a long time, and we certainly enjoyed it. But after this until we were pretty well up the Arkansas River, we had plenty of buffalo meat.

**The Indian Country**

Hitherto we had seen no Indians of the plains, though now that we had reached the buffalo country we had commenced to look for them. This was the time of the year best suited for their hunting, as they would be in greatest need of meat, and could best preserve it for the future. They could also treat the hides to the best advantage. These hides, made into robes, were their best revenue as well as their protection from the winter weather.
Soon after we passed Cow Creek something in the distance on our left glistening in the sunlight attracted our attention. We kept careful watch of the object and soon decided it was Indians. They had bright steel spears on sticks eight or ten feet long. As soon as they detected us they started for us. We had already commenced to make preparations to receive them by taking down our guns from the side of the wagon where we had them in straps as the most convenient place in which to carry them when not in use.

The Indians were probably two miles away when we first caught sight of each other, but nearer and nearer they came. Our hearts were beating fast as we discussed the consequences should they attack us. And well we might, for they could have easily overcome us—being about forty of them to six of us. As they got near us we stopped our wagon and fixed for them, determined to make the best resistance we could and show no signs of weakening or fear; for if an Indian finds that you can be frightened he will take advantage of that weakness. I had learned so by my experience among the Omahas and Pawnees in Nebraska in the years 1855 and 1856. If they can intimidate you they will make you dance to their music if for nothing more than their amusement. This knowledge of an Indian’s disposition was of great benefit to us. They came within a hundred yards of us, drew up in line and halted, saluted us with “How! How!” to which we responded in the same way. The chief then rode up to us and we had a hearty handshake and talked to him as best we could by signs, and tried to tell him where we were going and that we had no intention of interfering with their buffalo or their country. After a pow-wow for some time the rest of the warriors, (who meanwhile had been sitting on their horses like so many well drilled soldiers) at a command from their chief, rode into camp and the chief got out his pipe, and squatting tailor fashion on the ground passed the pipe of peace to each of them and to us in turn. A few little presents, mostly tobacco, were passed around by us and everybody was happy, particularly
our party, for we felt as though we had gone through that fight in grand shape and were ready for the next, which we found at Big Bend of the Arkansas River.

We arrived at Big Bend in the evening. It was the first time we had seen the Arkansas River. Our camping place was a beautiful spot, with fine grass for our cattle. We were in jubilant spirits, for now we thought that we were well along on our journey, for we were expecting our next three or four hundred miles to be on the banks of this River. Just before sundown, as we were airing our bedding and cleaning our guns, a small party of Indians crossed the river from some cottonwood timber opposite camp and started to round up our cattle and ponies. This was disconcerting, for one might as well be dead as to be left in that country afoot at that time, so we had to interfere, which we did in as pleasant a manner as possible. We knew we could hold our own with whatever Indians were in sight, but they threatened us with a big camp across the river. We could not see any over there, nor did we have any desire to look them up, as we had lost no Indians! It had been our intention to remain in camp at this spot for a few days to rest and enjoy the comforts of the place for man and beast, but after discussing the altered aspect of affairs we concluded the best thing for us was to get away. So about three hours before daylight we were on the march again, and by daylight or soon after found ourselves at Allison's Ranch close to Walnut Creek.

I remember that while on the road, I was walking ahead of the wagon some three or four hundred yards perhaps, when I heard something coming behind me. I stopped and looked around just in time to see some kind of animal crouching ready to spring on me. I jumped to one side and started back to the wagon for a gun, but while doing this the animal got away. It must have been a panther or mountain lion; and without doubt, had I not heard it coming up behind me, I would in a moment have been attacked.

At Allison's Ranch we camped and got our breakfast. Mr. Allison in his buckskin suit was a fine specimen of
frontiersman. He kept a fine stock of Indian goods and had a good trade with the Indians. All around the ranch buffalo by the hundreds, undisturbed, were grazing like cattle. Mr. Allison tried to leave the impression on our minds that the Indians were not, just now, on the best terms with the whites and that it would be well for us to be always on our guard and well prepared for them. He might have done this only to intimidate us, but we took it as good advice and exercised great caution. We were very uneasy all that day, fearing lest the Indians of the day before would follow us. We fully expected trouble.

At night we camped between Walnut Creek and Pawnee Rocks and several times had to get up and fire our guns to scare off the buffalo which were drifting southward in one dense mass. There was no way of estimating how many there were, but when we would fire our guns to part the drove that they might not trample us down, the very earth would tremble with their tread.

I have had years of experience on the plains since that night and the day following, but at no time have I ever seen so many buffalo as were located in that section of the country.* From Walnut Creek on the east to a point on what we called the “dry route” some few miles west of Pawnee Fork the country was black with them. The grass was white and curly and so short that you could see a prairie dog as far as his size would permit; and one would think that with such grazing the buffalo would starve, but instead of that they were slick and fat. While the rest of us tried to carve our names on Pawnee Rock,

*“... What strikes the stranger with most amazement is their immense number, I know a million is a great many, but I am confident we saw that number yesterday. Certainly, all we saw could not have stood on ten square miles of ground. Often, the country for miles on either hand seemed quite black with them. The soil is rich, well matted with their favorite grass. Yet it is all (except a very little on the creek bottoms) eaten down like overtaxed sheep pasture in a dry August. Consider that we have traversed more than one hundred miles in width since we first struck them. And that for most of this distance the buffalo have been constantly in sight, and that they continue for some twenty-five miles farther on—this being the breadth of their present range, which has a length of perhaps one thousand miles, and you have some approach of an idea of their countless numbers. ...”

Horace Greeley in New York Daily Tribune: June 18, 1859.
Jewett rode off to shoot buffalo and before long returned to camp with his horse loaded with tongues only, which he produced as evidence of how many buffalo he had killed, a ruthless slaughtering as looked at in this day, but at that time the entire number could not be missed from the countless thousands extending in every direction as far as the eye could reach.

Cattle sometimes got mixed with the buffalo. We had trouble keeping ours from getting lost among them, though they were almost too jaded to play buffalo. I have known cattle to get off with the buffalo and their owners be unable to recover them, and at other times I have known of cattle being captured out of the wild herds. It is difficult for oxen to travel with buffalo on the run as they cannot endure to run so long and sooner or later drop down exhausted.

From Coon Creek until we reached the Arkansas River again, we took a cut across country by what was known as the “dry route” and when we struck the river again it was near where Dodge City now stands and not far below the old Cimarron Crossing on the road to Fort Union and Santa Fe.

At that time it was a novel sight, and would be still more so now, to see how the mail was carried from the States to New Mexico. There was an ambulance with four little Spanish mules, a driver on the box to handle the lines and a man on the outside riding a mule and with a blacksnake whip in his hand to do the lashing. There would usually be an additional wagon accompanying the ambulance and driven in like manner. This was to carry the camping outfit and the grain and provisions, for there were no Stage Stations along the route, such as were afterwards established by the Overland Company. Instead of that, these hardy men had to camp out and carry all their own supplies and drive the same mules for hundreds of miles. It would thus take between two and three weeks for a letter or a passenger to get to New Mexico from Missouri, and the trip was not made by the same ambulance oftener than once in four to six weeks, I think.
Once the mail train overtook us and we stopped and had a talk with their party, which generally consisted of five or six men and sometimes a passenger or two. They would invariably have some story to tell about the Indians: a thrilling story of attack and how they barely escaped with their lives. Often there was not a word of truth in these stories, doubtless, but they always had a tendency to make one feel uneasy and keep a double guard at night.

This matter of standing guard was one of the hardships of the trip. Double guard divided between only six individuals made the duty fall on each individual very frequently, and the nights seemed very long and the weather very raw, and the darkness, two hundred miles from any settlement, was very lonesome. The beating of the rain and the howling of the wolves, and the bellowing of the buffalo bulls, only added to the solemnity or weirdness of the occasion. It gave us plenty of time for reflection: and often I thought how rash we had been to start out from our comfortable home in Leavenworth at that season of the year, and, with so small a party, to attempt to explore such an unknown country. We invariably extinguished our camp fire at sunset, as we feared it might attract any Indians that happened to be in the neighborhood, and we always attempted to so locate our camp that Indians might not be able to discover us.

The men of this mail train said that on this side of the river, near the crossing, they met a party of Indians who were not friendly and advised us to be on the lookout for them. That night we had to camp near where we expected to find them. On this night the guard was out as usual. He saw something that looked like Indians skulking around near our stock and gave the alarm, yelling “Indians, Indians”. At the first alarm we jumped for our arms and went to his rescue in the darkness of the night. He thought he could see Indians skulking around. As we could find no Indians, it must have been a practical joke played by the mail party on us, or the Indians had scampered off. Our greatest dread and fear of Indians was before we reached their country or saw much of them. It gradually
disappeared as we became better acquainted with them; yet we were always on the lookout that no advantage could be taken by them.

Soon after striking the Arkansas River between Dodge City and Cimarron Crossing, we left the Santa Fe Road, as our route was westward up the river, while the road crossed the river on its continued course to the southwest. Every night our camp was made on the river bank or with the river in sight. At Pawnee Forks we had left the timber lands behind and I have no recollection of seeing a tree of any size from there until we reached Big Timbers, some distance above the Santa Fe Crossing. For fuel we were entirely dependent on buffalo chips.

About this time we were overtaken by a small party from Osaloosa, Kansas. They had with them a man originally from Pennsylvania, A. O. McGrew by name. He had attempted to make the trip across the plains alone and wheeling his entire camping outfit, provisions, blankets, etc., in a wheelbarrow. He became well known as the "wheelbarrow man" and acquired considerable notoriety in the newspapers of that day. He had made some 150 or 200 miles of the distance and though footsore and weary was still making good time when this Oskaloosa Party had caught up with him and found him willing enough to abandon his undertaking and attach himself to their train.* So the wheelbarrow was slung behind one of the wagons, and thereafter whenever camp was pitched, was used for the gathering of buffalo chips for the fire. Many a time have I used it for that purpose. It was very welcome, well worth its weight in transportation.

Our two parties remained together for the rest of the trip up the Arkansas River.

For the next 150 miles it was the same scenery and

* Smiley in his Story of Denver page 237 incorrectly states: "On the Southern Route, a young man, who certainly deserved well of fortune, trundled his belongings—provisions, clothing and tools, all the way from the Missouri River in a wheelbarrow, arriving at Denver in good condition, and with a cash capital of ten cents in his pockets. He was a printer by trade, and afterwards won greater prominence in the affairs of the community."
the same incidents of ox driving and camping, without sight of Indian or white man, until after we struck the Big Timbers. In fact the country was little more than a barren waste with nothing but earth and sky and slender streams of river to meet the eye, save here and there a big sunflower stalk or perhaps a few willow twigs. There was hardly a trace of a trail, Col. Bent was probably the only man who had ever traveled it with a team, though it was used sometimes by the Indians on their ponies. The Big Timbers were hardly as big as their name would imply, but the monotony was broken and with fuel more plentiful we could enjoy once more the comforts of a good fire, which we often greatly needed.

Thus far we had been fortunate enough to have comparatively little rainy weather and only very light snows, barely enough to cover the ground at any time.

One day just after we had had our noonday rest we saw something some eight or ten miles away which we supposed was a herd of buffalo. The object was almost directly on our route, so we went forward more rapidly expecting to have some fresh meat for supper. When we had approached within two or three miles, father in his zeal, rode ahead, eager for the hunt. On getting nearer he found he was mistaken and that it was ponies belonging to a band of Indians who had 150 or 160 tepees just off the road. But it was too late to retrace his way, for the Indians had now sighted him and were running out to meet him. We kept on after him ourselves but were a mile or so behind. He passed in behind some trees just as we saw the Indians running towards him. I remember that the men made the remark that from the way it looked to them the Indians were going to kill him. We were all very much frightened and prepared the best we could to withstand an attack. There was little hope of success, however, as the Indians outnumbered us a hundred to one. We hastened on, making the best show we could and on reaching the timber got another view of father. He was sitting on his horse and there were two or three hundred Indians, large and small, male and female, around
him, having quite a powwow. He did not seem in the least frightened and we were delighted to find the Indians inclined to friendliness. We stopped our team and visited them for a time but, though it was camping time, we did not care to stay with them all night and so moved on, followed by quite a number of bucks. We made them some presents of sugar, coffee, tobacco, and trinkets and thus got rid of them. It was after dark before we finished making a treaty with them, but as soon as we could get away and into hiding we made camp, as our teams were very tired after so long a drive this day. There was one buck, however, who did not want to leave us. He persisted in staying until, to our amusement, another Indian walked up to him and tried to persuade him to return to the tepees and when he still refused, struck him with his fist and compelled him to return.

Our camp was made about half a mile off the road and we refrained from making a fire to attract their attention. Shortly after midnight we began to move again and by daylight we were several miles away.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Green Russell—Gold prospects—Bent’s Fort—Story of a disconsolate Indian
—Colonel Bent’s career—A letter from Bent’s Fort

NOT long after the events of the preceding chapter we met a party of three men, mounted on horses and accompanied by a pack animal. It was a most propitious meeting: for we found that the spokesman of the party was Green Russell. We were delighted to run across him in this wilderness.

Thus far we had been traveling more or less blindly, so far as the country was concerned. King, the man who had returned to Leavenworth with news of the discovery of gold was the only person whom we had met up to this time who seemed to know anything whatever about the country to which we were endeavoring to make our way. But here now was Russell, himself, the original explorer, the Boone of the west, the inspirer of all our hopes. He was returning to Georgia, his native state, to spend the winter and to better prepare himself for prospecting in the spring. One of his companions was his brother, J. Oliver Russell, and he had left another brother, Dr. L. J. Russell, on Cherry Creek. He gave us all the information he could in regard to the country and his findings and a general idea of the locality where we would find remnants of his party. He expressed great faith in the country and the conviction that gold would be found in paying quantities. He had several ounces of gold with him which he showed us.

Up to this time $500 would pay for the entire product taken from all the diggings in this territory, but as these
diggings consisted of only a few holes near the Platte River from three to six miles above the mouth of Cherry Creek, and had been worked only a few months, we were not in the least discouraged but rather were elated.

Our meeting with Russell probably did not last more than half an hour, but we told him of the excitement on the Missouri River over his discoveries and predicted that early spring would flood the country with prospectors and that development of the country would proceed rapidly. Up to this time he had heard but little of what was going on in the States. He said, in advice to us, that almost nothing could be done in the mountains until spring and by that time he would be back with some practical miners from his own State and would thenceforward make this Territory his home. Of course if he had been leaving the country in disgust it would have dampened our ardor; but, as it was, he left us filled with hope and encouragement. He said we should never regret our undertaking, and I can say now that we found everything just as he represented it, then and thereafter.

Apart from our good fortune in getting authentic information from Green Russell, we felt doubly happy in meeting him although we were with him for so brief a time, because white men were very rare in these parts and we could travel two or three hundred miles without seeing one outside of our own party. But as we approached Big Timbers and Bent’s Fort, Indians began to appear more frequently, and as we arrived only a few miles east of the latter place, near the crossing of a sand creek, we came upon a large camp of Cheyennes and Arapahoes. There were some 250 lodges of them.

Whether it was on account of seeing us or by mere chance I do not know; but, at any rate, just as we came near them they commenced driving in their ponies and taking down the lodges ready to move camp. It was like moving Barnum’s Circus. It was one of the most interesting sights I have ever seen. Everybody was busy. Each family looked after its own lodge, all the work being done by the squaws. They would take two of their lodge poles,
which were from 15 to 18 feet long, and would strap one on each side of a pony, letting the end rest on the ground. Then a large cage or basket made of willow wythes would be fastened between the poles near the pony. Into these the children and the aged and infirm would be placed and the ponies driven down the trail. Dogs were left to follow, but puppies that were too young to keep up were killed and strapped to a pack like so many squirrels. Indians were very fond of dog meat and a puppy was their best dish. Sometimes a child five or six years old would be strapped directly on a pony which would then be turned loose.

It took only a short time for the entire caravan to get on the move; strung out for several miles these Indians were passing us or traveling with us all through the day.

At night they camped in some timber within a mile or so of Bent's Fort on the east, while we camped about a mile beyond it on the west. Col. Bent did not understand why so many Indians had come in from the plains at one time. He talked to my father about it and expressed his fear that they might be up to some mischief.

Our camp was on the bank of the River and we laid over here during Saturday, Oct 30, 1858, to rest ourselves and our animals and to make repairs and clean up generally.

Bent's Fort was on a little hill or bluff near the river. It was built of stone. My recollection of it is that its stone wall was perhaps twelve or fifteen feet high.

Col. Bent was a Canadian. In 1846 he had located an old adobe fort some few miles distant from this site, on the Arkansas River, though his trade with the Indians had begun as early as 1842 when he located at Fort Union near the mouth of the Yellowstone River. He was a successful trader, but of course, from time to time, had his little differences with the Indians, especially Little Mountain of the Kiowas, who often threatened trouble. To guard against the Indians, therefore, he built this new Fort of stone. It covered nearly an acre of ground. The high stone wall formed also the back of his buildings,
while the doors of these buildings opened into the central court. The buildings were a stable, an ambulance house, men's quarters (for the Colonel kept quite a force of "hands", teamsters, et al.), his own residence and the store and warehouses.

On the wall at each corner, he kept a small howitzer in position ready for instant use and always in order. The fort being on an elevation of ground these guns could be trained on a foe appearing from any direction and there was little doubt that he could hold his Fort against a large band of Indians.

The entrance was a wide one through which teams could drive in with his stores; but there was also a small door which would admit only one man at a time. The large door was kept closed at night and whenever he anticipated trouble. We noticed that when this large band of Indians arrived at the same time we did, he took care to admit within the inclosure only a few Indians at a time. I have since learned from Mr. C. H. Wetzell, who in 1890 was still living at Soda Springs, Idaho, and who was at the time of which I am writing in Col. Bent's employ, that the Colonel was indeed at that time having a serious time with the Kiowas and feared that they had come in to give him trouble.

To enable him to get the supplies which he used to barter to the Indians in exchange for their furs and buffalo robes, he kept an ox train. In the spring he would load this with robes and furs and have them go to Westport or Independence on the Missouri, whence shipments were made by boat to St. Louis. On the return to the Fort this train would come laden with goods to suit his trade. His train this year had arrived at the Fort only a short time ahead of us, and I remember that father gave him a dollar for a dozen apples which he brought to me and said "These may be the last apples you will ever eat." Father also gave him four dollars for the pick of his buffalo robes.

Connected with these annual trips of the Colonel's train to the East a little instance related to me by Mr. Wetzell is worth repeating:
There was a very old Indian who was in some way related to Col. Bent's wife. For years this Indian had been trying to get Bent to take him on one of his trips to the Missouri River. From year to year Bent would put him off "until next year". On the occasion now being told about, the old Indian again came to him and begged to be taken on the trip, saying that he was an old man and could not live much longer, that he would greatly like to see the country of the white man before he died. His pleading and anxiety had no effect on the Colonel, however, who gave him the same old promise that he would take him "next year". With this the ox-train started, Col. Bent in his ambulance leading, while the disconsolate Indian sat leaning against the wall of the Fort, with his robe wrapped about him, broken hearted and sobbing. The train traveled only a few miles when night came on and camp was pitched. The next morning one of the men had to return to the Fort to get something that was forgotten, and he found the poor old Indian still sitting in the same position as they had left him the afternoon before, but dead. The disappointment had been too much for him; his spirit had flown to visit the pale faces' lands, when he could not go himself, in person.

The white men's life in this frontier post was hardly any better than the Indians'. I happened into the Colonel's building when his men were eating breakfast one day and I noticed the absence of bread. They told me that they seldom had flour, that they lived principally on meat, game, coffee and beans.

Bent's Fort was a factor in the development of our great West of such great importance that I shall take the liberty of quoting the following extract from Hall's History of Colorado, pages 163 to 166, Vol. I.

"... in 1826, shortly after the movement of the fur trade in this direction, and the opening of our inland commerce with Santa Fe, Charles Bent, with three brothers, William, Robert and George, and Ceran St. Vrain, all hunters and trappers of the class known as French Canadians, long engaged with the American Fur Company in the mountains of the Northwest, arrived on the Arkansas River and erected
a stockade of long stakes or pickets driven into the ground, which when ceiled and roofed, served the purpose of a rude trading post. It was located at a point on the left or north bank of the stream, about midway between Pueblo and Canon City, and was occupied by its builders for about two years. In 1828, finding it necessary to be in closer proximity to the richer hunting grounds of the Arkansas Valley, the Bents moved down to a point twelve miles northeast of the present town of Las Animas, and there began the construction of a larger and more pretentious structure of adobe or sun dried bricks. But for some reason unexplained it was not completed until 1832. Meanwhile, it is assumed the founders lived in tents of skin like the natives, when shelter was required from the hot suns and storms of summer and the chilling blasts of winter. When finished the station was named 'Fort William,' in honor of 'Colonel' or William Bent, who was the animating spirit of the enterprise, and indeed the principal trader, who took long journeys out among the Arapahoes, Cheyennes, Kiowas and Comanches, and perhaps other tribes, along the rivers far to the east and southwest, exchanging the goods he carried upon pack animals, and which the Indians eagerly coveted, for the furs and peltries they had gathered. On one of these expeditions he married a comely Cheyenne maiden, the daughter of a powerful chief.

"A remarkable man in his day was William Bent, not perhaps according to the aesthetic standard, but in the estimation of his fellows and of the red men, where his iron firmness yet kindly manners, his integrity, truthfulness and courage, not only compelled admiration but endeared him to them. As a consequence, no such harvests as he gathered were open to his competitors in the traffic, and when his heavily laden trains reached St. Louis, bearing the fruits of his enterprise they came like ships bearing coveted cargoes from foreign lands.

"The post which bore his name, and prospered under his subtle management—for both Charles and St. Vrain resided mainly in Taos,—became the popular resort of mountaineers and plainsmen, and was generally surrounded by large encampments of Indians. It was destroyed in 1852 under the following circumstances:

"It appears that the Federal Government by whom it had been used as an interior base of supplies for General Kearney's troops in the conquest of New Mexico, began negotiations for its purchase. Col. Bent had but one price—$16,000. The representatives of the government offered $12,000, which he refused. Wearying of the controversy, the Colonel while in a passion removed all his goods except some kegs of gunpowder and then set fire to the old landmark. When the flames reached the powder there was an explosion which shattered and threw down portions of the walls, but did not wholly destroy them. The remains of this once noted structure stand to
this day, melancholy relics of an epoch that marks the primordial settlement of white men upon this division of the continent.

“In 1852 the site of a third and much more imposing station was selected by the indomitable Colonel, forty miles above or west of the one just considered, on the same side of the Arkansas, at a point then known as ‘Big Timbers.’ Respecting this venture Judge R. M. Moore of Las Animas, a son-in-law of William Bent, writes the author as follows: ‘Leaving ten men in camp to get out stone for the new post, Colonel Bent took a part of his outfit and went to a Kiowa village about two hundred miles southwest, and remained there all winter trading with the Kiowas and Comanches. In the spring of 1853 he returned to Big Timbers, when the construction of the new post was begun, and the work continued until completed in the summer of 1854; and it was used as a trading post until the owner leased it to the government in the autumn of 1859. Colonel Sedgwick had been sent out to fight the Kiowas that year, and in the fall a large quantity of commissary stores had been sent to him. Col. Bent then moved up the river to a point just above the mouth of the Purgatoire, and built several rooms of cottonwood pickets and there spent the winter. In the spring of 1860 Col. Sedgwick began the construction of officers’ buildings, company quarters, corrals and stables, all of stone, and named the place Fort Wise, in honor of Gov. Wise of Virginia. In 1861 the name was changed to Fort Lyon, in honor of Gen. Lyon, who was killed at the battle of Wilson’s Creek, Missouri.’

“In the spring of 1866 the Arkansas River overflowed its banks, swept up into the fort, and undermining the walls, rendered it untenable for military purposes. The camp was moved to a point twenty miles below, and new Fort Lyon erected. The old post was repaired and used as a stage station by Barlow, Sanderson & Co., who ran a mail, express and passenger line between Kansas City and Santa Fe, with a branch from Pueblo.”

The following letter was written with a lead pencil and on the bottom of it, written with ink and dated “Denver City, K. T., 5 Jan. 1859,” is the following note: “This was neither finished nor sent: you can have it for what it is worth: Yours, Wm. Larimer, Jr.” (Editor’s Note.)

BENTS FORT, KANSAS TERRITORY,
30th October 1858.

Dear Wife:

We landed safely here last evening and are now lying here all day resting our cattle and ourselves but we have but little rest as we have been busy all morning arranging matters.

Our company now comprises thirteen wagons and fifty-one men.
and seventy head of cattle and five horses and ponies. In this com-
pany we have five wagons from Salt Creek, Messrs. Gilmore and
Greening. We have the heaviest load in the party. Our cattle are
beginning to fail considerably, but we have now only one hundred
fifty miles to go.

We find some parts of the road very sandy and hard hauling.
We may lie over here until Monday, not certain. We have had but
one or two disagreeable days, two days particularly and nights also.
We have been surrounded by Indians for the last three or four days.
They are great Beggars. You have no idea of the number of their
ponies. The Kiowas passed our train yesterday with over one thou-
sand ponies. The sight was grand. Some of the little children not
larger than George were tied on ponies. The reports from the mines
are good. Still, we have no positive information yet. From three
to ten dollars is the story by all parties. The weather is delightful,
truly, for the season.

One of our party, Mr. Greening, will return from the mines this
winter. I will write by him my views of the whole thing, good or bad.
I am writing this letter with the chances of getting it mailed or sent
by hand. We find the Indians very hard to trade with. I have tried
every day to buy a robe, but I guess I shall fail. They all want to
trade for my blue coat, but I cannot spare it.

Messrs. Jewett, Lawrence and Dorsett send respects to you all.
We have come five hundred fifty miles averaging about twenty miles
per day. We lay up one day at Topeka and often made short drives.

Bent's Fort is rather a fine one. Mr. Bent has a white wife;
I did not see her, but some of the boys did. She wears hoops and I
guess makes annual visits to St. Louis with the Colonel. They live
in the most retired spot of Earth except Indians. His building is a
perfect protection against Indians.
CHAPTER EIGHT

First glimpse of the mountains—Cheyenne Indians—Wild game—Le Compton Party—Organization of Arapahoe County—Mexicans steal our horses—Lieutenant Marcy's catastrophe—Heavy snow fall—Headwaters of Cherry Creek—Arrival at its mouth

We were about ten miles west of Bent's Fort when, on Nov. 1st, we caught our first glimpse of the mountains. The Spanish Peaks to the southwest and Pikes Peak to the west or slightly to the north of west of us looked in the evening like dark clouds, and we speculated much among ourselves as to whether they were really mountains or not. I remember that Jewett bet $2.50 that it was merely a cloud. But before darkness had concealed them we reached the conclusion that they were not clouds. Then came the discussions as to the distance to them and how long it would take us to reach them; for we did not know within fifty or even a hundred miles how far they were away; but on the morrow when the sun shone on the snowcapped peaks we had no further doubt as to their reality and their grandeur began to grow upon our minds.

Again we passed a band of Cheyenne Indians camping on the site of Col. Bent's old adobe fort which now showed as nothing but a heap of tumbled walls. The chief of this band was unusually talkative and accompanied us for several miles. Very much to my amusement he asked my father if I was his papoose. He was a fine looking fellow and particularly pleasant. It was very unusual for Indians to laugh or even to smile, but this chief would often laugh quite heartily at something said by signs. My father was
quite adept at getting along with all Indians. His large, commanding figure, and the blue overcoat he wore always marked him out as the leader of the party, or the "Cap-a-tan," as they called him. He was fond of making them little presents, which they seemed to appreciate. Frequently they would be very annoying to us by following us for miles and expecting us to feed them and give them presents. Sometimes we would have to use strategy to get rid of them, by telling them that there were "big heap white men" so many suns or so many sleeps back of us, and that the big "cap-a-tan" was with the party,—that he was the one who would make them presents, etc., etc. In this way we got more than one band of Indians to go eastward far enough not to be able to catch up with us again. Indians were often very useful to us in giving us the routes we should follow. They were very familiar with the geography of the country and could mark off with a stick on a clear spot of ground a very faithful representation of the topography, locating every stream from the Platte to the Arkansas Rivers, with the mountains in the west. They knew very well how long it would take us to get from one point to another, and often could assist us in matters of importance to us. Of course we were traveling up the Arkansas River all the time and the road was tolerably well defined, so that we could not very well get entirely off our course, but in spite of this there were many places where we might have wandered had it not been for the information obtained from Indians.

This far up the Arkansas there were no buffalo but other game, such as deer, antelope and turkeys, was plentiful. Also we had wood and water in abundance and the delightful weather continued so that we could scarcely realize how much we had feared the cold and snows when we were organizing our party and making arrangements for leaving Leavenworth.

Every day was bringing us fifteen or twenty miles nearer our destination as we thus journeyed through this hunters' paradise. But our oxen were getting very tired and weak, the shortening of daylight in the late fall
was making it necessary for them to do all their grazing after dark and after traveling nearly all the day, and this was telling on them. It was also leaving its mark on us to walk all day driving the oxen and then stand guard half the night. We were in constant fear that Indians or Mexicans would run off with our stock and leave us without any mode of transporting our luggage. For this reason we took no chances, but kept always on the alert.

It was not at all unusual for some of us to walk ahead of our teams as a sort of advance guard. Sometimes one of us would venture two or three miles ahead, alone. On one such occasion, when about thirty miles east of Pueblo I ventured off by myself a mile or so ahead of the wagon. In passing through a little skirt of woods, I came upon an open place by the side of the road, and much to my surprise walked right into a little band of about a dozen Arapahoe Indians, all bucks. They had on heavy white blankets with hoods of the same material. They were sitting on the ground, and had a little fire at which they were parching corn. When I saw them my first impulse was to run away and get back to the wagon. But my better judgement was to face the party and do my best to make friends. So I walked boldly forward and offered my hand with the usual “How, How”. To this they did not respond. I sat down with them, thinking to make myself agreeable by eating a little of the popped corn. This did not work either, and it was very obvious that I was not a welcome guest. They kept a constant talk among themselves which in no way contributed to my comfort. I could imagine they were considering what fate to mete out to me; and minutes seemed like hours. All the time I was keeping my eye on the road, hoping the wagon would not be much longer in arriving, and at last my hopes were fulfilled, for the team showed through the fringe of woods and attracted the attention of the Indians, who immediately ran in front of the oxen and spread blankets on the ground and otherwise tried to make the party halt. We were all so well armed, however, that they attempted no use of force, though I
think that alone kept them from it. This was the only band of Indians we had met thus far who were not disposed to be friendly, but these were indeed far from it.

When we met Green Russell he told us that he had met H. P. A. Smith, Hickory Rogers, Ned Wyncoop, Joe McCubbin, N. W. Welton, Levi Ferguson and I think one or two others,* comprising a party which was traveling ahead of us. And he said that on account of the lateness of the season they would winter about the spot where now stands the town of Pueblo.

At that time there was an adobe building there, and in it were living two or three Mexicans and a white man by the name of McDougal who had drifted into Mexico from California and thence to these parts. We did not go all the way to this place to camp but stopped about six miles east of Pueblo, where Green Russell had given us landmarks to indicate the place and direction. From our camp my father rode over to look for this party and found them just as Russell had said. The party was from LeCompton and had been only two or three days ahead of us all the way up the river. They had indeed made up their minds to stay at Pueblo for the winter, but after talking matters over, father told them that he was anxious to get to Cherry Creek and that he did not favor camping on the course for the winter when already so near the objective point. He recognized the possible difficulty of crossing the Great Divide between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers in the winter season and had in memory the sufferings and loss of men and animals of Lieut. Marcy's command in the month of May this same year, but still he insisted on the desirability of the joining of the two parties and the rapid prosecution of the trip to Cherry Creek. At last the others assented and it was arranged that the LeCompton party should start forward up the Fountaine Qui Bouille and that our party would cut across country and join them a few miles above Pueblo.

* W. Brindell, H. S. Walsh, George Baker, John Shannon, and Eli Moore Jr. are said to have also been members of this party, known as the LeCompton Party.
and that thereafter we would journey together to Cherry Creek. When the LeCompton party were hesitating to assent, I remember my father said he told them that he was going as long as he could see the horns of the oxen above the snow. His persistence won the debate.

Some of the members of the LeCompton party were friends of the Territorial Officers and we learned that they had secured from Governor Denver, of Kansas Territory, commissions for organizing Arapahoe County. It was to embrace all that part of Kansas west of about the 98th degree of longitude to the summit of the snowy range on the west, and was to run from New Mexico on the south to Nebraska Territory on the north. The commissions were for the following officers:

- H. P. A. Smith, — Judge,
- Ed Wyncoop, — Sheriff,
- William Larimer, Jr. — Treasurer,
- Hickory Rogers, County Commissioners,  
- Joe McCubbin,
- Levi Ferguson, — Clerk.

While father was at Pueblo interviewing the Le Compton party some of the members of our party scared up a large herd of deer which came dashing out of the timber, directly through our camp, knocking over sundry things in their flight, while we threw at them axes and clubs or whatever we could catch up the quickest.

After father's return from Pueblo, one day's march brought us to the designated junction point and as now the number of our party had so greatly increased, and the union had so greatly excited us, we grew rather careless in regard to keeping close guard over our horses. The result was that during the very first night all the saddle animals of both parties were stolen. The evening before we had noticed some Mexicans camping on the creek a mile or so from our camp and pretending to be hunting. When we missed our horses we started out to look for the Mexicans but only discovered that they had broken camp and disappeared. Of course we had to get everywhere by walking and though we spent all the day looking for the
Know all men by these Presents that H. P. A. Smith as Principal and E. W. Wynkoop and Jos. C. McCubben as sureties are holden and stand firmly bound unto the Territory of Kansas in the full and just sum of Three Thousand Dollars to the which payment well and truly to be made we bind ourselves our heirs, executors and administrators firmly by these presents.

WITNESS our hands and seals this eighteenth Day of November, A. D. 1858.

The condition of the above obligation is such that whereas the said H. P. A. Smith has been appointed Probate Judge of the County of Arrapahoe for the term prescribed by law that if the said Smith shall faithfully perform the duties of said office and faithfully apply and pay over all monies that may come into his hands by virtue of said office then this bond is void otherwise it remains of full force and virtue.

H. P. A. Smith
E. W. Wynkoop
J. L. McCubbin.
animals we saw no signs of them. We came to the conclusion that both horses and Mexicans had disappeared together and that there was nothing for us to do but complete our journey afoot. As they had left the oxen we concluded the predicament we were in was not so bad but that it might have been worse; so we yoked our oxen and started across the divide.

We were now on the road leading from New Mexico to the forts on the north: Fort Laramie, Fort Bridger, and Salt Lake. All the camping places had names, such as "Jimmie's Camp" and "Fagan's Grave," which was marked by a little stone. Then we came to Black Squirrel Creek, where on the twelfth of May preceding Lieut. Marcy lost about 150 mules and eight or ten men in a blizzard. The bones of the animals scattered around on the ground showed the location, and the height at which the trees had been cut above the ground told only too plainly the depth of the snow and what had occurred only five months before:* but our experience was much more

* "While stationed at Fort Bridger in November, 1857, there came to Captain Marcy an order to move his company across the mountains by the most direct route into New Mexico, with the object of procuring supplies for General Joseph E. Johnston's army, and thereby enabling him to prosecute his designs against the Mormons of Salt Lake then in rebellion against the authority of the United States. . . .

"In his report of 1858 the Secretary of War in referring to this expedition, says: 'It may be safely affirmed that in the whole catalogue of hazardous expeditions scattered so thickly through the history of our border warfare, filled as many of them are with appalling tales of privation, hardship and suffering, not one surpasses this, and in some particulars has not been equaled by any. Capt. Marcy departed from Fort Bridger on the 24th day of November 1857 with forty enlisted men and twenty-five mounted men, besides packers and guides. Their course lay through an almost trackless wilderness over lofty and rugged mountains, without a pathway or human habitation to guide or direct, in the very depth of winter through snows, for many miles together, reaching to the depth of five feet. Their beasts of burden very rapidly perished until few were left; their supplies gave out; their luggage was abandoned; they were driven to subsist upon the carcasses of their dead horses and mules; all the men became greatly emaciated; some were frostbitten, yet not one murmur of discontent escaped the lips of a single man. Their mission was one of extreme importance to the movements of the army, and great disaster might befall the command if these devoted men failed to bring succor to the camp. . . .'

"When they left Bridger there was very little snow. . . . Ascending
fortunate, for we could not have wished for better weather than we were then having.

We camped at Point of Rocks. Hickory Rogers and I stood the first guard. Before midnight the wind arose and the weather got so cold that to make ourselves comfortable we felled a large pine tree and built such a roaring fire that it illuminated the whole country over and could well have been seen from the top of Pikes Peak. For our midnight lunch we cooked a prairie dog which we had killed during the day previous. Hickory Rogers argued that prairie dog was as fine eating as squirrel, while we were eating it; but after we had finished our repast, it was the candid and unanimous opinion of the two of us that it was not.

Pikes Peak and Cherry Creek—those mystic names which had lured us on through all these weary eight hundred miles,—now seemed very real to us. They were the only landmarks known to us when we first started from Leavenworth. Cherry Creek was still ahead of us,—ever ahead like the ignis fatuus—but not so seemingly unreal of attainment, for was not one half our dream already realized! There was the grand snowcapped peak looming up always on the western sky, and our increasing elevation in general was permitting us to get more comprehensive view of the entire landscape and gain some conception of what we might expect when at last we should arrive at the mouth of Cherry Creek on the Platte River.

The mountains were a gorgeously grand view, the valleys were of a variegated beauty, and the slender streams
wound their way through fertile valleys and past what we felt sure were mineral bedded rocks. But gold or no gold, our enthusiasm and our judgment told us that the country would be soon settled with a vigorous and energetic host of people and that wealth would come to them as the result of their toil and the bounties of Nature.

Before we left our watch a little snow had commenced to fall: and how the wind did rustle and crackle in the tops of the pines! A mournful sound it was on this dreary winter night. Continuously the storm increased in violence after we went to our sleep and it was not long before we were the only members of the party who were not up and waiting patiently for day to dawn and speculating as to the fate that would overtake us if we should be winter bound in this unprepared place. The most serious aspect of the matter was that our oxen might be driven off by the storm or even perish. We had plenty of food and wood for ourselves, but our cattle could not survive very many days without grazing. But with daybreak the sun shone out brightly and the storm abated and we were happy to see that all the cattle had taken shelter in the lee of a rock not far from the camp. Once more we realized the good fortune which was following us.

Soon we were on the road again: there must have been twelve inches of snow and it had all fallen in less than six hours. It was hard to find the trail when we first set out but every mile we went the depth of snow became less and we finally passed out of it entirely, and before the day was gone we reached the Headwaters of Cherry Creek, and thenceforward would have a descending road down the dry creek bed or along its banks to its mouth. It was Friday the 12th of November. We lay over here through Sunday to clean up a little. Some of the boys went hunting and brought in three deer. Jewett and Dorsett were our best hunters and they found game very plentiful, antelopes and wild turkeys by the hundreds.

The trip down Cherry Creek had no episodes of special interest and on the 16th of November 1858 we arrived at its junction with the Platte River and felt that our travels
were over, but that our pioneering was really just beginning. We had been forty-seven days on the road.

Had we been acquainted with the Platte River Route from Leavenworth we could have saved at least 125 miles in distance or fully a week in time, other things being equal. But casting regrets aside we rejoiced that we had arrived safely and with so much less hardship than we had anticipated when we started. We had the remainder of our lifetime ahead of us, and much of it we fully believed was not going to be loafing on the job.

We crossed to the west side of Cherry Creek and went into camp under a big cottonwood tree on the bank of the Platte River. Thus our camp for the first night was on the Auraria side, which is now West Denver.

Practically the first thing we did after arriving was to divide our outfit into three parts. Jewett and Whitsett decided to keep together, also Lawrence and Dorsett, his nephew, would stay together, and my father and I naturally made the third couplet. So all the supplies were laid out in three piles: We then drew lots for the first and second choice. This satisfactorily disposed of the provisions. The disposition of the oxen and wagon was by negotiating among ourselves.

Later Jewett and Whitsett went about six miles up the Platte River to a place called Montana where some of the Lawrence Party were located, and there they remained most of the winter. Lawrence and Dorsett remained with father and me, however, temporarily, until they got their cabin built.

I quote one of my father's letters written to my brother Thomas:

DENVER CITY, ARAPAHOE COUNTY, KANSAS TERRITORY
1st December 1858.

Dear Thomas:

I cannot let the opportunity pass without giving you a few lines. I think I can see you holding the pony the morning I came up to you on my way here. I have written until I feel that I have exhausted every subject, still I have not, the grandeur and beauty of this country cannot be exhausted. The general appearance of the country is not unlike Larimer City. Cherry Creek is dry at its mouth, it sinks in
the sand about two miles above, it is gradually sinking for miles. At best it is a small creek about twenty feet across up twenty miles. The South Platte at this point is quite a strong little river, belly deep on the oxen for about fifty or sixty feet and altogether about forty or fifty yards wide. The mountains are beautiful and very high with plenty of snow. Pikes Peak and Longs Peak are both in full view, the former ninety miles on our left, the latter forty miles on our right, and in a direct line to the mountains about twelve miles, but it appears right beside us. The prairie is nearly level up to their very base. The mountains are full of streaks or Canons as they call them. Pikes Peak is not so much higher than the other mountains as I expected to see it. Longs Peak is also not much above the balance of the range. The Spanish Peaks were seen first, not clearly, but they were in full view for ten days. They are now out of sight. The whole range of mountains appear to me in the shape of a bow, Pueblo is a bad location for a town, but a good point at the mouth of Fount Caboi, or boiling spring, the Arkansas River makes its way through the mountains, so does the South Platte. The banks of the South Platte where it goes into the mountains are so steep that you cannot follow it any distance unless you take through the water and it is pitching at a fearful rate they say. I have not yet been to the mountains except passing from Pueblo, here we may say we are right under them the whole way. In my letter to Mayor Denman I speak of the divide where Lieut. Marcy lost so many men and mules on the 12th day of last May in a snow storm. We saw a number of their graves. Lieut. Marcy was recruiting stock for Col. Johnston's Utah Army. You all remember reading about it in the papers last summer. The divide is a spur of the mountains and being so high storms of a fearful character come up suddenly. We were well warned of the danger but we came through safely with a little fright only. It gave us a few blasts one night with about 12 inches of snow. I tell you, Tom, the wind made the tall pine trees crack, I got up and put on my clothing ready for our tent to be blown down. Will lay still, he said he had no fears. My great trouble was fear of losing our cattle, but we found them all right in the morning under some rocks, they had a good shelter. I must close as Vill has the Breakfast ready. I want you to save up a lot of papers that will interest us and in the spring you can send them by someone coming here. If Denman published the letter save a copy of it for me or mail it to Fort Larimie as per directions. Remember me to your mother and all the dear children. I will write Rachel and all in time.

Your father,

W. L. JR.

P.S. We saw thousand of Indians, Cheyennes, Arapahoes and Kiots on our way. They had thousands of ponies. They are all great beggars, for sugar particularly. They were very civil and all looked
well, much better than our Nebraska Indians. Quite a delegation of Arapahoes came into our town a few days ago. They all stopped outside of town until they were invited in. The citizens all contributed and gave them a good breakfast. They only stayed one day. They then all went down the Platte River. They had several *papooses* about the size of our George. We have plenty of provisions, Will and I, to put us through. Flour is worth $20.00 per 100 pounds here, and everything is very dear, but we all have plenty and no one has to buy anything. Bent's new fort, where he now lives, is thirty-six miles east of the old fort on the map. The old fort is all crumbling down, as it was made of dobies. The new fort is built of stone very largely, costing about $10,000. Ft. Atkinson is also abandoned and crumbling down, it was built of sods only. Kansas River is also quite a small stream at Pueblo, rather wide and shallow, about two hundred yards wide.

I wrote you about the buffalo. There are no buffalo here but plenty of deer, antelope, wild sheep and goats with more wolves than anything else, also plenty of rabbits and small game. I want you all to read all my letters before mailing them. I sent you a letter, I mean mother, by Capt. Greening which you have by this time. I hope you are going to school every day. Will and I will have many things to tell you, when we get back, that we cannot write.
GENERAL WILLIAM LARIMER (1852)
CHAPTER NINE

Auraria—Its inhabitants—Its business—The founding of Denver—Building of the first cabin—St. Charles Town Company—“Golden City”—Letter from General Denver—The Georgia Party—The Lawrence Party—Stockholders of the Auraria Town Company—The Denver City Town Company

On our arrival at the mouth of Cherry Creek we crossed to the west side and camped under a large cottonwood tree, near the bank of the Platte River. This place was the center of attraction and nearly all who were in the country at that time had congregated here, with the exception of a remnant of the Lawrence Party, which had located about six miles up the river and started a place called Montana, where they were making preparations to winter. The remnant of the Georgia Party had selected this spot at the mouth of Cherry Creek for winter quarters, and among the trees were busy erecting cabins, as were also some of the early arrivals from the Missouri River, such as the Oakes Party, which had arrived on October 10th.

This place was called Auraria, having been named by the Russell Party in remembrance of their home town in Georgia. I speak of the remnant of both parties, as many of each party had taken their departure for the States in the early fall. Up to this time all the prospecting, and what little gold had been taken from the ground, was between these two points on the banks of the Platte, but it was very meager in quantity.

My own recollection is that on our arrival at Auraria, William McGaa (alias “Jack Jones”) and John Smith,
both mountaineers with Indian families, had about completed a cabin. Dr. L. J. Russell and the few Georgians had cabins and were living in them. A family by the name of Rooker (Mormons, comprising husband, one wife, a son and a daughter) had completed a cabin and were living in it. The Rooker woman was the first white woman in the country. Blake and Williams, from Crescent City, Iowa, had about completed a cabin, and with several wagon loads of goods had opened a small store or trading place. They were the first merchants at Auraria, though John Ming came in shortly afterwards, as did also John Kinna with a wagon load or two each of goods with which they opened small stores. Kinna's stock was principally tinware and his partner Nye did not join him until the following spring. The next to build winter quarters were Ross Hutchins, one of the Lawrence party, A. H. Barker, Andrew Sagendorf, Ed. Willoughby, Colonel Dudley, Jack Wright, Oscar Lehow and E. P. Stout: though it was not necessarily in this order that they completed them. Indeed A. H. Barker claimed that he built the very first cabin in Auraria; but that is not my recollection and I think the claim is incorrect, as Jones and Smith and the Russell brothers and the Rooker family were in the country before any of the others named above arrived.

Sagendorf, in an article in the Commonwealth Magazine which was reprinted in Field and Farm, gives the credit for building the first house in Auraria to Ross Hutchins and goes on to say:

"Oscar E. Lehow and myself started for Pike's Peak from Omaha on 3 Sept. 1858. We had two yoke of cattle and we had a year's supply of food and clothing for ourselves only. We traveled alone to Fort Kearney, where we joined others bound on the same errand, and from that point our train consisted of ten or a dozen wagons. It was a weary march up the Platte, and we were all glad when we arrived on 6 Nov. at the mouth of Cherry Creek. We found about fifty persons sleeping in tents and in wagons. Among others I recall the names of Col. J. H. Dudley, A. H. Barker, Ross Hutchins and Jack Wright. Green Russell and his brother the doctor and McFadden the first president of the Auraria Town Company were here also. The Town Company was organized a few days before our arrival,
but Lehow and myself were admitted as original members of the company, of which J. Shanley was the first Clerk. The townsite of Auraria, as surveyed, embraced an area of about 1200 acres, bounded on the north and east by the center of the main channels of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek. If my memory is not at fault, the first house completed, after the town was surveyed, was built by Ross Hutchins on Ferry Street. It was of unhewn cottonwood logs, covered at first by poles on which was a layer of wild grass and twigs surmounted by a stratum of earth, and was ready for its occupant four or five days after the first log was placed."

These first cabins were built in a grove of young cottonwood trees which made good house logs and grew not far from the river. They were more for convenience and protection than as the intentional nucleus of a town. There must have been some twenty or twenty-five cabins under construction in preparation for the winter. As but little was known of the climate and the prevailing impression was that we would have deep snows and severe cold our own party remained for a few days on the Auraria side of the Creek with the probable object of securing the mutual protection that is derived from union.

But on our very first night here, my father, without consulting anyone outside of our own Leavenworth Party, packed his blankets and some provisions, left camp and crossed the Creek to pick out a new site. He left instructions for us to get up the oxen and join him, as he believed the east side of the Creek was much the best location for a town and no one in the country laid claim to it, or if so had abandoned it and left the country. As soon as we could yoke and pack we followed him. In crossing the creek our wagon stuck in the sand and it was with great difficulty that the team finally extricated it. When we finally reached the eastern side of Cherry Creek, we found him near the bank with a camp fire awaiting us. He had four cottonwood poles crossed, which he called the foundation of his settlement and claimed the site for a town,—for the town which has now grown into the one of which Colorado is the proudest. This was early in the morning of Wednesday, November 17, 1858.

Not far from our camp a small cabin had been started
by someone. It was about 10 x 12 feet; the logs had been raised for walls but there was no roof on it, nor was it chinked nor daubed, but the door, as I remember it, had been cut out. To all appearances it was abandoned. Afterwards we learned that it had been intended as a blacksmith shop and had been built by Hank Way.

By some it has been maintained that members of the Lawrence Party had made claim to a part of this land before leaving for the east and had called it St. Charles; and much has been said and written about the St. Charles Town Company and the Nicholl's unfinished cabin or Hank Way's Blacksmith Shop. The story runs that a party of six or seven of the Lawrence Party, before they left for home in eastern Kansas in October or November, 1858, claimed to have staked off 640 acres which later was jumped by those who organized the Denver City Town Company and was incorporated by them in the town site of Denver. Without making any improvements or leaving any one to look after their claim they proceeded down the Platte for home. They had not gone far until they met parties coming up the Platte: the Oakes Party,* I think, was one of them and was probably the first which came by the Platte route. The Lawrence Party, knowing they had done nothing to protect their claim, thought best to send someone back to build a cabin and make other improvements and establish actual settlement. A man by the name of Nicholls was selected. His may have been the cabin we found on the banks of Cherry Creek, unfinished and unclaimed by anyone on the ground: but, as stated above, we were led some time afterwards to understand that it was built by Hank Way and was intended for a blacksmith shop. However, it was never finished nor used as a blacksmith shop, nor was Nicholls there, for he too returned to the States; nor did Hank Way show up.

This is the only basis known to me for the contention

* The Oakes Party was from Iowa and comprised D. C. Oakes, H. J. Graham, Chas. Miles, Geo. Pancoast, Abram Walrod, and possibly A. H. Barker and Jos. Harper.
that some members of the Lawrence Party had made claim to a part of the land before leaving the country and had called it St. Charles. I do know that my father claimed the town site: that he organized the Denver City Company and that our claim was never contested, nor our rights questioned, until the following spring, when some of the members of the so-called St. Charles Town Company returned from the States and then put in a claim which was compromised by the Denver City Company merely to promote harmony.

The Town Company was organized on 22 November and most of the prominent men in the country were made members of it. I was made a member of the Company before I was eighteen years of age and nothing was thought of it and no objection was raised to giving a mere boy such rights. The meetings of the Town Company were held in Auraria in the cabin of Jack Jones and usually in the evenings. There were two or three meetings before they agreed on a name. Several names were suggested and among them "Golden City"; this was the name for at least twentyfour hours. But one evening* my father left me in the tent to keep house, while he went to attend a meeting of the Town Company. When he returned to the tent after the meeting he found me writing a letter to my mother. It was a cold night, the ink was freezing on my pen almost before I could get it on the paper. I had already headed my letter with the name "Golden City", but as soon as he saw it he said: "Will, we have changed the name again and are going to call the town Denver". I then scratched the "Golden City" out and wrote over it "Denver City." That was undoubtedly the first letter ever written from Denver, and that night I had been on the town site of Denver as its sole occupant.

The name of Denver seemed to please father very much. It was in honor of Governor Denver of Kansas.

* Smiley, in his Story of Denver (p. 234) says this was on Nov. 17: but he also says: "No other name was ever suggested, and there was no controversy in deciding upon the one given. The name 'Denver City' was immediately, formally, approved at the first meeting, Nov. 17, by all the leaders in the enterprise."
Territory, who had taken such interest in the country as was shown by his organization of Arapahoe County and the location of the county seat. I think that during the day my father and some of the LeCompton Party, such as Ned. Wynkoop, Smith and others who had received commissions from the Governor to organize the county of Arapahoe, got together and agreed upon this name, but, of course, none of us knew at the time that more than a month before we had arrived on the site Gen. Denver had resigned the governorship.

Owing to the sundry claims which had been made over this matter of naming Denver, I wrote in 1890 to General Denver to get his version of it; and here is the reply which I received:

WASHINGTON, D. C.
November 14, 1890

Dear Sir:

Your letter of November 11th with enclosures has just over­taken me here and I proceed at once to comply with your request to give you some account of the naming of the City of Denver in Colorado.

When I was Governor of Kansas Territory, in July 1858 a report came to the settlement that gold had been discovered at Pike's Peak; at that time the Territory of Kansas extended westward to the summit of the Rocky Mountains and the first territorial legislature had divided it all into counties as far west as a line running north and south in the neighborhood of the mouth of the Smoky Hill fork of the Kansas River; and all beyond that line was designated as Arapahoe County. Arapahoe County was also organized by the first territorial legislature and a full set of county officers appointed, but they had all left the county, and at the beginning of 1858 there was probably not a white man in it.

The report of the discovery of gold produced a great commotion and quite a number of companies were at once organized to explore the country and engage in mining. One day while looking at some of the men breaking mules near my office in LeCompton, it occurred to me that here was quite a crowd of people going out into a new country where there were no laws or officers to administer or enforce the laws and that there was danger of difficulties occurring out there similar to those we had just experienced in Kansas and which we were then greatly gratified at having overcome and quieted. I examined the laws and ascertained that Arapahoe County had been organized as above stated: that the officers had all abandoned it, and that the organic act of Congress organizing the Territory of Kansas had made
it the duty of the Governor to fill all vacancies in office where not otherwise provided by law, and here was a case directly to the point. So I at once appointed a full set of county officers for Arapahoe County from among those gentlemen whom I knew were going out there.

For County Judge I appointed H. P. A. Smith, an old California friend and native of Maine; for Sheriff, Edward Wynkoop; for County Treasurer, General Larimer. The names of the others I believe I have forgotten. They proceeded out towards the foot of the Rocky Mountains and learned that the place where the gold was discovered was in Cherry Creek, a tributary of the south fork of the Platte River about 70 or 75 miles north of Pike's Peak, and to that point they directed their course.

There being no county seat for Arapahoe County, it became the duty of these officers to locate it; so they laid out a town just below the mouth of Cherry Creek and did me the honor to name it after me. This is about the whole story.

You will see that the Town of Denver was located for the county seat of Arapahoe County in the Territory of Kansas and has grown to be a large, elegantly built and flourishing City, the capital of the fine State of Colorado but still retaining its County of Arapahoe.

If this should be a matter of any interest to you, you can do with it as you think fit.

Very respectfully,

J. W. Denver.

In connection with this naming of the town, it has always seemed to some people that "Larimer" should have been the name selected instead of Denver, as it was General Larimer who selected and made claim of the town site, organized the Town Company, selected most of the members thereof, and by his perseverance, energy, tact and skill as an organizer, insured its success, and that too in the face of opposition and competition on the part of the backers of Auraria. At first the people of Auraria were quite bitter toward my father, but a testimonial to the manner in which he won their confidence and esteem is in their donating to him four lots in Auraria as a special compliment in the early part of 1859. So, as to the name, perhaps all that would have been needed was for him to have encouraged the use of his name among his friends and doubtless there would not have been a dissenting vote. But such was not his way: and, though I never
asked my father who proposed the name which was adopted, it is not impossible that he himself was the one.

The Denver Republican of Sept. 23, 1894, gives the credit of the naming of Denver to Wm. McGaa in whose cabin these town meetings were held: "McGaa had acted as the guide of James W. Denver when he passed through the country years before en route to California and a strong friendship existed between them. He guided Governor Denver's commissioners to the mouth of Cherry Creek and succeeded in having the town named Denver."

Editor's Note: It must be remembered that our author, at the date of these events, was quite a young man and may not have been taken into all the councils of his elders; and, further, that in much later days when many of his reminiscences were written, his memory might have been at fault in some of the details. At any rate, the evidence seems to be quite clear that at the date of organization of the Denver City Company Nicholls was still on the ground, and that not only did General Larimer and his associates admit Nicholls to membership in their Company, but also, because of his insistence, admitted four of his absent companions, viz: French, Cobb, Churchill and Dickson. These four men thus became possessed of four of the shares of stock which the author states on page 106 in this book were set apart for nonresidents because of their prospective interest in a stage line to connect this frontier town with the Missouri River towns. The inference is more natural that it was because of their claim through Nicholls on the part of the St. Charles Town Company rather than on account of a future stage line, and that the only share set apart from that motive was the one assigned to W. H. Russell.

Furthermore, in one of General Larimer's letters to his family (but which, unfortunately is without date), are found the following remarks:

"The Hank Way claim is settled today by giving him 100 draw lots. We could have beaten him but he might have kept in law for a long time."

Mr W. H. H. Larimer in his notes has made comment on this in the following words:

"As to the Hank Way claim that was settled: he claimed to have built what was known as the Nicholls unfinished cabin. This cabin was claimed to represent the St. Charles Town Company, but it could not have been, as it was not within a quarter of a mile or so from the land the St. Charles Town Company claimed."

It is not altogether clear whether this "Hank Way claim" is identical with the Nicholls and St. Charles claim or not. If it is identical, then the letter of Gen. Larimer above quoted was probably written on December 4th, as the Denver City minute book has the following entry in General Larimer's handwriting:
“In obedience to instructions the Board of Directors made and concluded a contract on the 4th day of December with the following parties. . . . This arrangement was made to carry out the previous contract made by Charles Nicholls.”

Shortly after this date, however, Nicholls did go east; and he and his associates in the St. Charles Town Company venture did not return to Denver until late in the spring of 1859.

It may be well to introduce at this point the testimony of General Hall, who, in his History of Colorado (vol. II, page 228), says:

“The first attempt at establishing a town on the present site of Denver is found recorded in a small memorandum book in these words: ‘Upper waters of the South Platte River at the mouth of Cherry Creek, Arapahoe County, Kansas Territory, Sept. 24, 1858: This article of agreement witnesseth: That T. S. Dickinson, Wm. McGaa, J. A. Churchill, William Smith, Frank M. Cobb and Charles Nichols, have entered into the following agreement, which they bind themselves, their heirs and administrators, executors, assigns, etc., forever to well and truly carry out the same. Article First: Whereas, the aforesaid parties as above, have agreed to lay out 640 acres of land for town purposes, etc etc.’ Then follow a series of by-laws and a provision for the election of town officers to be held on the 28th of the same month. Each member was to own several hundred lots. . . . The St. Charles town site, thus established, remained chalked out on paper for five or six weeks, without as much as a single shanty being erected upon it, save a few logs crossed together, with an old wagon cover for a roof, which had been built by one Henry (Hank) Way. . . .”

Also as to the founding of Auraria, he thus continues the narrative (pages 229–30):

“In the meantime other parties, principally Georgians, including some Kansas men from the Montana settlement who were not taken into the St. Charles Town Company, concluded to locate a town of their own on the west side of Cherry Creek. Three log cabins with mud roofs were commenced about October 20th, close to the bank of the Platte, almost simultaneously by Roswell C. Hutchins, Old John Smith and A. H. Barker, and soon a street called ‘Indian Row’ gave the settlement a ‘local habitation and a name.’ Another cabin was commenced October 26th by one S. M. Rooker, a renegade Mormon who had arrived with one wife and family August 30th, and had lived in a tent during the two months previous. . . . About the middle of October, old John Smith relinquished his claim to the west side for a nominal consideration, and a town was projected by the Georgians and others to be called ‘Auraria’, after a small mining town in Georgia.
A man named Foster began surveying the same on the 8th of November. Eight cabins had been built before the town was laid out. The prospect for Auraria grew more and more brilliant from day to day, while that of St. Charles and Montana became correspondingly discouraging. Up to this time no one could be induced to complete the first roofless cabin in St. Charles, much less to construct a second, notwithstanding an offer by Mr. Nichols to donate one hundred lots to the person who should erect a log tenement on his townsite. Finding his enterprise a failure, since everyone who came joined the colony on the west side, scorning St. Charles, Nichols left for the States in disgust during the first week in November."

In the preceding pages have been mentions of the Georgia Party, the Lawrence Party, etc., so I think it will be of use for future reference to give a list here of each of these parties:

**THE GEORGIA PARTY**

was from Lumpkin County, Georgia. They left home Feb. 17th, 1858, reached Bent’s Fort on June 12th and Cherry Creek on June 24th. Their leader was William Green Russell who was accompanied by his two brothers Dr. Levi J. Russell and J. Oliver Russell. The remaining six members of the party were Samuel Bates and Solomon Roe who stayed at Cherry Creek for some time, and John Hampton, Joseph McAfee, Lewis Ralston, and William Anderson who abandoned the party and returned to their homes very soon after arrival in the Pike’s Peak region.

En route to Cherry Creek the above were joined at Rock Creek, Kansas, by James H. Pierce and R. J. Pierce, who were in some degree related to the Russells; and at Manhattan, Kansas by J. Brock, T. C. Dickson, Theodore Herring, George L. Howard, Jacob F. Masterson, William A. McFadding, William McKimmons, Luke D. Tierney, Valarious W. Young, and Henry a Frenchman whose last name I do not know. At or near Great Bend on June 3rd, they are said to have also been joined by Rev. John Beck, George Hicks and some twenty-eight other Cherokee Indians who are given the credit of having first called Russell’s attention to the existence of gold in that part of the country and who were at Great Bend awaiting his arrival to lead him to the promised land. But of these I know nothing: I never saw any of them around Auraria or Denver.

In addition to all the above, there was, however, one other claimant to membership of whom I never heard anything except in Leavenworth. This was the man King, who carried the news of the discovery of gold back to Leavenworth and whose stories and samples started our Leavenworth Party on its westward tramp and probably
had a great deal to do with starting the rush of 1858–9, but who dis-
appeared as mysteriously as he had appeared.

**THE LAWRENCE PARTY**

was so named because it originated with a membership of seven at Lawrence, Kansas. John Easter organized the party and his associates have been marked in the list with an * before the name of each. They left home in the latter part of May and arrived at Cherry Creek in August, 1858. They were joined en route by the others whose names are here arranged in alphabetical order. Not all of these stayed, some drifted into New Mexico and many others, soon after arrival, returned to their homes in Kansas and the East. T. C. Dickson of this list is the same as is in the Georgia Party list having left the latter party to join the Lawrence Party after arrival at Pike’s Peak.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albert W. Archibald</td>
<td>“Pap” Maywood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. F. Bercaw</td>
<td>William McAllen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giles Blood</td>
<td>. . . . . . McKay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Bowen</td>
<td>John D. Miller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wm. J. Boyer (Secretary)</td>
<td>Austin R. Mills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Brown</td>
<td>Robert Middleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Chadsey</td>
<td>Mrs Robert Middleton &amp; child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*John A. Churchill</td>
<td>four months old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Frank M. Cobb</td>
<td>*Charles Nichols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Copley</td>
<td>William B. Parsons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. C. Dickson</td>
<td>George Peck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*John Easter</td>
<td>Robert Peebles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Adnah French</td>
<td>William Prentiss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Halsey</td>
<td>William Regan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*William Hartley, Jr. (Surveyor)</td>
<td>Charles Runyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah Hinman (President)</td>
<td>George W. Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Holmes</td>
<td>Nicholas Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Anna A. Holmes</td>
<td>*William M. Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Henry Holmes</td>
<td>J. H. Tierney (The Leader)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Archibald Holmes and her brother</td>
<td>Jack Turner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George L. Howard</td>
<td>Augusta Voorhees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard Hunt</td>
<td>James H. White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roswell Hutchins</td>
<td>A. C. Wright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jason T. Younker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE AURARIA TOWN COMPANY:**

Organized 30 Oct 1858: First Meeting of Board 8 Nov, 1858

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry Allen (Director)</td>
<td>F. Bartrof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John D. Baker</td>
<td>2 Samuel Bates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. H. Barker</td>
<td>E. W. Bigelow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Charles H. Blake
3 Giles Blood
William Richard Blore
3 Joseph Brown
Hayman Chapman
H. B. Chubbuck
W. H. Clark
J. H. Clarke
J. N. Cochran
G. W. Coffman
William Cole
James R. Compton
E. H. Conart
J. Conner
J. C. Cotton
Judson H. Dudley (Vice Pres.)
H. Earl
3 John Easter
W. R. English
Theodore Fetts
William S. Foster
George Fuller
James Gordon
A. F. Graeter
Hiram J. Graham
John Granfred
John Graves
Frederick Grider
2 Theodore Herring
D. D. Hoag
3 Roswell Hutchins
Charles Johnson
John Kane
Frank K. Kast
Christian Kelber
John Kinna
Noel LaJuennesse
James Lee
Oscar E. Lehow
W. H. Longsdorf
James Lowry
2 Jacob F. Masterson
George Maus
Nicholas Migel
3 Austin R. Mills
M. L. McCaslin

Wm. A. McFadding (President)
1 William McGaa "Jack Jones"
2 William McKimmons
William D. McLain
J. D. O'Connell
John F. Palmer
John Pander
J. T. Parkinson
Phillip E. Peers
2 James H. Pierce
2 R. J. Pierce
Louis Pilcher
Thomas Pollock
Michel Leo Prance
J. D. Ramage
A. H. Ramsdalc
James B. Reed
J. W. Reed
3 William Regan
Jarvis Richardson
2 Solomon Roe
William Roland
1 S. M. Rooker
2 J. Oliver Russell
2 Dr. L. J. Russell (Secretary)
2 William Green Russell
W. J. Russell
Andrew Sagendorf
James C. Sanders
Philip Scheerer
John J. Shanley (Town Clerk)
E. B. Sharpe
William M. Slaughter
Andrew J. Smith
1 John Simpson Smith (Treas.)
W. A. Smith
Richard Sopris
Henry Springer
W. Starring
Charles M. Steinberger
F. B. Steinberger
Moses Stocking
E. P. Stout
Matthew Teed
2 Luke D. Tierney
H. Tozier
Not all the above Auraria stockholders were present at Cherry Creek at the date of organization but the list grew as new arrivals were taken into membership from time to time.

In organizing the Denver City Town-Company my father selected most of the men from among those who were then in the country and the list was complete from the beginning. Each person in our own Leavenworth party and also in the LeCompton party, which had joined ours en route, was made a member and ten of the Auraria Town Company were likewise invited. In all there were forty-one members of

THE DENVER CITY TOWN-COMPANY

P. T. Bassett (Recorder)  James McGargill
Charles H. Blake 6 J. L. McCubben
3, 4 William Brindle 1, 4 William McGaa (Director)
J. B. Reed
3, 4 John A. Churchill 6 Hickory Rogers (Director)
Richard Courtright  William H. Russell
Samuel S. Curtis J. B. Reed
5 Folsom Dorsett 6 H. P. A. Smith (Secretary)
Judson H. Dudley 1, 4 John Simpson Smith
6 Levi Ferguson
3, 4 Adnah French E. P. Stout (President)
George W. Fuller R. S. Stevens
S. O. Hemmenway Oscar B. Totten
5 M. M. Jewett 6 Edward W. Wynkoop
Dr A. S. Kunkel (See page 171) 6 N. W. Welton
5 Charles A. Lawrence (Director) 5 R. E. Whitsett
5 William Larimer Jr (Treas.) Andrew J. Williams
5 Wm. H. H. Larimer 6 Hugh S. Walsh
George McDougal L. J. Winchester

In the preceding lists the number in front of a man's name indicates to which of the following Parties he belonged:

1. Original Indian Trader 4. The St. Charles Town Company
2. The Georgia Party 5. The Leavenworth Party
3. The Lawrence Party 6. The Le Compton Party
There were ten men who were members of both the Auraria and the Denver Town Companies: These were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charles H. Blake</th>
<th>James B. Reed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judson H. Dudley</td>
<td>John Simpson Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William McGaa</td>
<td>E. P. Stout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. T. Parkinson</td>
<td>A. J. Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillip E. Peers</td>
<td>Jim Winchester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was considerable rivalry between Auraria and Denver but this coalescing of the stockholders lessened the jealousy and helped to promote harmony. During the spring of 1860 Auraria was consolidated with Denver and lost its own identity.

* Some writers have refused to date the origin of the City of Denver from 17 Nov. 1858, but persist in maintaining that it dates from the building of the first tent or house in Auraria. This is manifestly unfair. Auraria and Denver were entirely distinct towns. Merely because Auraria was later absorbed by the more prosperous Denver, there is no reason for shifting the date or credit for the founding of Denver to coincide with that of its present suburb.
FROM AN OLD DRAWING PURPORTING TO REPRESENT DENVER IN 1859

(Many details are inaccurate).
CHAPTER TEN

Laying out the streets of Denver — Early letters from Denver—Securing a charter for Denver City

THE site for Denver, on the border of the River, was a beautiful one. Here and there were scattered cottonwood trees. These were of a large size and just back of where Blake Street now is, there was a low place with a heavy growth of cottonwoods. It was from this grove that I cut the logs for our cabin. Dorsett and Lawrence likewise cut their cabin-logs in the same place. We had our pick of choice trees, for I do not think the grove had ever before resounded with the strokes of the woodsman’s axe, unless rarely an Indian or some roaming camper had felled a tree for firewood. But by the time we had all built our winter hovels, house logs became very scarce, and by spring we were hauling them for several miles from up and down the River.

The location of streets was made by Col. Samuel Curtis who had had some experience as a civil engineer, assisted by James S. Lowry and myself. With a rope for a “chain” we staked off lots and streets. Col. Curtis was a member of our Town Company, but he wintered at Arapahoe on Clear Creek, of which town he was indeed the founder. He was a son of Major General S. R. Curtis of the Civil War and was himself a Lieutenant-Colonel of the Second Colorado Regiment.

It is generally supposed that my father was president of the Town Company but that office was held by E. P. Stout as my father preferred to be Secretary and what they called Donating Agent, which gave him power to
run the town. He was authorized to give anyone who would build a cabin 16x16 feet two lots which the latter could select himself from the lots already unappropriated. In this way Denver started.

In order to get some sort of authorized form of local government, Edward Wynkoop on December 1st started back to the capital of Kansas Territory for the purpose of getting the Denver City Town-Company incorporated by the legislature. Father used this opportunity for sending several letters home. Two of these I here print because they give interesting sidelights on contemporaneous events and what had preceded.

DENVER CITY, KANSAS TERRITORY,
23rd November, 1858.

Dear Wife:

I am keeping camp today and I thought I would commence this letter not to be closed until the last of the month. In the first place, Will and I are in clover. . . . Will and I have agreed so well we have never had a cross word, and I do say with pleasure that he ever consults my wishes and does all the work for him and me both. In short, he is the finest boy I ever saw in every way. He is noted here and along the road as very promising. Truly I cannot express my feelings when I think of his feelings towards me: and he so often talks of you and all the family. One Sunday he said to me: "Only think how they are so uneasy until they hear from us." Will and I have had a hard trip, but we stand it so well we do not feel the cold. Still I may say we are out of doors and in the weather nearly all the time. I may want either John or Mr. Jones to come here: still I will get along, if possible. We cannot make any rash calculations yet as something might occur to spoil our calculations.

The weather is not favorable for digging and nearly everyone is fixing for winter; still some are digging and doing well. There is a man above here a few miles that everybody says is making from $5 to $10 every day. I did not see him myself but I believe it. I have seen plenty specimens of gold, one lot about $70. The immigration appears about over for this season: very few have arrived since we came. I guess some have stopped over upon the Arkansaw. Captain Humphreys was to leave Leavenworth the Monday after we did, but he has not yet arrived here. A part of the road we came over has now, they say, about two feet of snow. We got here at the nick of time.

I want you to tell all inquirers about roads to be sure to take the Laramie Road to Fort Ramsey, and they will find a good road up the
South Platte and save at least 150 miles. Over the route we came it took us at least two weeks longer than it should have done. St. Matthews, the man that was in the office with the two dogs, has never reached here; neither has Mr Wade. I think Mr Wade must have gone back from Topeka.

We made a mistake by coming so many in one wagon. Our load was too heavy; moreover, when we divided we had small portions. If Will and I had each taken a light wagon with two yoke of oxen we should have done better. Only think: Will and I never rode one mile on our Wagon, nor did any of us. We had to trudge along day after day on foot, while the Oscaloosa boys could lay all day in their wagon and we, too, had no one driver, but had to drive day about, and had to whip the oxen from morning till night. It surprises me to think we ever got through. Our team was fortyseven days on the road, only think of it. I am very anxious to hear from home. Our Laramie Express will run once a month. By the 12th of December I expect to get your letters. It will cost twenty-five cents for each letter and fifteen cents for newspapers. Let all your letters be good large ones send me no papers except important ones: but do write me often, I have plenty of money with which to pay postage.

Will and I now cook by ourselves. We have the little stove, and I was so fortunate in drawing it, when we divided our baggage. A few little sticks will get a breakfast.

I wish you could look into our quarters, you would go up! I am writing while sitting on my trunk with a little board stuck through the logs with one end to write upon. It works nicely. Mr Sanders, James Sanders, has just called in to see me. I want you to direct your letters to me in care of Sanders & Co. Express. This will save the trouble of sending an order every time.

25th November: The weather is now mild and beautiful, very much like Pennsylvania weather. Will is out busily engaged chopping logs for our house. We expect to get them all hauled tomorrow. I am keeping camp today again. You would laugh to see Will and me eating breakfast and supper. We eat only two meals a day. Will makes first rate cakes (biscuits). We have venison nearly all the time, if not we have plenty of bacon. Will and I both feel rich. We shall have about 500 lots, each, in Denver City. I am selected to donate lots to actual settlers. We shall have at least fifty houses up this fall and winter and no one knows how many in the spring. We expect a second Sacramento City, at least. Everybody here is delighted with the prospects, and none more so than Will and I... We may open an office here. Everyone has it that I am going to do so. We haven't the whole matter at present in our own hands, but there is nothing to do, nor can anything be done, until they dig the gold and a regular express starts. But all this is in the future, and I will write you every chance after we get fixed up. Will is going to dig. We have
our claims staked off about four miles above here. . . . Everybody here is confident of success. . . .

_Sunday, 28th:_ I have just returned from Church. A Mr Fisher, a Methodist minister, came in our party. He preached here last Sunday also. You can imagine my feelings last Sunday when we had Mr McLane to lead the music. He was not here today; he is stopping four miles below town. Mr Moyne, a young Omaha deacon, is also here; his cabin and ours are right opposite each other. Mr Moyne is that young man with fair hair that you always saw at our church in Omaha, so you see that we are not out of the world yet. The church was better attended last Sunday than this. Everybody is busy today building and hunting. The weather is now very warm and pleasant. We have got all our logs and hope to get well housed next week. We have plenty of dry wood nearby, so you need not fear for one moment about Will and I being warm and comfortable. Besides, I think the weather here is warmer than with you, certainly warmer than in Nebraska,—the mountains protect us. . . .

Everything looks cheering. Will and I get along nicely, so think no more about us. We are perhaps more comfortable than you and we have plenty of people all around us. We shall have a good hotel here by spring. Stephens of Omaha is going to keep it; he is starting early in the spring. Stephens formerly kept the Douglas House and is now keeping the Saratoga Hotel. Old Spooner is here building the hotel in our City. Our town is now the County seat. I believe I wrote you I was appointed Treasurer. I am also Treasurer of Denver City, our town.

30 _November:_ I'll have to close my letter tonight, I guess. I will send it by the hands of Ed. Wynkoop and Dr. A. B. Steinberger of Bellevue. They leave tomorrow. The express also leaves tomorrow.

Say to Mr Reed that Mr Lawrence and Dorsett are well. We will stick together. Whitsett and Jewett have gone to Montana, six miles above here: they are also very well. Mr Whitsett was down today. The news of gold diggings are better and better every day. . . . If things go well here I may be home by mid-summer, if not before. I have instructed Mr Wynkoop to leave John a map of Denver City when he gets them lithographed. . . . When you get this map notice that my lot is on the northwest corner of C and Larimer Streets: Will's lot is on the northeast corner of D and Larimer streets. Larimer street at present is the best, Lawrence and McGaa next.

Yours affectionately,

WM. LARIMER, JR.
Denver City, Arapahoe County,  
Kansas Territory,  
19th November, 1858.

Hon. H. B. Denman,  
Mayor of the City of Leavenworth,  
Kansas Territory.

Dear Sir:

Before I left Leavenworth City I promised to write to you in relation to the gold digging at this place. At that time all was vague and contradictory, and I am happy to inform you that we found things here very different from what we expected from the reports as above. As you are aware, I left your city on the 3rd day of October and reached this place on the 16th instant after a long and tedious journey. To begin: we came at least 150 miles out of our way. The road via Fort Kearney is by all means the route, unless a much shorter route is had up the Republican Fork. We came clear around by Pueblo or within five miles of it.

Gold is found everywhere around here, but not everywhere in sufficient quantities to pay, but the Cherry Creek and the South Platte diggings are found to pay, more particularly those on the Platte. But the richest diggings are up near the mountains. Upon all the streams putting out of the mountains gold is found fully sufficient to justify, and upon the whole the success of this country is a fixed fact. So far as I know all of the settlers here intend to make it their permanent homes. Besides the gold diggings we have a very good farming country with plenty of yellow pine within twelve to twenty miles. Along the South Platte cottonwood abounds; coal has also been discovered in several places up towards the mountains. Much of the land off Cherry Creek and the Platte is rather sandy with small gravel, but along the valleys the land is good for farming purposes.

This town, "Denver City", is situated at the mouth of Cherry Creek where it forms its confluence with the South Platte. This is the point also where the Santa Fe and New Mexico road crosses to Fort Laramie and Fort Bridger, also the great leading road from the Missouri River: in short, it is the center of all the great leading thoroughfares and is bound to be the great city. The mountains are within 12 or 15 miles of it and form the most beautiful view ever looked upon. Pike's Peak and Long's Peak are both in full view, the former about eighty miles on our left and the latter say forty miles on our right, with the great chains between them and upon both sides of us as far as the eye can reach. The peaks of both are not so much higher than the mountain ranges as I expected to see them. The town site of Denver City is beautiful; the land rises gradually, not unlike many of the Missouri River towns. The population of Denver City and the valley (say a range up and down the river of 40 miles) is about 1000 people, and more coming every day.
All kind of game abounds here, particularly deer. One company of hunters brought in fifty-one deer yesterday with some wild goats and sheep. Another party brought in twelve and another six deer. We have what they call the black-tailed deer: they are very large and fat. On our way hither from Pueblo we saw thousands of antelope. We have plenty of rabbits and all kinds of small game. Besides all this: we have a fine climate; I think much better than Eastern Kansas and Nebraska. We are, so far as my experience goes, free from high winds. The weather reminds me very much of my old Pennsylvania home with less rain and more clear sunshine. Yesterday was as warm as the middle of May.

On our way hither the first view of Pike's Peak was upon the morning of the first of November when we were about fifteen miles west of Bent's Fort. Our company were all delighted and shouted lustily. In short, Mr Mayor, this is the most picturesque country in the world, with fine air, good water and everything to make man happy and live to a good, old age. Who ever heard of an old mountaineer dying? When I look into these beautiful mountain streams, as clear as crystal and as cold as ice, I often wish for all my eastern friends to drink with me. What adds to the beauty of the mountains is that you may say the prairie is a smooth surface until it reaches the very base of the mountains, then come the sudden rises nearly straight up: but still you can climb them with safety. When the time comes that we get a railroad connection with the East, all the pleasure seekers, not only of the United States but also of Europe, will flock to this point during the summer months as the most delightful pleasure trip on earth. The learned and scientific men of all countries can find everything combined here, upon these mountains, to amuse and instruct them, from the grizzly bear down through the different objects of attraction combining all the minerals and petrifactions. I often think it is well that the Pilgrims landed upon Plymouth Rock and settled up that country before they saw this, or that would now remain unsettled. I have now spent nearly four years in the great and glorious Western country; but, until now, my longings for the beauties and grandeur of nature as it is had not been satisfied.

In relation to gold digging, the question is asked constantly in the East: How much gold can a man dig in one day? In answer I would say that here, thus far, but few men have ever done more than to prospect. Some get one dollar, some two, some five, some eight, and one man here got from $8 to $10 every day he worked. Again some inexperienced men get only the colour. The Georgians took out $375 about seven miles from here, at the mouth of Dry Creek, in a few days. This is a fact well attested here. Every one here is arranging winter quarters, and I have no doubt that by spring mining will be carried on to a great extent. The success of the country is not
questioned here, and that new and important diggings will be discovered by spring is not doubted by any one.

Fort Laramie is distant about 190 miles and Pueblo on the Arkansaw is 110 miles. There is an Express established here to convey mail matter to and from Fort Laramie once a month. The present price is twenty-five cents a letter and fifteen cents for newspapers.

The extent of the gold discovered extends from Arkansas to Medicine Bowe on the north, a distance of over five hundred miles.

Yours respectfully,

WM. LARIMER, JR.

It would appear that Mr Wynkoop, the bearer of these letters, had another object in view, in making his eastward journey, besides the securing of a charter for Denver City; for the New York Daily Tribune of Feb. 3, 1859, reprints from Freedom's Champion (Atchison, Jan. 22, 1859) the following news item:

"On Thursday last we received a visit from E. W. Wynkoop and A. B. Staunberger who had just returned from the gold region. They left the mouth of Cherry Creek on Dec. 1st and the gold region on the 11th of the same month. They came in by the South Platte route. They suffered much from the cold during their journey. Mr Wynkoop is the sheriff of Arapahoe County, having been appointed by Governor Denver. . . . These gentlemen came in for the purpose of obtaining from the legislature now in session at Lawrence a charter for a company who intend digging a canal from a mountain stream to the gold diggings for the purpose of supplying the miners with water. . . ."
CHAPTER ELEVEN

Certificate of stock in Denver City Town-Company—Building cabins—Early life in Denver revealed by letters—False claims

Of the original Town Company’s forty-one shares, under which we claimed about 2,200 acres, all but six were held by parties in the country. These six were given to W. H. Russell of the noted firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell, government freighters, and to other parties in the States who were already or could be induced to become interested in the welfare of the city and might be influential in bringing a stage line into the country with Denver as its objective point.* It will be remembered that my father had talked with Mr. W. H. Russell before we left Leavenworth in regard to town sites, stage lines, etc. The plan worked out well: no body who came into the country could get around Denver, all routes led to Denver City, no matter whether they came by the Platte or the Arkansas they landed finally at the mouth of Cherry Creek.

When certificates were issued to the stockholders in the Denver City Town-Company they were written by my father, who was a good penman, as of course we had no printing presses. My father’s share was Number One: my own was Number Two, as shown on the next page.

Thus father and I had one share each. Later we bought another one for a trifle. This made us the owners of about one-fourteenth of the entire town site. After-

* See Editor’s Note on page 92.
wards, when printing presses arrived the shares were subdivided into ten-lot shares.

The Town Company originally claimed 2200 acres, but when a claim club was formed it was thought the company was claiming too much, so we cut the town down to 1280 acres. The land thus abandoned by the company was taken up by the usual method of "claims" by Lawrence, Dorsett, Clancy, Blake, Stout, Williams, McFadding, my father and me.

My claim was about midway between the Platte River and Cherry Creek. There was a high, round, mound called "Pilot Knob" near the center of my claim. It is now called "Grasshopper Hill" I believe. I set a man at work digging a well and spent about $100 on it; but, during my absence in Leavenworth in the winter of 1859-60, some enterprising fellow jumped my claim and I was never able to recover it.

Father's claim was next to mine on the Platte River side, and is the present site of the State Capitol. In a letter written by father on 29 June, 1859, he expresses the belief that on his claim would be located the future capitol. He said:

"We are bound to have a Territory, if not a State, and the Capital
will be Denver City with the State House very near Will's and my claims. The survey of the town is now perfected and Will's claim covers Pilot Knob. The Knob is about the center of it: my claim adjoins. Beautiful 320 acres adjoining the capitol is of some value."

But father never realized any advantage from it: his claim suffered the same fate as mine. It was jumped during our absence.

While all these affairs were going on, I was busy getting out house logs, as everybody was busy fixing for the winter and building cabins was the vogue. There were several acres of nice young cottonwood trees which had not been touched back of Blake Street towards the river. It was in this grove that I cut the logs for our cabin, though some were obtained from another grove just over a little hill near Magee Street and F and G streets.

Of course we had to have oxen to haul the logs. Having no provender laid up we had to turn them loose to roam at will during the night that they might forage for themselves. At first they grazed a few miles off Cherry Creek but it was not long before they formed the habit of crossing the River up near Montana and taking to the foothills. So it became necessary for us, when wanting the oxen, to arise and have breakfast before daylight so that at dawn we might be ready to get off after them. Often it would take half the day to find them and we would have time left to draw no more than one load before dark. The tramping for them had to be done afoot, as our pony had to have the same treatment as the oxen. When we had arrived at Cherry Creek our cattle, from hard, continuous driving, had become very weak, but under this system of night pasturage it was not long before they gained strength and a prime condition for work, but they certainly did cause us many a weary tramp, in return for a small quantity of work from them. We were in no particular rush, however, to finish building our cabin as we had a comfortable tent and the weather was not very severe. In fact the severe winter which we were always fearing was only a bugaboo. We had a little snow, to be sure, but never much cold. At no time did the thermometer
drop to zero and many days it ranged around 60° F. There were no blizzards and but very few days when it was uncomfortable to work out of doors. Some days I would help Lawrence and Dorsett and on other days they would help me in return. My father’s time was mostly taken up with other matters so that most of the manual labor for the two of us was left to me. But everybody else had to look out for himself and until Christmas there was not much idleness.

In cutting the logs for our cabin I made them as long as I could and still have them straight enough. They were about eighteen feet long, which made our cabin about 16 x 16 feet. There was no diversity of architectural design, everybody’s cabin was like everybody else’s except in size. Most of them were not as large as ours, I think. The logs were laid up square, with two ridge poles in the center. From these to the wall logs we placed small poles and covered them with long grass and about six inches of dirt. This made a good roof except in the most prolonged wet weather. Our chimney was made of tough sod plastered with mud and was in one corner of the cabin. Our bed was made in another corner by a pole reaching from the ceiling to the ground and another pole nailed to the logs of the wall; the slats being split cottonwood poles. With plenty of dead grass and buffalo robes and blankets laid on these slats we had a bed fit for the peaceful repose of our weary muscles after a hard day’s toil. From the boards* we had brought on the wagon with us and which we had not yet needed for coffins we made a door and a table.

D. C. Collier, who had just arrived in the country and whom we had taken to live with us until he could get a cabin of his own built, made us a window of four lights, but being without carpenter’s tools he had to make the

* Smiley in his *Story of Denver* infers from the fact that the Larimer cabin had a door from sawed boards that Moyne & Rice had finished their own cabin and whip-saw mill prior to the building of the Larimer cabin and that therefore the Larimer claim of having built the first cabin in Denver is not correct. But whatever incorrectness there is lies in Smiley’s inference and not in the Larimer claim. See page 48.
sash with a penknife. We had brought with us some 8 x 10 inch glass: so our cabin had a glass window in it and was the only one in the whole country at that time which was so elaborately equipped. When Jack Jones came over to visit us he advised us to darken it at night as we were liable to be assassinated by Indians. His advice was taken, and every night a blanket was hung over the window. Jack Jones and John Smith were authorities on all Indian questions, as they both had Indian families. They had been trading with the Indians for many years and could speak the language. Through living with the Indians so long, they had learned to be always cautious and were always in fear of an outbreak on account of our invading their country; and, indeed, we were at the mercy of the Indians, who could have wiped us out of existence.

As for the location of our cabin: the wagon road from the Arkansas River, by which we had come to this locality and which ran from Mexico and Forts Bridger, Laramie and Salt Lake, came down what is now Fifteenth Street. It was on this road that we selected a place for building our cabin. We then laid off streets and lots to correspond with the location of our cabin and the beaten trail. Our cabin was the first house in Denver and was built on what
was then laid off as the corner of Larimer and C streets (now 15th Street), and fronted towards the Platte River and was near to Cherry Creek.

The illustration of this cabin, above presented, is made from a drawing by General F. M. Case, first Surveyor General of Colorado, and is considered by those who have seen the cabin as a very faithful representation of it.

I have already stated that our party, which had come from Leavenworth, had disbanded as a company. We had divided our provisions and everything which had belonged to us in common. Jewett and Whitsett went up the Platte River about six miles to Montana and built a little cabin for the winter. Lawrence and Dorsett remained with us and built a cabin on the corner of Larimer and Fifteenth Street diagonally from us.

The following letter gives an idea of our style of living in those days:

DENVER CITY, 28th Dec., 1858.

My dear Family:

You have no idea how nice Will and I are fixed up. We have plenty of everything to eat. Today we had nice cakes, venison, beans and molasses for dinner. Will is a splendid cook; and our cabin is so tidy. We have a nice door with an old fashioned wooden latch, with a string on the outside of course. The fireplace, as is the custom of this country, is made of sods. In the southwest corner is the bunk; in the northwest corner the window, four panes of glass with sash. On the north side, between the end of the bed and the fireplace, we have two shelves and a bench, all made with a nice slab. We cut the meat on the bench and set the water buckets on the other two shelves. We keep our pans, knives and forks, and all our table furniture on the southeast side of the house. We have our luggage, flour bags, etc. on this side. I have also a shelf with sundry articles around this same side. I have the remaining hams hung up; also the saw, auger and hatchet, also two bed cords and two pairs of boots and sundry little matters. On the northeast side and corner we hang our coats, pants, guns and such things. I have the nail box, picks, shovels and old boots and buffalo overshoes under the bunk or bed.

I am writing on a nice pine table under the window, covered by that gray, horse blanket as nice as the day we started. On this table I have my books and papers, ink stand and all the other nice things, together with the candlestick and candle, with some matches ready to light. Will scoured up the candlestick today; it looks clean and nice.
We have also another nice pine table to eat upon. Will has on it a nice tablecloth made of muslin. We have four nice stools with my trunk and the water-keg to sit upon. I have the comb and the hair brush on the window sill. Will made a nice willow broom. I have David Copperfield, my Bible and your Prayer Book together with some old newspapers and a lot of Mr Collier’s books on this table.

We have three sacks of flour and some crackers with plenty of candles, soap, dried apples, rice, onions, about three gallons of molasses, one hundred pounds of bacon, fifty or sixty pounds of sugar, thirty or forty pounds of coffee, one-third of a bag of salt and nearly a bushel of beans.

Our cabin is fifteen feet six inches by sixteen feet six inches, and you have no idea how comfortable we all live. We sleep warm and nice. Will and I are so busy every day: I have the donating of lots to attend to and that keeps me busy. I have taken in a young lawyer, David Collier, from Wyandotte, to live with us. He has lots of nice things to eat and is very clever. He helps to get wood and carry water. He made our window frame and will make us a table, stools, etc. all in return for house room until he gets his house up.* He has a good yoke of oxen but no wagon.

I want you to tell Mr Pitser that I have selected him his church lots: four lots (of 100 ft) on the corner of C and Arapahoe Streets, southeast corner. I have given Rev. Fisher similar four lots (100 ft) right across C street; I mean our Rev. Fisher, Methodist clergyman. My house is on the corner of C and Larimer streets, or rather back from the corner sixty feet. If the Rev. Pitser wants another pair of lots to build a home on I will give them to him, or tell him rather the Company will.

I will certainly be home next fall. Will will also be home next fall on a visit only: I want to arrange to stay all winter.

Afft. yours,
WM. LARIMER, JR.

The Editor cannot use the close of this chapter to better purpose than to show how easy it is for false rumors to get a ready circulation when the claim is made that they are based on authentic written records. From this point of view the following letter published in the Chicago Times of October 1st, 1883, is very interesting. It was written by William B. Parsons, who was a member of the Lawrence

* This letter should mark “finis” to any argument that David C. Collier built the first house in Denver, or prior to the Larimer cabin, as rumor would have it that he did. This is alluded to in Smiley’s Story of Denver, (page 230) though that historian does not give any credence to the rumor.
Party and who, by his own admission left the Cherry Creek region to return to the East on August 31, 1858, or 77 days before the Leavenworth Party arrived in that same region. Yet it will be noted that he claims “William Larimer came to Cherry Creek on the 28th of August. If he should himself tell me differently I should think he had forgotten, for I have it in black and white. He built the first house somewhere from the 5th to the 10th of September.” I cannot venture to state how much allowance should be made for his other claims in this letter, though several of them seem to have been adopted by some historians as authentic.

A SUNFLOWER PROTEGEE:


Denver, Col. October 1, 1883, Special: The following letter from a Tribune’s Chicago correspondent will prove of interest to old-time Kansas:

During the session of the Free State legislature in Lawrence, Kansas, in the winter of 1857 it was whispered around among the boys that some Delaware Indians had brought in some fine specimens of gold from the “Rockies” and for a consideration would show us where it could be found. As you remember, we arranged with “Fall Leaf” to guide us, but he was so injured in a drunken frolic that he could not go, and so on the 23rd of May we set out without him. There were forty of us, and but two in the party, John Turney and Russell Hutchins, had ever seen a gold mine or a sluice box or cradle.

At Switzer Creek (now Burlingame) we were joined by three men and one woman, who had a baby four months old. At Collinwood’s, John Henry Holmes and Julia Archibald Holmes and her brother met us, thus making our party number forty-seven exclusive of the baby. You will remember that the whole country beyond Council Grove, where now thriving cities stand and the thundering trains of commerce pour wealth and prosperity on their way from the Atlantic to the Pacific shore, was to us a terra incognita.

We knew absolutely nothing of the route of the country except from Fremont’s report of 1842, and what little we could gather from bull whackers of the Greaser variety. There was not a house between Diamond Spring (twenty miles west of Council Grove) and Bent’s Fort. The latter was identical with the building known as the “commissary”, when you were in command at Fort Lyon in 1862 and I was
there with my company G, of the Ninth Kansas. A young man by
the name of Russell with four assistants had charge of the fort, and
the plains around were dotted with the tepees of Cheyennes and
Arapahoes. Russell had not heard from the "States" in four months.
We camped in a grove of cottonwoods near the present site of Foun­
tain City on the night of the Fourth of July.

We celebrated our nation's birthday in true frontier style, and
I ventured the prediction in a spread-eagle speech that some us would
live to see ten thousand people in this region and a weekly mail.
Smart wasn't I? On the 6th day of July we camped at the gateway
of the Garden of the Gods, and my tent was on the identical spot now
occupied by General Palmer's residence. We corralled one hundred
mountain sheep on the high slate shaped rock south of the gateway.
On the 13th of July five of us ascended Pike's Peak. I don't claim to
be a hero and don't want immortality that way, but I have been told
by old John Smith, Kit Carson, Jack Jones, and several other moun­
taineers whose names I forget, that I was the first person who ever
set foot upon its summit. I wrote a letter from there to the St. Louis
Democrat and though I have the slips before me, I cannot tell the date
of its publication. Four days later John Archibald Holmes went to
the summit and from there wrote an article for the National Era, I
believe, if it was then published. At all events for some Washington
publication. I have seen accounts of the ascension of the mountain
by some Denver ladies long afterwards, and the claim was asserted
that they were the first to plant their feet on the summit. The truth
is, Julia Archibald Holmes, afterwards secretary of the National
Woman Suffrage association, dressed in black, tight pants, a hickory
shirt and a pair of moccasins, was the first woman who ever set foot on
the summit of Pike's Peak or any similar elevation in America.
From Pike's Peak we went to a location known as La Veta pass and
did some hard work and found a little gold. We there learned from
some Mexicans that the most probable place to find gold in quantities
was at Cherry Creek. We went there as soon as we could, arriving
some time in August. When we went there the "inhabitants" were
just these: Jack Jones, his Cheyenne wife and two or three young
Indians; Sanders, with about the same outfit; John Jones with two
Sioux women, and an Arapahoe woman and three or four young bucks,
and John Atwell and squaw.

We camped on the east side of Cherry creek and about three
hundred feet from the river. The bottom was full of willows. Four
days after we went there three men from Salt Lake came in, one of
them being a gambler by the name of Vincent.

During a game of Monte, he shot Atwell, the ball plowing along
the left side of his head, but not breaking the skull. He ran into the
willows, but the Indians soon unburrowed him and captured him.
I was selected Judge, and a jury was impaneled according to the forms
of law. The man was found guilty, and my decision was that his horse and revolver should be given to Atwell and that he be turned out of camp with his rifle, ammunition and six day’s rations, and the assurance that if ever again seen within a mile of camp he would be shot on sight. Thus I had the honor to preside at the first trial ever held in Denver. There have been many able judges in Denver since my day, but I venture to boast that justice has never been administered any more speedily and satisfactorily than in Vincent’s case.

I have always seen that General Larimer built the first house in Denver on August 12th. This is not true. I don’t know the exact date, but I am positively certain that there was no house on Cherry Creek on August 31st. John Smith’s half breed son washed out 82.20 in gold during the day of August 18th, and I think it was the first time any man or boy ever obtained as much as one dollar in one day from the Colorado gold mines. Gregory and Green Russell had meanwhile come, each with his own party, and knowing far more than any other in the country about the business of prospecting struck the first paying diggings in September. But strange as it may seem, they had a tremendous excitement in St Louis about our mine discoveries at least thirty days, before one of us ever gained a cent.

William Larimer came to Cherry Creek on the 28th of August. If he should himself tell me differently I should think he had forgotten, for I have it in black and white. He built the first house somewhere from the 5th to the 10th of September. The Lawrence company had selected Montana (twelve miles above Denver) as a town site, and had moved up there. Josiah Hinman and John Eastin were the most early in the new town, but it was a failure. I left Cherry creek August 31, 1858. We were told by plainsmen that it was thirty miles to the South Platte, and we took rations accordingly. We were five days without a mouthful before we arrived at Kearney.

I started with the idea to making a set-off to the statement of the special correspondent of the Chicago Times. There was no “Leavenworth company”, but a Lawrence company. The idea of living off the inhabitants along the route was not conceived, neither was the Times’ correspondent. We had plenty of rations and afterward sold them. Nobody ate up his brother. The organization which established and named Denver was made in the land office at Leompton, Kansas. General Brindle, George Baker, Ed. Wynkoop, John Shannon, Hugh Walsh and Eli Moore, Jr., were the founders of Denver. It was a Kansas enterprise, as was the whole of the Pike’s Peak affair, begun and finished on Kansas soil and though Green Russell and Gregory, by reason of their skill in that particular line, were the first to unearth the immense riches of Colorado, yet Kansas men were the initiators of the whole scheme and are entitled to the patent. I could fill a thousand pages with reminiscences of the early times of the far west, but I suppose I have even now transgressed the
limits of your desires, and I will therefore close by saying that there is a vast amount of unwritten history of the plains now fast going into the realms of myth.

No one is more suitable than you, by reason of your long and faithful services as a newspaper man on the frontier, to rescue from the dulusive fogs of the variety stage the rough but true and noble characters of the frontier and present them to the rising generation in their true light. I know of no work which would be so timely and valuable, and presume profitable, as an exact, comprehensive statement of the far west as you and I knew it, twenty-seven years ago.

Yours truly,

WM. B. PARSONS.

Here is a case of a man setting up something as claimed by General Larimer, in regard to dates, which no Larimer ever did claim; and then attempting to refute it by records made by himself “in black and white” at the time the events occurred, when he could not possibly have made any such records on the dates he claimed, as the events of which he speaks had not occurred until more than two months after his so-called “records” state. In attempting to refute an imaginary claim he has set up equally imaginary records.
A **MONG the Oskaloosa Party, which had joined our party en route, there was an old gentleman by the name of George W. Fisher who, when at home, I think, followed wagon making. He was a good man and my father took quite a fancy to him. He would often visit us in our tent. Father discovered that, aside from making wagons, he had been at one time a Methodist circuit rider or preacher in Kansas; so, on November 21st, the first Sunday after our arrival, arrangements were made for preaching. The weather being too inclement for outdoor services, Jack Jones and John Smith donated the use of one end of their double cabin.

It was morning service. The congregation was small, although Mr Fisher and my father went around and invited everybody to attend. There were no church bells to ring, no finely draped ladies, no choir, no pews to sit in. But seated on buffalo robes spread on the ground with both the Jones and the Smith squaws present (there were no other women), Fisher, father, myself and perhaps six or eight others held the first religious service ever held in the country. Mr Fisher was very earnest in his worship. I have forgotten the text, but it was selected to suit the occasion and we sang old time songs led by Mr McLane, formerly of Omaha and whom we had known when we lived in that City. In the opposite end of the cabin I could hear the money jingle where the gambling was going on at the same time that Mr Fisher was preaching.
While preaching was thus early inaugurated, it cannot be claimed that even a majority of the pioneers were eager to attend services regularly every Sabbath. As in every community, some were in favor and some were lukewarm and some were opposed entirely to the program. This opposition grew when that arch opponent of religion, whiskey, was introduced, though it is to the credit of the earliest settlers from the States that the supply of whiskey was so light. No one was inclined to burden his oxen hauling it, and until the arrival of immigrants from New Mexico such a thing as a drunken man was seldom seen. But with the Mexican arrivals Taos Lightning, as the worst brand of whiskey ever brewed was called, was the chief stock in trade.

Into our community, Dick Wooten brought the first supply on the evening before Christmas,—a whole wagon load, in barrels. On Christmas morning these barrels were taken from the wagon and, with one exception, stood on end in a row. The exception was turned down, tapped, and a number of tin pans filled with its contents. The pans were then placed on the heads of the standing barrels, and every man in town was invited to help himself. Several did help themselves, and so often that they needed help to reach their cabins; and from that time until the present day the stock has never been exhausted.

While there was no quarreling on that Christmas Day, it was not long before an overdose led to the killing of Jack O'Neal by John Rooker over a game of cards. When they parted it was with the understanding that they would shoot at sight. The next morning, O'Neal, who was a man of powerful physique, came walking up the street in his shirt sleeves, as was his custom, shoulders thrown back as he walked fearlessly along, apparently unconscious of danger. His enemy, Rooker, concealed behind Wooten's store, saw him approach and shot him dead. It was a kind of case where the public had no sympathy one way or the other, as both were bad men such as the country could well get along without and it would have been much better if both had ended their existence on the battle-
field. But unfortunately Rooker was left to cause more trouble at a later day.

But there were other ways for celebrating Christmas besides by a drunken bout. We had a few of all classes of people with a full complement of sports. One of our most noted characters was Charlie Gilmore. He was a good fellow but a great sport. His principal game was chuck-luck. So fond of this game was he that he became known only by the nickname of "Chuck Luck". There was very little currency in the country, but by the time spring came he had monopolized practically all there was and had about two-thirds of all the old guns in the country besides.

F. C. Orem or "Con" Orem, as we called him, was another of the sporting fraternity. He would amuse the boys with boxing, wrestling, etc. For Christmas Day he had arranged a wrestling match, with some fellow down the Platte some few miles, for a purse of two yoke of oxen and a wagon. He invited me to go with him. This was about his commencement as a prize fighter, but he afterwards became quite a champion in his line of business and challenged the world. Not taking much interest in such things and having invitations out to eat a Christmas dinner with a few friends in our own cabin, I did not go with him on this occasion.

I shall have to tell about that Christmas dinner of ours: it was so different from any modern dinner. Our table was very small and was covered with a blanket for a tablecloth. Our plates and cups and spoons and knives and forks were of tin or like cheap material. For food we had game of various kinds and bean soup, dried corn, dried apples, rice, coffee and pie made of dried apples. Mr Collier and I presided over the culinary department. Our stock of provisions was made up of substantialis, and at that time canned fruits and vegetables were but little used. Our invited guests were personal friends who, no doubt, enjoyed the occasion as much as a swell Christmas dinner of today. They numbered about twentyfive; but during the course of the day nearly all the settlers in
Auraria and up and down the river called on us. Our latch string was always out: and no matter who the settler was, he seemed to enjoy calling on us.

In preparing the dinner a rather amusing incident occurred. Provisions were none too plentiful in the country and we all had very healthful appetites by reason of our hard work out of doors, so that much more attention was paid to eating than might be supposed. But we also had to draw on our stocks with economy as, in case our supply became exhausted, there was no telling when we would get any more. Now, the night before Christmas, we put our corn to soak, thinking it would assist in cooking the next day. Next morning, my father on arising earlier than the rest of us, found that a mouse in looking for something to eat had dropped into the camp kettle where the corn was soaking and was drowned. His first thought was to throw corn and all out: but on reflection he concluded that here was a chance to practice double economy: save the corn and abstain from eating any of it himself too. So he emptied out the mouse and water and replaced with fresh water and said nothing about it to us. At dinner we noticed that he did not eat any of the corn, but we thought nothing of it at the time. It was several days before he told of it. When he told us of it at last, of course we enjoyed the joke immensely and were glad he had saved the corn!

As I remember it, there were on this Christmas Day of 1858, only four cabins on the Denver side of Cherry Creek: they were on the four corners of Larimer and Fifteenth streets, and were ours, Lawrence's and Dorsett's, Moyn's and Rice's, and Hickory Rogers'. The first three were occupied by the builders, but Rogers' was occupied by four German relatives of whom more will be told in a later chapter.*

Before the winter was over, however, so many cabins had been built (as every share holder had to have a cabin to hold his interest) that all the suitable trees in the neighborhood had been cut and houselogs had to be hauled

*See pages 147-150.
Birthplace of Rachel McMasters, Wife of Gen. William Larimer, Jr.,
Turtle Creek, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. From photograph in 1893.
several miles up and down the Platte. They also built continually improved grades of houses, using pine logs and hewing them. Some were even brought from the heads of Cherry Creek and Plum Creek.

By this time most of us had become well acquainted with one another and there had been few new comers after the first of December. The entire population of the country did not exceed two hundred, I should judge, and I was probably the youngest of them all.

DENVER CITY, K.T.,
19th January, 1859.

Dear Family:

I find another opportunity to send a letter by a Wm. Tate. He will call to see John and Edwin in the office. I have nothing new or strange to write. The weather grows warmer and warmer every day: the thermometer is 51° in the shade. Last night was warm enough to sleep with a summer quilt. I have never seen so pleasant a winter.

Things look brighter and brighter every day. A Mr Bacon, of Michigan, came through a few days since. He came from your city, leaving it on the 24th of October. He and his party of five came the whole distance up the Smoky Hill fork. He traveled by compass after the stream ran out, and he struck Cherry Creek twenty-three miles above here. He then came down on the regular road. He was a long time on the journey but lay over for long periods. After Mr Bacon came he went up the Platte to see the diggings. He is an old Californian. He came back and told me he was well pleased with the prospects, and said he could himself make $8 or $10 per day, so he has taken lots, he and his party, in Denver and has now gone back to the pines to get out their buildings. He is then going back to Leavenworth to telegraph for his family to come on to meet him and bring them here. I mention this matter to satisfy you that all is right here.

Will and I have great prospects here. Will and Mr Collier talk of opening a hotel; if so, they can rig up here, as, by spring, everything necessary will be here: but this is only talk. My own opinion is that Will can do well. They will rent some of the largest buildings going up here. They will open in a small way and increase the business, if they decide to go into it.

I have written a letter to T. M. Jones which you can read over and mail to him if you approve it, if not you can retain it. Still I am satisfied that he could do well in Leavenworth City, and the sooner he gets a house the better, as all the world will be in Leavenworth City by early spring to fit out for this country. He should open a wholesale grocery (and retail also), the same as McCracken, Clarke &
Richardson and others. Besides I would like so much that Annie
should be with you as I will necessarily be absent a good deal for the
next year or two—I hope not longer. Do not fear Will's going into a
hotel: it will only be to make a raise and sell out. He will be home next
fall certain, perhaps to stay. . . . I will also be home early in the fall,
if not to stay, at least to give you quite a visit and return with a few
teams laden with flour. . . .

You can read over the inclosed letter and do as you please about
sending it. I feel what I write, that Leavenworth is the great point
and this country is going to make it so. The merchants in your city
cannot nearly supply the cash outfits for this country and that will be
a sure thing if this is not. If a lot of property holders come out, I
want to make some good trades with them. Tell Mr Tanner I would
hesitate whether I would swap farms with him, even up,—not speak­
ing of Will's. I would trade with Dr. Davis about even up.

Will and I are helping Collier to raise his house today: he helps
Will and me.

I wrote you that I received six letters from home which were very
satisfactory. One from mother, 9th of Dec. was the latest: one from
John, two from Thomas, Annie and Kirkpatrick.

Tell Mr Reed and Lawrence that Mr Dorsett is well. He left
for the pinery the Monday after Mr Lawrence left. I have not seen
him since, but hear from him often. The mail will be in from Fort
Laramie by the 28th with a fresh lot of letters, I hope. McLain is up
often. They have quite a band of music here; they play every night.

I cannot think of anything more today. They have put up an
icehouse on the bank of Cherry Creek, near our house, but up until
now we have no ice to put in it, and I do not think they will get any.
The river, in places, has been frozen over, but opposite here it has been
open all winter. The thermometer is up to 62° above zero today.

I have no doubt but Will can sell out the hotel if he goes into it.
He and Collier will start on a small scale, cook themselves and work.
The house they expect to get will be 40 x 45 feet with a temporary
kitchen outside of that. This building is opposite Will's corner on D
and Larimer streets. Will is in fine spirits all the time. Collier is a
boyish kind of fellow and easily got along with. He is a first rate cook
and can make the finest kind of pies, cakes, etc. He will make all the
tables, stools, benches, etc. The only expense they will have is the
provisions at the start and between us we have enough ourselves to
run the thing for one month. They will not have much to do until
the immigration commences. I expect they will have to pay about
$50. per month for the house. It is not built for a hotel. There will
be four other hotels opened in the spring about in the same way our
boys talk of opening. Stevens of Saratoga is expected with his
furniture. This will be the best house but not as large a building at
the start as Will's. I will board with them. . . .
Will and Collier are going up to the pines for shingles for their houses. They will be gone four or five days. They can go up in one day, twenty miles, by making an early start. They are going where Mr. Dorsett is. There are a large number of persons at that point on the same business, besides every other direction.

This exceedingly warm weather will develop some new digging. The people are not now afraid to venture out. Heretofore, we have all been looking for those deep snows and cold weather that you hear so much about in the East, but now all fears are over and we feel that "springtime" has come. You have had cold weather East, we have not had any here. The coldest spell we had was a few days after we came here, at the time Will wrote that letter when the ink froze in an open blacksmith shop. He had better been out of doors that night.

Mr. Lawrence has gone back exclusively on his own business, not mine. I have no connection with any one in any kind of business nor do I mean to have. I will not attempt a Banking House either, as I want to keep loose. . . . I see I have managed to fill this letter again.

Our three oxen are doing first rate and so are we all. I hear our pony is near Taos, New Mexico, and I expect her to be sent back by Judge Smith.

God Bless you all,
W. L., Jr.

DENVER CITY, K.T.,
19th January 1859.

Dear Son:

I have been upon a study ever since Will and I found what we think is a good thing here, how to advise you. I believe I wrote you often, or at least my family, that Will and I have one share each in Denver originally. I then bought one other half share. I got it for building a good cabin house and $5. in cash. The cabin Will and I built ourselves so it cost nothing but hard lifting. This gives us our portion out of forty-one original shares,—besides we have each 160 acres adjoining the city all mapped and lithographed with Denver City. This occurred this way: we took 2500 acres into our survey and sent on to have it lithographed. We then concluded to cut down the town claim to 1280 acres. This made seven claims around the town and Will and I got two of the best lying side by side, and what gives this so much value, as we conceive, is its being lithographed and can be shown up with the town. We intend to put ours in as additions to Denver City. So you see what we have to calculate upon. The day after I bought the half share I was offered $400. for my bargain by young Curtis son of the Iowa Congressman. Dr. Kunkle took his share back to Sioux City to sell a part of it. He held the whole at $25,000. and I guess it will make it. If one share is worth $25,000,
you can calculate two and a half shares with the three hundred twenty acres of outside lots; but I may be badly disappointed in my figures as I have been before, but I can cut down. Will and I have ten of the best lots in the city selected, with two of the best corners. These lots will sell right off for good prices by early spring. We shall then have any quantity of good lots all over the city.

Will talks of opening a hotel in company with a Mr. Collier, if it will look like paying. . . . Will and I have thought this but do not pretend to advise you or interfere with your arrangements with my good and fast friend, Uncle Frank, but Frank might favor the idea, which is this: that you open a wholesale and retail grocery, and iron and nails store with Pittsburgh manufactured articles generally, in Leavenworth City. All the world and the rest of mankind will be fitting out there by early spring. There will be any quantity of nails and glass particularly wanted besides everything in the shape of flour, sugar, coffee, tea, spices, salt, soap, candles and in short everything and you will find that there cannot be too much brought to Leavenworth to load the wagons. This you may rely upon whether you pitch in or not. You will find that the location of the mines is such as to bring everything to Leavenworth. St. Joseph is also a good point, still Leavenworth is safe.

If I had money to give you I would help you start but you might with your means and credit get a good start. You could order every day from St. Louis by telegraph: it is now in order I suppose. You could lease a lot and build a rough building in two weeks, cheaper than any other way. Still you could rent a house to start. I dont believe the merchants of Leavenworth know what a harvest is before them. You do not need a large capital in cash except to buy flour and this McCracken generally buys on time. You could easily raise two or three thousand in banks in Pittsburgh and John, if he gets along well, can always assist some in a pinch, besides I shall be absent a good deal for a year or two, I hope not longer, and Annie's mother and the family would be too happy to have you in Leavenworth.

Leavenworth is bound to be a very large city. Its central position to the Territory and the Fort and its great start will keep her a long way ahead of even Kansas City and St. Joseph. She will soon get a railroad.

I want you to examine this matter carefully before you change quarters, of course, but next year will be the big harvest in Leavenworth. You may rely upon it. If I succeed here I should like to bring a small train with flour to Denver next fall, late. I expect to see flour $50 to $100 per sack of one hundred pounds here about this time next year if the immigration comes that we expect.

A Mr. Bacon of Pontiac, Michigan, an old Californian and a very clever, substantial looking man arrived here last Saturday (Jan. 15, 1859). With four others of his party the next morning he went up
four miles to examine the gold diggings and returned the same evening in high spirits. He says he can himself dig every day from eight to ten dollars. From what he saw he said more than half of the worked diggings in California are not so good as what he saw with his own eyes. He came and took lots with all his party in Denver and went up to the pinery to get out their house logs and shakes, or shingles, and intends sending on to Michigan for his family. He said he would write facts enough to move one-half of the people in Michigan. You may say: 'Could I not do better to go to Denver City?' I think not, from the fact that everything here will be overrun and overdone. . . . Still this is the best climate in the Union, I will not except California. While I write, the thermometer is sixty degrees above zero in the shade. You can form no idea of our mild climate and truly the finest place to live I ever tried. . . . This whole range of country reaching above Ft. Laramie and Medicine Bow clean down into New Mexico is fast going to be settled up with fine farms, etc. All our stock is getting fat; we have no snow, with green grass up the valleys. I do not mean it is now growing, but it is good food for stock. Even the mountains are now nearly bare of snow. Since I have been here, we have had two windy days like Nebraska. Rather unpleasant to be out, still everything went on as usual though the days were what I call disagreeable. Our chimneys smoked awfully on those two days. This is heaven's own day, in fact it gives one the spring fever to work much. Will has worked hard ever since he left home and so have we all. Still I shirk some. I do not pretend much in the way of work here except put my hand to in raising the buildings.

Thermometer 62° above zero to-day in the shade.

Give my best respects to all my friends. I read my dear Annie's letter with tears of affection.

Yours truly,

WM. LARIMER, JR.

The first merchants in the country were Charles H. Blake and A. J. Williams, who opened a little store from their outfit, which did not exceed one wagon load, I should imagine. John H. King brought in a little stock of goods at an early date, but Blake & Williams had preceded him. They were both leading citizens and were very enterprising and took an active part in everything that was going on. Their store was in a small cabin in Auraria, close to the cabins of Jack Jones and John Smith. Their merchandising did not last long, as their stock was light and they took no pains to renew it. As others arrived with larger stocks Blake & Williams soon retired from general
mercantile business. Both of them were members of both the Auraria and the Denver City Town-Company; but it was not long before they identified themselves more particularly with Denver and made preparations to erect the building which became known as Denver Hall, which will be described later.

Jim G—, who proved to be one of the most noted and notorious characters of our little colony, made his headquarters at Blake & Williams' store. I think he came to the country with them from Nebraska. He was one of the most exemplary young men in the country and no one had more friends than he among the best class of our citizens. He was educated for a civil engineer: he dressed well and was very fond of reading, which was his almost constant occupation as he loitered around the store during the winter. His downfall came with the prosperity which accompanied the spring immigration and through the introduction of "Taos Lightning". He was quite peaceable when sober, but when he was under the influence of whiskey he became crazed and would shoot at any object in sight. He had several shooting escapades, but by the influence of his friends managed in one way or another to get out of any trouble resulting therefrom; until, one evening, near the middle of July (1859), as he was passing along Blake street shooting at dogs or anything else in his way, he saw a German, John Gantz by name, sitting in a store. The man was an entire stranger to G—, but without a word of controversy or warning, G— shot him dead. Assisted by his friends he escaped. His first stopping place was old Fort Lupton, about twenty-five miles down the Platte River. The Vigilantes quickly got on his trail and surrounded the fort. Jim was mounted on a good horse, so he dashed out and made good his escape across the country to the head of Cherry Creek. There he remained secreted for a few days and then, with the assistance of other friends, made his way to the Arkansas River where he joined a freighting outfit for the States. His route became known and Sheriff Middaugh started in pursuit.
The Sheriff took the stage from Denver to Leavenworth and from there started back on the Sante Fe Road to head him off. He met the train, only to find that Jim had left it a few days before and had headed for the Indian Territory. Middaugh, determined not to give up the chase, soon got on his trail again and captured him near the Indian Territory line. It was necessary for him to return to Leavenworth, as that was the starting point of the Overland Stage; but on his arrival at Leavenworth, the German citizens, being so enraged, determined to take the matter of punishment into their own hands. An organized mob undertook the job, but owing to the resistance of Middaugh and others, G—'s life was temporarily saved, though the sheriff's clothes and his own were torn from their bodies and G— was dragged for a considerable distance by the neck.

The Sheriff succeeded finally, however, in getting his prisoner back to Denver. There a court was organized and three judges selected. After an impartial but strongly contested trial he was convicted and hanged. This was one of the most exciting hangings that we had, though it was not the first one.
ON New Year's Day, William Clancy, one of the members of the Town Company, gave a dinner at his camp down the river. My father was one of the invited guests. We all had a good time and father made an after-dinner speech on general topics. A history of Denver and Colorado would not be complete without further mention of this William Clancy, for he was a man of great ability, but his abilities were too often misapplied or inert. He and my father had been acquainted in Omaha, before they met here in the mountains, both having been members of the first Nebraska legislature when Nebraska was organized as a Territory in 1854–5. In Nebraska he was a politician in every sense of the word, and at one time was in good circumstances financially, having large interests in Omaha. He was sharp and shrewd. His greatest misfortune was that he was an ardent lover of Taos Lightning. We arrived at Cherry Creek at about the same time, and of course our Nebraska acquaintanceship was soon renewed and we became strong friends.

Clancy was progressive in his ideas and not bound very strongly by ethics or morals: in politics he was a Democrat, in religion (if he had any), a Catholic. In physique he was a man of medium size.

When under the influence of liquor he was fond of telling stories, particularly on himself. One of his stories was that in Omaha, when he was a candidate for the
legislature, his district was close and he had fears that he would be defeated. His opponent was a strong man and hard to beat. There was quite a floating vote of the laboring class. He owned a vacant lot on one of the principal streets, so he gave it out that he was going to build a large block of houses. A day or two before the election he hired all the laboring men that could be found and set them at work digging the cellar, and he had all the mechanics and contractors figuring on the estimates. When election day came they were his friends to a man and were hurrahing for Bill Clancy. He was elected; then he made some excuse for concluding not to build.

During the winter or early spring of 1859, we had some kind of an election. It was our first. It was about something that divided each side of the Creek and each side was trying to outvote the other. It was not an election authorized by law, as we had no law. There was some kind of an agreement: nobody being sworn. On our side Clancy and, I think, Judge Smith were the Judges of Election. Voting was quite spirited and it was going to be close work for our side to win. When noontime came the polls were closed for dinner: Clancy was not hungry: he thought he could use the time to better advantage. I was not a voter: my age would not permit it. Being young and inexperienced, I was requested by Clancy and one or two other men who were in the conspiracy with him, to accompany them to a cabin in a secluded place. He gave me a book out of which to read some names to them. My recollection is that it was some kind of a post office book which he, perhaps, kept for the purpose of using in this branch of his business. However, I innocently called off the names while they wrote them down. When the vote was counted in the evening the Denver City side was victorious by a large majority. I truthfully say that my father knew nothing whatever of the transaction until it was all over, nor did I understand the significance of it at the time, though I knew that Clancy must be up to something.

Clancy was accompanied to Cherry Creek by a Mr
Spooner, also of Omaha. They had their winter quarters down the Platte and it was known as Spooner & Clancy’s Camp.

In the early spring Cherry Creek began to flow a little. This made it advisable to put a footbridge across the Creek at the foot of Larimer Street. It was hardly more than a string of logs across the stream. To cross by this bridge without falling off necessitated being sober. Some time during the winter, McGrew, the “wheelbarrow man”, indulged in a little too much Taos Lightning and by lying out in a wagon box one night froze his feet. It was said that when he recovered it had left holes in his feet. Well, one day, Clancy and McGrew (both as full of whiskey as they could be) were crossing over this log bridge. First one would fall over into the Creek, and then the other. But they were determined, and with the single idea that so often possesses a drunken man, instead of wading out of the Creek after once getting wet, would persist in clambering onto the log again, only to again fall off. For some time they kept this up. Finally Clancy said: “McGrew, for the sake of heaven, wade out, it won’t wet you: the water will run out of the holes in your feet”. Knowing the parties and the circumstances as we did, it was highly amusing: and it was many a day before we let either of them forget the adventure.

When the Montana gold excitement broke out, Clancy followed the crowd, and sought his fortune in that “farther west”.

On New Year’s Eve, a little before midnight, we had begun our fun. There were only four or five of us living on the Denver side of the Creek at that time. We thought we would hail the coming year by the firing of guns and revolvers: we kept it up for some time. We certainly made things lively and aroused all the people in Auraria. They thought the Indians had made an attack and had killed us all. But they did not take the risk of investigating, and it was not until morning that they discovered the truth, when Jack Jones came over to look for us and told us how frightened everybody had been and what
preparations they had made to receive the Indians if they should make an attack on the Auraria side.

There was some excuse for such fears, to be sure, for the Indians did not fully acquiesce in our abiding permanently in their country, and our occupation of their land was sometimes protested by them. One such occasion was while I was cutting trees for our cabin. Several Indians came to me and by signs made known clearly enough that they questioned my right to take the trees, as the timber and the land belonged to their tribe. I paid but little attention to their protest, however, but mentioned the fact to my father. He always managed to keep on good terms with Little Raven, Left Hand and the other chiefs by inviting them to eat with us and making them presents.

Most of the Indians around us were Arapahoes: those in the mountains were Utes who never came into Denver City. The two tribes were not on good terms with each other, and the Utes were more hostile towards the white settlers. One day I was up the Platte near Plum Creek looking after some stock and an Indian, mounted on his pony, came dashing down the road from the direction of Platte Canyon. As he passed me he cried: “Ute! Ute! Ute!” He was working both legs, frantically spurring the pony and with his right hand wielding a quirt. His head was ahead of the pony’s in his eager strain to reach Denver to escape the pursuer. I could see no Indian in pursuit: but it may be that while he was closer to the mountains a small band of Utes had started a chase. The Utes were considered bad Indians but I was not afraid of them at that time and continued on my way.

If the settlers of Denver had had trouble with the Indians at all this winter it would have been with the Arapahoes who might have combined with some other tribe, such as the Cheyennes. But I attribute our relations with the Indians to good judgment and kind treatment. If we had mistreated them, there surely would have been trouble. There were many Indian traders among us, but they too were friends of the Indians of course.
and were no detriment to us, perhaps were largely instru­mental in keeping the Indians in goodwill towards us.

Moyne & Rice, our close neighbors, early started the first sawmill. They dug a pit and erected a platform. Then with oxen they rolled the log up lengthwise of the pit, barked it and chocked it, and then one man would stand on the log and the other in the pit and with a whip­saw the two would saw from 100 to 150 feet of lumber per day. We purchased their first cut of slab and made stools of it for our cabin, by boring holes in it into which we put legs. I think they charged twentyfive cents per foot for their lumber.

On the first day of spring, however, Judge Wyatt arrived with a steam mill and located at the head of Cherry Creek among the pines. He was soon followed by Mr D. C. Oakes who located one on Plum Creek. From that time on, better houses were built. The first house with an upstairs to it (with exception of Dick Wooten's two­story log cabin) was built by a colored man by the name of Ford, on Larimer Street between D and F streets, now Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets. I think it was in this building that my father rented the second story for a Presbyterian minister to hold services in. This minister arrived among the early spring immigrants. I became sexton. I made candlesticks out of a block of wood by driving three nails in it between which the candle could be stuck. Father and I also furnished the candles. About the second sabbath evening the preacher wanted to pass the hat around: father objected, saying that he would get the room and furnish the lights and the heat, and suggested that they run it in an economical way until we had a good congregation; that taking a collection might prevent this by keeping a great many away. To this the preacher objected: “No pay, no preach” was his dic­tum, so we had to abandon services for want of a pastor. In church matters, General Sopries and family, who were among the earliest arrivals, were quite prominent. The young ladies of his family rendered some very fine music, which made the services attractive.
As I look back over the events of those distant days, I recall many familiar names and faces, though sometimes with confusion as to the exact sequence of dates.

During the latter part of the winter we had received quite an immigration from New Mexico; most of them brought a little stock of goods of one kind or other,—flour, onions, beans and a number of other products which were very desirable, besides the one which was not at all desirable to the better class of citizens, such for instance as was brought by Dick Wooten as already mentioned. Dick located on the west side of the Creek and built a two-story log house, some 20 x 30 ft. in size. The entrance to the second story was on the outside. On completion of his cabin he gave a ball or dancing party. It was a lively if not gay affair. Ladies were scarce, but with the two or three white women and Wooten’s Mexican family and Jack Jones’ and John Smith’s squaws, enough were found to make one set.

Louie St. James and Ed. St. Vrain were two other arrivals from Mexico. They located on Larimer street on the bluff overlooking Cherry Creek. They were originally from St. Louis. Ed. St. Vrain was a nephew of Colonel St. Vrain. Theirs was the first large stock of goods placed on our market. They built a cabin of hewed logs which was a great improvement over any hitherto built.

Other acquisitions in the way of merchants during this winter were Clayton & Lowe from Leavenworth, who brought in a train; also Jones & Courtright brought in a train. A stock of goods was likewise brought in by the Kiskadden Brothers, but they remained only a short time, then continued on to Salt Lake where they located permanently. There were also a few French traders who came in from the North Platte and other points. Among these were Joe and John Richards (or Renshaw, as we called them). They had a fine stock of Indian goods, the best I ever saw. They built a hewed log house on Lawrence Street, between E and F. Another Frenchman by the name of Felix Lameroux had quite a nice stock of goods. He was located at the corner of Larimer and F streets.
There was one peculiarity about all the traders: they had more fears of Indians than we from the States had. They perhaps knew more about them. Mary Poisel, a daughter of a Frenchman by an Indian mother, was in constant fear. She told me one day that if the Indians made a raid on us she would be the first to be slain on account of her mother being a full blood of another tribe.

I remember that soon after St. James and St. Vrain located among us, they came over to our cabin one evening very much excited, saying that some Mexicans had arrived from the Arkansas River and told them that quite a band of Indians had congregated there and were going to make an attack on the settlers at Cherry Creek. St. Vrain was particularly excited over it: he wanted some large size buckshot which we had, as he was preparing for the attack. As they were leaving our cabin, my father and I walked with them towards their store, as the subject was of great interest to us and we thought they ought to be better posted on the subject than we. Before separating we heard the Indian drums beating and could hear Indians singing. St. Vrain said: "There they are now, up the Creek, preparing for an attack". It so happened that I had been up the Creek late the preceding evening and noticed two or three lodges of Indians located about where the sound came from. I was satisfied that they were the Indians whose drums we could hear. So my story had a tendency to reassure him. But it was not long afterwards that he sold out and left the country.

Among the early arrivals whom I can now recall was James M. Broadwell. It was he who built the Broadwell House, on the corner of G and Larimer streets. This was the first hotel of any consequence in Denver City.

Thus with the coming of spring all kinds of merchandising were well represented: hotels were being built; theatres, such as they were, were running in full blast; church services were held on Sundays; and, as many farming claims had been taken on the bottom lands, in due season a few vegetables were raised and brought to town; watermelons and milk and butter began to make their appearance.
In view of all the work we were finding to do, and the new acquaintances we were daily forming, we were a happy people and there was nothing to trouble us, except that we were getting anxious to hear from the States. Three months from the time we left home, we still had not received a letter from those whom we had left behind. Before we left Leavenworth Fort Laramie was the nearest post office known to us, so we had given directions that all our mail be sent there. But the difficulty now was to find transportation for it from Fort Laramie to Denver. Jim Saunders, who like John Smith and Jack Jones, had been a long time in the country and had roamed all over the west with his Indian family, said he would go to the post office for us if we would give him fifty cents for each letter and twenty-five cents for each paper: so he got a list of all the names of the persons in our district and on 23 Nov. started with his squaw in a little wagon drawn by four Indian ponies for his two hundred mile journey. He was gone about six weeks. When he started it was one of the few times when the weather was quite cold and there was some snow on the ground. No mail has ever arrived in Denver that was more anxiously awaited than that which he brought on his first trip. Nor, perhaps, has any one felt any keener disappointment in life than did those who, on that occasion, failed to receive the expected and longed-for letters from the loved ones at home. And as fortune would have it, we were among the disappointed ones. Saunders returned on January 8th, but he had nothing whatever for father and me. Our grief was reflected in the following letter which father wrote to my brother on that day:

Denver City, Kansas Territory,
8th January, 1859.

Dear Son:

Our mail is in, and only think, John, we did not get either letters or papers from you or any other. On the 10th of December Mr Geary saw two or three letters and quite a lot of papers reported for me at Ft. Laramie. Oh! the sad disappointment when the next thirty days will have to pass without another mail. Will and I feel so badly over
it; still, we cannot help it. I never felt such a sore disappointment, neither did Mr Dorsett or Mr Lawrence get any. Mr Lawrence left this morning for Leavenworth. He had a three mule wagon, a Mr. Hall of your city and young Wyman of St. Louis. I hope he will get through safely.

I have written a volume to the family since I left home and they will all reach you I know. When you write get plain envelopes: that card on your envelopes may have returned the letters to you, if so write me. Tell me all about the Thurston and Thomas matter. I saw a Times & Ledger of December 15th, today. Over one hundred letters came with plenty of papers, so we have some news. I see Col. Thorne and lady were at Platte City, and that the sleighing was about over in your city, etc. I have no heart to write more today.

_Sunday morning, 9th January:_ I feel better and must dismiss my gloomy feeling of yesterday. I am at a loss to know what became of the mails, but they may turn up yet. The express men are all a set of drunken gamblers. They were to bring down a lot of stock, mules and horses, but they gambled them all off. I am writing to the Postmaster at Laramie as I can assign no reason for others not getting letters; besides, my papers would not have anything on them to “return in two weeks”; but hereafter write with common envelopes and put “Denver City via Ft. Laramie”. This will keep them from being returned. “Denver City mouth of Cherry Creek via Ft. Laramie” is best. I also have seen plenty of Omaha and Council Bluffs papers with dates up to the 17th of December. I see in the Omaha Times lots of letters from here, all of the strongest kind and the news is that everybody is coming. I say, come ahead: some will succeed well and all of them will, if they will only work. We have now about two inches of snow, but it will all be gone in a few days. It seems it cannot get cold here for some reason.

I have written to Ft. Laramie about my letters. Tell Mr Reed that C. A. Lawrence left for home on the 8th instant, and all is well here. Fulsom Dorsett is going to the pinery today in company with Isaac F. Davis to get roofing for their houses. Will and I are busily engaged at Will’s house. I sent lots of letters by C. A. Lawrence with $8 in gold dust for you.

Your father,

P.S. All in fine spirits again.

Wm. L., Jr.

This Jim Saunders, who started the first express, was in the country when we arrived. He had been trading with the Indians on the North Platte when the gold excitement broke out. He was a native of Pennsylvania and had drifted into the far Western plains during the Mormon war, or with General Harney’s expedition against the
Indians at Ash Hollow. He was well posted on Indians and the country; and later, after leaving Denver, he was a guide for General Sully's expedition against the Indians in the upper Missouri. I knew him well, and met him at Leavenworth soon after Sully's expedition. He and Jack Henderson got to be strong friends and finally, in some way, became brothers-in-law.

While we always looked upon Saunders' Express as one of our first and most important institutions and always anticipated its arrival with delight, it was, in a way, the cause of our community's first sorrow. It was a rare thing to find any one in our country who did not have a bond of connection of some kind with some one else; no one crossed the plains single handed, each had his partner in the outfit; sometimes as many as eight or ten, but generally four to six, were banded together. In the case I am now speaking of, there was a party from St. Louis composed entirely of steamboat men of a high order. Captain Theodore Parkinson, Captain Will Parkinson, Captain Bassett and John Scudder, and, I think, Park McClure, were in the party. They had all been bosom friends in the States: they had crossed the plains together: to all appearances they were friends up to the very time of the tragic events I am relating. But now, between Bassett and Scudder some trouble arose in regard to a letter that had been received by Saunders' Express. The particulars I have partially forgotten, but I think Bassett accused Scudder of opening some of his letters. At any rate a bitter feeling arose. In the quarrel that ensued on 16th April, Scudder shot Bassett in the breast. After the shooting, the wounded man was taken to his cabin, which was on Larimer Street only two or three cabins from ours. Here he was kindly cared for: all aid that human hands in this remote frontier town could render was done for his comfort. His cabin was a comfortable one. The 'bed was just inside the door to the left and was make in a rude manner against the wall. It was filled with hay for a matress and he had a blanket for a sheet. In the early part of the evening, while I was preparing our
supper, his attendant came rushing into our cabin telling us that Capt. Bassett was dying. My father, Mr Collier and I rushed to his cabin and in a few minutes he passed peacefully away. It was a sad time for us all and not soon to be forgotten.

Scudder quickly left the country: went to Salt Lake where he remained a year or two, but eventually returned and gave himself up. He stood trial and was acquitted, but soon afterwards again left the country.

Captain Bassett was a member of the Town Company, stood high in the esteem of his friends, (as indeed Scudder also did,) and like the balance of us was living in bright anticipation of the future. His life was thus cut short before he had received any benefit from his adventures and privations. Had he lived he would, no doubt, have taken a conspicuous part in the development of Colorado.
CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Gold prospecting—The first white woman at Denver—A theatrical troupe—
The first hanging—"Noisy Tom"—Locating a cemetery

DURING the winter it was hard to distinguish the Georgia and Lawrence Parties from our own Leavenworth Party. We had all been "pioneers" in the sense that we were all early arrivals and felt that we had first claim on everthing in sight; and as winter had shut us out from all communication with the outer world, we grew better and better acquainted with each other and a sort of brotherly affection arose between us. This was particularly noticeable in the spring when the immigrants of 1859 commenced to arrive; and in order to maintain our precedence in importance as well as in time, we felt as though we had to stand together in protection of our mutual interests.

The mildness of the winter gave us an excellent opportunity to prospect in the valley for gold, and many availed themselves of this opportunity. On Clear Creek there was quite a camp called Arapahoe, where considerable prospecting was done. But after all, but little was known of the mountains. Hunters ventured into the foothills a few miles, but not many prospectors risked the farther recesses of the mountains until towards spring. We all felt as though we had to learn the climate by experience and we dared not wander too far, as we knew nothing of the depths of snow, or suddenness of storms. Game was plentiful everywhere but especially in the foothills, so we had no trouble gaining our sustenance. We had elk, deer, bear and antelope meats practically all of the time.
But domestic meats were almost priceless, bacon was exceedingly prized. I remember a man came to me and wanted to buy a few pounds of bacon and offered me seventy-five cents a pound. There was no object in our selling it as we had use enough for it ourselves, but he wanted some so very much that I finally concluded to accommodate him with a little.

Among those who had cabins at Arapahoe were Col. Sam Curtis and his cabin mate, Dick Courtright. They spent perhaps half their time at Arapahoe though nominally residents of Denver or Auraria. On one occasion when Col. Curtis was in Denver he invited me to go home with him with the promise that he would make a trip with me into the mountains. It was a beautiful day when we set out from Denver. We waded the river and took a direct course across the country for there was no wagon road at that time. When we arrived at his cabin I was very much disappointed, as it was so small that there was scarcely room enough for us all to get in with any degree of comfort. It made me homesick. During the night it commenced to snow and by morning at least a foot of snow covered the ground. We discussed our intended trip to the mountains and decided it was best not to start at that time, so I struck back across the prairie towards Denver encouraged by the lessening depth of snow the nearer I approached home; but it was, nevertheless, a weary, lonesome tramp that made even our humble log cabin in Denver seem like a palace when I reached it.

Montana was another little mining camp quite similar in many ways to Arapahoe. About all the gold that had been taken out of the ground up to the end of this winter had been from the vicinity of Montana. Many thought Montana would outstrip Denver in growth and importance. Even two of our own party, Jewett and Whitsett, though retaining their membership in the Denver Town Company, took up their residence almost from the first at Montana. But when spring came the place was almost totally abandoned: some of its residents came to Denver but the most of them took to the mountains to prospect for gold
in more paying quantities and abandoned their claims at Montana.

Among those who came to Denver from Montana was Mrs Katherine Murat, a German. I think she was the first white woman in this country from the States. I never knew this fact was disputed until I noticed in the list of names of pioneers in attendance at the First Annual Reunion, held in Denver on Tuesday, Jan. 25, 1881, the name of Mrs William Coleman of Fair Play who claimed she dated from September of 1858. However this may be, Mrs Murat with her husband, Henry Murat (or Count Murat, as we called him) did spend the winter at Montana and became permanent residents of Denver in the spring and the Count opened a barber shop. Among his notable customers was Mr Horace Greeley, who in his description of “Life in Denver” (N. Y. Tribune of July 21, 1859) says:

“I had the honor to be shaved by the nephew (so he assured me) of Murat, Bonaparte’s King of Naples,—the honor and the shave together costing me but a paltry dollar”.

Among the other early arrivals at Denver were John and Louis Reithmann. They erected a cabin on Blake Street and opened a bakery which was a success from the start. They were well prepared to receive the spring immigrants and many a hungry man was fed by them. They had come from Plattsmouth, Nebraska, and in the same party were Wm. M. Slaughter, Joseph Harper, George and Dave Griffin, Wm. Listin, Wm. Stocking and one or two others.

About Christmas, William Graham, our pioneer druggist, arrived from St. Louis. He was accompanied by an old gentleman by the name of Hawkins, who had the reputation among the buffalo hunters and the traders of making the best gun on the market for killing buffaloes. A Hawkins rifle was the standard gun and no mountaineer or Indian trader considered his outfit complete unless he had one or more of them. On their arrival Mr Graham and Mr Hawkins took up their abode in the cabin built by Moyne & Rice opposite our cabin, thus I grew all
the better acquainted with them. Mr Graham had been in the drug business in St. Louis for a number of years but had just retired from active business when the gold excitement broke out. So he, like so many others, concluded to chance his fortunes in the search for gold. But habits of a lifetime are clinging, so it was not long after his arrival that he conceived the idea of starting in the drug business again. We became quite intimate and would spend much of our leisure time together. After the manner of some country communities where the custom is to gather in the wayside grocery store and discuss the news of the week around a red-hot stove, we, in Denver, and especially Mr Graham and I, were accustomed to do our gossiping while seated in the door of our cabin, where the bottom log of the cabin extended across the door opening, partly as a door sill but mainly as a binding rod to hold the two ends of the cabin wall together. I remember that often we would sit together on this door log while he would make up his order for a stock of goods for the store. With a small memorandum book in his hand, he would say: "Now, how do you think this or that article would sell in this country? and how much shall I order?" I remember he would want to confine his order within a certain amount, but would often branch off on some article that, strictly speaking, did not belong to the drug business, but he could see money in it and would order some of it. His goods arrived and his store was in running order early in the spring. His business proved a great success, as is well known to all the people of Denver. Mr Graham was a perfect gentleman and a loyal friend. He never missed an opportunity. In his later years he showed his respect and affection for my father and myself by making a special trip to Leavenworth to call on us and spent some time with us talking over the old, old days of early Denver.

About the last to arrive from the States during the winter was Mr Bacon and a party of five from Pontiac, Mich. Mr Bacon's party was the first to make the trip by the Smoky Hill route. They left Leavenworth on October 24th and arrived at Denver on the 15th of January.
They followed the Smoky until they reached the head of that stream, then, by the aid of a compass they managed to strike Cherry Creek about twenty-three miles from Denver. The weather being favorable they came through without much suffering, though usually this was not a good route (as was learned afterwards) because water was very scarce. When the stage company was formed and their service was inaugurated, their first attempt was to travel by this route, but they were soon compelled to abandon it and use the Platte River road.

But not alone did there come to Denver the seekers for gold and the wild adventurer. As early as April, 1859, there came one, Wm. N. Byers, whose mission it was to enlighten the world even to its uttermost recesses, by that greatest of all enlighteners, the printing press. But of all things in the world in which there should be competition in this frontier town, one would expect the least in this "art preservative of the arts" and yet almost contemporarily with the arrival of Mr Byers with his entire outfit in a single wagon, there also arrived his competitor John L. Merrick. It was a strife between the two as to which would get out the first issue of a weekly newspaper. As fate would have it, The Rocky Mountain News by Mr Byers and the Cherry Creek Pioneer by Mr Merrick appeared on the very same day, April 23rd, 1859. But as the News was by far the more promising and the larger, the Pioneer gave up the ghost and the Rocky Mountain News became a prominent factor in the early development of Colorado. Mr Merrick afterwards joined the staff of the News as a compositor and reporter.

The first theatrical people who arrived in the country were Miller, Haydee and sisters. They had some little reputation in the Missouri River towns. I do not think they had any support and did not take to the stage until some little time after their arrival. The first actors of considerable reputation, however, were the Thorne Family. Col. C. R. Thorne had located at Leavenworth in the spring of 1858. His home there was known then, and perhaps now, as "Thorne Hill" and was located about two miles
west of the City. But the Colonel with his sons, Tom and Bill, decided to venture across the plains. Tom was what we in these days would call a “dude” but he became an expert with the bull-whip in driving their ox-team loaded with stuff across the plains. I remember when they arrived. The first theatre building or place of amusement was on Larimer between E and F streets. Here they were to unload their traps. Tom drove up looking about as bronzed and hard as a bull-whacker generally gets, threw down his whip and swore that now his journey was done and that he would never drive an ox another foot. The old Colonel, noticing that he had not put his wagon in the proper position for unloading and thinking to reprove him for his rash vow, gently said: “Now, Tom, just move your team up a little”. Tom looked at the old man, then looked at the team, but with never an eye for the crowd of bystanders and without a word, picked up the whip and skilfully manoeuvred the team into position to the admiration of all on-lookers. Then the crowd shouted and cheered. I think, however, that was in fact the last of Tom’s ox driving. The Thorne Family did not remain with us long, and shortly after they left Langrish & Daugherty came to amuse us with their “Pat Casey” and “Night Hands” and other popular songs.

Thus business and pleasure were mingled in alternate rounds to occupy our time through the winter and the spring. At no time did we feel deeply depressed nor excitedly hopeful, but we did all have a sincere feeling of assurance that the future of our town and country was to be progressively bettered by the influx of settlers. This optimistic spirit tempted us to get and hold as much of the land as we could: for everything was open to us. Thus farming claims as well as mining claims were taken to such an extent that almost all the bottom land both up and down the river was preempted.

Among those who had been foremost in locating such claims was Jack Henderson, who took up his abode on “Henderson Island” in the Platte River. Everybody knew Jack. He had made quite a reputation for himself
in Kansas in the border troubles of 1854 and 1855. Though a native of Pennsylvania he had come west and formed the Pro-slavery Party and published a paper in the interests of that party in Leavenworth. He was a warm friend of my father's though they differed in politics. In 1849, when in Pittsburgh, my father had loaned him money on which to go to California, but ran across him next after we had moved to Nebraska when, on a business trip to Leavenworth once, he chanced to see him. Jack seemed very glad to renew the acquaintanceship and was very insistent that father should move his family to Leavenworth and join with him in the Pro-slavery movement although he well knew my father's attitude on the question. Of course it amused my father as he had spent the better part of his life in active work for the cause of freedom and had voted and stumped for James G. Birney at the last presidential election. Of course father declined his solicitations, but Jack could never take a rebuff and always regarded father as one of his staunchest friends, and he always referred to him in conversation with the greatest of kindness, and he never grew tired of telling about how father loaned him and eight or ten others the money with which to go to California, though he claimed that he was the only one of the party who had ever repaid the loan.

Of every person who held a share in the Town Company, it was required that a cabin be built within sixty days and that it should be in size not less than 16 x 16 feet. There were about forty who had to build, and I was one of this number. Our cabin-mate, Collier, also had to build. As we believed in progress, we wanted something more than dirt for our roofs so we decided to rive out shakes. To do this we had to go to the head of Cherry Creek. The first night out we camped with some forty or fifty lodges of Indians in timber about ten miles up the Creek. Next morning we were covered with about six inches of snow but had slept warmly on the south side of a big log. This was really the biggest snow storm we had throughout the winter, but we had no difficulty in making our way to the pines and in a few days had secured all the material
we needed. We had found large straight pines three feet through and forty feet to a limb. Chopping and riving the shakes was a new sport for us and we enjoyed it. Soon after this other parties began making shingles and it was not long before dirt roof houses were a thing of the past.

I think the very first frame house with a shingle roof was built by Mr Alexander C. Graff of Pittsburgh, Pa., who had arrived early in the spring. His house was a small structure on Larimer street or Lawrence street near the bluff of Cherry Creek. He used it as a residence.

On our return from the pines, father was delighted to see us; he said he had been so lonesome, as, for four nights there had not been a single person on the townsite but himself. The few residents of Denver had gone to the foothills to hunt or to the pines for lumber. Collier and I soon finished our cabins and had the first ones with board roofs.

Some time during the subsequent spring, needing some more logs, we sent our Mexican teamster to the Plum Creek district again for a load. He had been gone a week or more when his continued absence aroused our fears as to his safety, so I started out to look for him. Near the mouth of Plum Creek I found the wagon and ox-yokes and chains. The place looked as though he had camped there his first night out, but no signs showed that he had been there recently. I set out to look for the oxen, fearing he had driven them off; but I soon found them and started back to town. We could not account for his abandoning us in that way. There had been several inches of snow but it did not remain on the ground long, but we learned afterwards that it was what accounted for his absence. He had been stricken with snow-blindness: and a week or so later he was found by another Mexican who led him back to our cabin.

Not only did the stockholders in the Town Company have to build cabins to hold their claim, but there was another rule to the effect that persons not members of the Town Company would be given two lots if they would
build a cabin not less than 16 x 16 feet; and the members of the Town Company were allowed to select six lots to each original share. By this method most of the best lots were disposed of. I selected four of mine on the corner of Larimer and what is now called Sixteenth street, and the other two on Blake street.

On December 14th, 1858, D. C. Collier and my father waded the river and staked off a townsite which they called Highland. In speaking of it in a letter I have before me, father says:

"We had a cold bath: I waded with my boots on and after crossing I put on dry buffalo shoes, but feared my feet were frozen. I took off my coat and put my feet in the sleeves and Mr Collier rubbed until he restored circulation. The river was frozen with the exception of about thirty feet which we waded in three feet of water. Collier took off his trousers. We had a blanket which we lay on the ice to change our clothes."

We never made anything of this location, however, and it was soon abandoned.

During the winter there were several of our party who returned to the States. Ned Wynkoop left before Christmas, Charlie Lawrence and old Mr Greening left soon after. Their absence was only temporary, however, as they were among the first arrivals in the spring.

Those who were appointed by Governor Denver to organize the County of Arapahoe did so, but, as there were no funds in the treasury, they were not as ardent in the further prosecution of their duties as they should have been. H. P. A. Smith had the title of Judge and Ned Wynkoop that of Sheriff, but if there was any hanging to do, the people did it and were not long about it.

The first man who was hanged was a German or Hungarian, Stoefel by name. There were four of these Germans and all related in some way. They came to the country together and had occupied a cabin built by Hickory Rogers across the street from us, on the corner of Larimer and Fifteenth. So they had been our nearest neighbors for some time and we got to be quite friendly. They would occasionally come to our cabin and spend an
hour or so with us. We never knew much of their history, however, nor where they came from. These were matters which were not much discussed on the frontier, too many wished the days of the past to be forgotten. These Germans spent most of their time hunting and finally they moved down to Clear Creek. We had never noticed any disputes among them, but one day in the early spring two of them went out together, but in the evening only one returned. Suspicion was aroused and search was made in the direction they were last seen together. Not far from the trail they had been on, the body of the missing one was found. He had been shot in the back of the head. A team was sent for the corpse and the suspect was arrested. The foundation of a newly begun cabin was used for the court house. S. W. Wagoner was put on the bench as Judge. I have forgotten who was the prosecuting attorney, but the prisoner selected my father to defend him. A jury was set on a log and the trial proceeded. The first witness who was examined was a mountaineer and a shrewd fellow; I have forgotten his name. The prisoner wore Indian moccasins and the witness testified that the tracks in the sand where the body was found were moccasin tracks of a given size. They measured the prisoner’s feet, and the prosecuting attorney was showing it up to such good advantage that the prisoner gave in and confessed. Of course that settled his case. The jury found him guilty and the judge immediately sentenced him to be hanged. This was the 8th of April, 1859.

From the very beginning of the trial the crowd was so positive that he was guilty that they had already made ready a rope with which to hang him. “Noisy Tom” was anxious for the job of hangman. After sentence was pronounced upon the prisoner, he was granted fifteen minutes for spiritual consolation. He was taken into the second story of Dick Wooten’s cabin. Rev. George Fisher’s services were called for and he and my father and the prisoner went up the stairs which were on the outside of the cabin. The crowd had given them fifteen minutes but before this brief time had expired they got impatient
and called "time". In response to the din my father appeared at the upper door and spoke to the throng in entreaty for fifteen more minutes for the prisoner's spiritual welfare. This was granted and when the time was up the three came out and walked solemnly down the steps. "Noisy Tom" stood at the foot of the steps with a rope all ready, and there my father and Mr Fisher shook hands with the prisoner and bade him a last farewell and then walked away, having no desire to see the hanging.

The rope was placed around the German's neck and he was taken off to a large cottonwood tree near the river (I think it was the very same tree we had camped under when we arrived in the country). On the way he was led past where his victim lay dead. The rope was thrown over a limb and a wagon was drawn up by many willing hands; and on it he took his stand by the side of "Tom". He was given some little time in which to talk. He tried to make a speech. His broken English would occasionally cause laughter and he himself smiled when he told the crowd that they should not make sport of his faulty language. While "Noisy Tom" was adjusting the rope he told him to hold up his head and made the remark that he had hung many a man but that he was more trouble than any of them. So the fellow would hold up his head, though trying to talk all the time. No cap was placed over his head, nor were either his hands or his feet tied. While this was going on he noticed me standing back in the crowd and he took off the belt which he had around his waist and threw it to me and told me he had a shot gun in his cabin on Clear Creek which he wanted me to get and give to my father. In fact, he willed thus to father everything he had for defending him before the court.

By this time the mob was becoming impatient and, with words in his mouth, they pulled the wagon from under him and let him swing into eternity.

His belt I gave to some one standing by, but his message I repeated to father, who said that he had no use for the gun and that he did not want it. I believe this was the first hanging in that part of the country. I have been
told that "Noisy Tom" afterwards met the same fate as the poor German whom he seemed so delighted to hang.

This was, perhaps, one of the most novel court scenes ever witnessed. It could not be considered as lynching: the prisoner had a fair trial, admitted his guilt freely and frankly, and deserved the punishment which was meted out to him though there was no formal law in force in that part of the country except as made at the time by the people. He had all the protection which could be given. We had no jail and no funds, and prompt action was necessary as a safeguard to all law-abiding citizens, hence the short shrift that was given him after conviction.

The New York Daily Tribune of Tuesday, May 17, 1859, gives the following account of the affair:

"Lynch Law in the Gold Mines: Judge Lynch, It Appears, Rules at Pike's Peak. A correspondent of the Leavenworth Times, writing from Denver City, says that a German named John Stuffle was hung on the 8th of April for the murder of his father-in-law, Antoine Beingraff. It is supposed that Stuffle and Philip Beingraff, son of the old man, murdered the father to get his money. Stuffle was tried, being prosecuted by Henry Allen, Esq., and defended by General Larimer, found guilty, allowed a half hour to prepare for death, then placed standing in a wagon under a tree to which a rope was attached and the wagon driven from beneath him. Stuffle made a speech full of raving and blasphemy. It was thought that Beingraff would be hung the next day. The family had emigrated from Louisville, Ky."

After securing a site for a great city with its additions and all the necessaries except population and wealth, it occurred to my father that there was still one thing wanting to complete our mission,—namely a Cemetery. We knew it was a healthful country: nevertheless there was likely to be a death now and then, some sudden like the above, and some from old age. At any rate a city without a cemetery was unknown. So he and I had slipped away by ourselves one day and staked one off on the hill along the road up Cherry Creek. This seemed the most eligible site and not too far off. We called it Mount Prospect Cemetery. Later we took Mr Clancy in with us on this claim. He thought we should have only 160
acres in it but father insisted on 320 acres. Father was President and Clancy the Secretary. The latter was to represent the Catholics and the former the Protestants. But our trouble was going to be to hold the land by a valid claim. A cabin was unnecessary for a graveyard: dead bodies were necessary; so we watched quietly for the first victims. They were the German who was hanged for killing his father-in-law and the father-in-law who was killed, though a few days earlier Edward Hay of De Soto, Nebraska, who had taken cold while hunting and died very suddenly in camp near the mountains, had already been buried in this cemetery. But now these made the start: father selected the spots for their graves: and the murderer and his victim were buried in the same grave.

Now we thought we had triple grounds on which to base our claim to the cemetery property; and it did prove satisfactory until an undertaker appeared on the scene and started an establishment for supplying coffins. We thought that by interesting him in our project he would give us his business and thus get our cemetery well under way. But this proved to be our undoing in what had looked like a dead-sure business, as it was not long before he managed to beat us out of our interest through some rascally technicality during our absence in the States. Thus neither Clancy nor my father ever derived any benefit from this venture, though it is the resting place of many a body.
CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Small towns surrounding Denver—High cost of living—Large number of immigrants—Anger of the disappointed—A deceptive guest

Most of the towns which now exist outside of the mountains and in the vicinity of Denver take their date of founding from the winter of 1858–9. The sites of Arapahoe, Golden City, Bradford, Boulder, Pueblo, Colorado City, Centre City and some others of lesser note were selected at that time. Father and I and some others located a town at the base of the mountains between Golden City and the Platte and called it Baden Baden. It was selected as a possible starting point into the mountains and it was here that the first wagons made the attempt to enter. While we were interested in this site, we nevertheless made no great pretensions for the town and as for making it a pleasure resort, such a foolish idea never entered our heads at that early day, though there seemed to be something romantic as well as mountainous about the name. However, it was soon found that better passes existed, and the town died a natural death.

The little town of Montana, up the Platte River, was founded by the Lawrence Party, as already stated. What little gold had been taken out up to that time had been taken from within a few miles of Montana. But the town lasted for only a short season and its site became a part of Jason Younker’s ranch. Cherry Creek acquired the reputation of being the place where gold was discovered: it is probably true that the first prospects were found there, as there had been many prospect holes dug at various
spots up and down the Creek; but they were nothing more than prospects, as no one attempted to make a serious business of digging gold on the Creek after our arrival and the holes which then existed were not large enough to show any considerable amount of work.

Perhaps Pueblo may fairly claim to be the oldest town in the Territory. There was one adobe building, a few Mexicans and one white man, McDougal by name, there when we arrived. McDougal was a polished gentleman and why a man of that kind came to such a place at such a time has always been a mystery to me. He claimed to have come from California and to have been the brother of the McDougal who was at one time, I think, Senator from that State.

Fort Lupton about twenty-five miles down the Platte River was an abandoned adobe fort whose walls were well preserved. My understanding was that it had been used as a trader’s fort and not by the government. A little later Messrs Blake & Williams made claim to it and used it for ranching purposes.

Fort St. Vrain was similar to Fort Lupton and was used by Colonel St. Vrain though it was abandoned many years before the discovery of gold. Up to this time but little was known of the country in western Kansas. Pikes Peak was not discovered until 1807 and Longs Peak in 1820. A few roving traders may have seen them before those dates but we owe to Lieut. Pike and Major Long, respectively, of the U. S. Army the reporting of their existence to the rest of the world. Probably the first ascent of Pikes Peak was made by Dr. James the botanist, mineralogist and surgeon of Long’s Expedition on the 13th of July, 1820. The party then continued southward to the Arkansas River. After descending the river some 70 or 80 miles, the main party under Major Long marched south to the headwaters of the Canadian River which they followed for several hundred miles to its junction with the Arkansas River.

At the time of our arrival at the mouth of Cherry Creek, exclusive of scattered gold hunters, our nearest neighbors
in the different directions were, Pueblo which was not far from the New Mexico line, Taos, Bent’s Fort and Fort Laramie which we used as our postoffice though it was a three week's journey to reach it.

With the except of the Georgia and the Lawrence Parties the first settlements of western Kansas (or what is now Colorado) were made by citizens from the Missouri River towns, and many more of them were from Nebraska and western Iowa than from Kansas. St. Louis was represented by about a dozen, but there were a few from many other parts of the States. For example, Mr Bacon and his party of five who arrived on Saturday, January 15, 1859, were from Pontiac, Michigan. Some were from Maryland and Virginia and New York. We Larimers were from Pennsylvania as were also Jack Henderson and A. O. McGrew the “wheelbarrow man” who received so much notoriety through the press for his performance in attempting to wheel a barrow and outfit across the plains. He was a printer by trade and a man of considerable ability, a fine scholar and much of a gentleman. He soon returned to the States and at the breaking out of the rebellion he entered the service of the Union and acquitted himself with credit.

Besides the citizens from the Missouri valley and the Eastern States, I must not forget another class that helped to swell our numbers. They were the French Indian traders from all over the country. I have already mentioned John and Joe Richards (or Renshaw), Felix Lameroux, Old John Poisel and his half-breed daughter, Mary, Old Man Papau and many others. They were all interesting people. To see John and Joe Renshaw’s families going visiting was a sight: each had several squaws and plenty of children. They kept quite a large band of ponies, and they were good ponies, too. Most of them were what we called “paint ponies”, — those beautifully marked ponies such as are selected now-a-days for a first-class circus. These fancy ponies were for the use of the families. It was nothing uncommon to see the band driven in from the prairies and a dozen or more of them selected and sad-
dled so that the whole family could go off to visit some of their Indian relatives and be gone sometimes a week or two. The Renshaws built a large, log, building of fine logs on Lawrence Street and kept perhaps the largest stock of Indian goods that ever was in Denver. It was a curiosity shop that was well worth seeing.

Towards spring our supply of provisions had become somewhat depleted, but relief came through the immigrants from Mexico. Mort Fisher was one of these. He arrived on 24th of April with a few wagons loaded with flour, onions, beans and such things as were raised in that country. I remember well when he arrived: he stopped his train not far from our cabin. A rush was made for him and considering the situation he was quite reasonable in his prices. He sold his flour at about $16.00 per hundred pounds and it was taken readily from his wagons. It was not long before his entire cargo was distributed among the people. Onions were much desired as we had no vegetables that early in the spring and they were considered a good preventative for scurvy of which there had been a few cases. We purchased two sacks of his flour, although we had a good quantity on hand, and hid it under our bed for use in case of emergency. Mort remained in the country and became one of our most active, enterprising citizens. Similar testimony as to the beneficence of Mort's coming is to be found in Andrew Sagendorf's "Reminiscences of Early Denver", first printed in Field and Farm and reprinted in the Commonwealth Magazine, where he says:—

"We did not prospect much during the first winter, but I remember that Col. Dudley and myself walked to the "Spanish Diggings" on Christmas morning, and washed out some gold which the Colonel sent home to be made into a ring for his little child. Early in the spring the Smoky Hill party came in with their hand carts, and they were a destitute lot of men. We shared our supplies with them and thus the stock we expected to last a year was nearly exhausted when Mort Fisher came into town, late in April, with a train of flour from Taos, New Mexico. We had neither money nor flour; he had both and he sold us the flour we needed on credit, taking from each of us nothing but a pledge to pay when we could. Moreover he only charged us
sixteen dollars a sack when he might have charged twice that amount. There will always be a warm place in my heart for Mort. Fisher. Directly after obtaining a supply of flour a party of us loaded our wagons and started for the mountains on a prospecting tour. We headed for Vasquez Fork now known as Clear Creek, and passed through what is now Sloan's lake, then dry as an ash-pit. Of course there were no roads over the mountains, and it was by dint of hard work and good engineering that we got through to our destination."

Jesus Aubreyo arrived at about the same time and opened a store on the corner of McGaa Street and F or H Street. He was the first Mexican who located with us and was very much of a gentleman and a good citizen.

The abundance of game in the country did much towards making the provisions we brought from the States hold out. Though not ourselves much given to hunting, we always were well provided for by our friends with deer, antelope, elk, mountain sheep and occasionally with a bear. Hunters were very fond of our Hawkins rifle and for the use of it we were always supplied with game. Almost any time on the roof of our cabin, where we kept our game, you could find plenty. The Indians, whom we always had with us, would occasionally take a ham of venison during our absence. This we thought nothing of as my father was very kind to them and took delight in feeding them. In fact, we kept an open house most of the time and whoever was around at meal time never went away hungry. This was a noticeable feature of the country, one could start out on a few days journey around the country and everywhere he stopped he was at home. Food and blankets were divided with him and he had no bills to pay. The latch string was always out and if no one was at home it was a custom to pull the string anyhow and if hungry help one's self.

We had every prospect of a heavy immigration into the country. We knew there would be much disappointment, as the mines had not been developed sufficiently to enable new comers to jump right in and dig fortunes in a few days, and this alone would cause much dissatisfaction. There was nothing done in the mountains, of
course. We were pleased to have immigrants come but did not think any would venture here unless prepared for the trip and willing to take chances with the rest of us. There were a few arrivals the latter part of March. In April there were still more; but in May the country was overrun. They came in all kinds of conveyances: oxen, mules, horses and ponies: but some came afoot and with handcarts. Pell-mell they came into the country—thousands without supplies of food or a dollar with which to buy any. Here they were among us! and looked to us to be their providers. Our cabin was crowded all the time with hungry and foot-sore immigrants. A great many, however, came prepared for some kind of business and looked upon matters quite differently. Some made a short stop in Denver then hastened to the mountains; others located in business in Denver and in the surrounding country. Some took farming claims or ranches, but thousands returned to the East after only a few days in the country. These enroute turned back everybody they could. The result of this was that thousands who made the start never reached the country and there were times when more were headed East than West, and they never forgot to express their feelings towards us who had ventured into the country and against those who had encouraged them into the country by representations which they claimed were false.

Many reports, such as the following, got into the eastern papers, but they did not seem to deter any adventurers from leaving their homes for this western, gold seekers' paradise.

"St. Louis, Thurs., May 26, 1859.—

"A Mr. James Maginnis of Lockport, N. Y. who had just returned from the plains publishes a statement in the morning papers denouncing all the Kansas gold mine's excitement as the most stupendous humbug ever perpetrated upon the American people. He says it was gotten up by lean speculators, and sustained by parties interested in frontier towns and merchants with heavy stocks of goods on hand. The statement is corroborated by another person, Mr. Van Ness of Jackson, Miss., who positively asserts that after having prospected throughout the whole country he visited all the claims and diggings,
and saw no man who had made more than twenty cents per day or found dirt yielding more than one cent per pan."

N. Y. Daily Tribune, Friday, May 27, 1859.

"J. E. Bromley, Route Agent of the Salt Lake Mail Service from Kearney to Laramie after describing a fight between Pawnee and Cheyenne Indians writes from Cotton Wood Springs, Louise Station, April 28, 1859: "... The mail will be along to-night, I must close to go to the war dance. The blacksmith and wagon shops are both full of gentlemen from Pike's Peak, minus the gold and d—d glad to sleep on the shavings. Great old country this!"

New York Daily Tribune, Tuesday, May 17, 1859.

Not infrequently the report was carried back that many of the original pioneers had been hanged by the disappointed gold seekers and that my father was among the first on whom vengeance was thus meted out. Of those who remained, little groups could be seen standing at sundry times discussing their grievances. I would often slip around among them to hear what they had to say. My father was selected as the target: among themselves they often threatened him, but I never knew of his being insulted or threatened directly in person. It kept us busy informing our family, back in Leavenworth, that we were still alive. Bancroft in his History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming (page 374) says:

"Henry Allen and William Larimer came in for a share of blame also. There was as little reason in this revengeful feeling as there had been in the unbounded credulity which had led them (on the first unproved statement of a book maker) to hasten to place themselves in the front rank of gold seekers."

Up and down the Platte and up Cherry Creek was a camping ground of perhaps two thousand people at one time, and a more disappointed set of people had never before assembled together. Fully two-thirds of them were prepared to dig gold: even those who had not had the foresight to provide food or money had picks and shovels. Tools were plentiful and cheap when it came to using them as currency with which to buy something to sustain life. So many had expected to find rich, paying mines without the labor or delay of prospecting or any trouble what-
ever except the digging of holes out of which to scoop gold dust and nuggets, that they naturally were disappointed to find the situation that actually existed.

I remember that in one crowd which I happened to overhear abusing the Denver Town Company and charging its members with the crime of inducing them to come to the godforsaken country, one fellow remarked that you could go around and pick out all the members of the Company by the buckskin patches on their trousers, and he looked askance at me as he said it. I took this as rather personal for I was one of those who had the buckskin referred to. It was fashionable, or at least a useful custom in those days, to mend trousers by putting in a buckskin seat, and the knees and the bottom of the legs, too, were often of buckskin. Often new trousers were made in this way. These new comers were called "Pilgrims" by the rest of us. One evening about half a dozen of our friends came to our cabin: among them were Captains Theodore and Bill Parkinson, who, as they came up, said: "General, we have come to guard you against the Pilgrims". Of course it was not pleasant to our ears and father retorted that he had no fears of them. But they told some of the things they had heard that day, and insisted that it would be well for us to be on our guard in such troublous times as those. The coming of these friends was only another indication that we could count on the old settlers standing united against any opposition. This state of affairs kept up for some time. As the news from the mountains became better from day to day, the dissatisfied ones scattered off: some went to the mountains and some returned to the States and turned back all they could. But in spite of their growling and threats they really had more confidence in my father than they were willing to admit and this probably accounts for the fact that they never did more than backbiting. A further evidence of this may be seen also in the act of one party who had been most bitterly talking about us and yet when they started for a trip to the mountains they brought their guns and other articles to our cabin to leave them in
our care until their return and in due course of time every member of the party became our friend.

I quote here only one of father's letters as typical of the kind we had to write on more than one occasion during those boisterous times:

DEERSON, K.T.
Sunday, 20th May, 1859.

Dear Son John:

I received your letter of the 10th last night. I was very anxious to receive it after what I saw in the Times. . . . This country is turning up astonishingly rich, I assure you, and we are now encouraged to hope for the future. I believe it is richer than California in its palmiest days. From $4.00 to $16.00 is now taken out from a single pan of dirt about thirty-five miles from here. One party took out $1,950.00 in three days last week and all are doing well. Plenty of men are making from $50 to $100 per day. Still hundreds are doing but little. Still we have the gold here in abundance.

I fear you will be annoyed by ridiculous stories about hanging and shooting me and other town speculators as we are called. These stories only exist along the different roads, not here. No one interferes with me or any of us. These are facts. Mr Eads of Leavenworth arrived last night, he says a report came from St. Joseph to the effect that I and others were hung. I hope you will not be annoyed by such reports. I am as safe as you, and the loafers have all left and all is calm and comfortable. They have it on the express road that I am in prison and to be hung on the 1st of June. This is a lie out of the whole cloth by Carpenter of your city. He was Captain of the Police after I left home. I treated this Carpenter well: he slept with me two or three nights; he ate with us: I took him to our boarding house one morning for breakfast; but I refused to lend him $25.00 and he then commenced, behind my back, to abuse me. Some say he is not going back to Leavenworth but to Ft. Riley. This man and Davidson of St. Louis, who carried a letter, are said to be telling the same story.

I am blamed for writing letters to induce people to come here. Many hundreds never saw the letters but others tell them so and so. Everybody knows me, it appears, come from where they will. Some of them will be glad to do me justice after they hear the news that will go by this express. I am not going to write it, but others will.

I want my own dear family and friends to know that I am in fine health and spirits, and the balance of mankind may have it their own way. I will yet live to get square with these false rumors. My crime is not for anything changed by reports I know, but writing letters in relation to this country. I never wrote the truth, I know, for I kept back facts that were ever before me in relation to the richness of our
mountains which I dared not write. After the whole country gets
done abusing me, I will write up the matter. . . .

Now dear family: have no fear for me. I assure you I am sur­
rrounded by friends on all sides, and the whole stories about me are as
false as can be: I need not repeat it.

Read the Rocky Mountain News and mail it to Mr. T. M. Jones.
I believe every word it contains. If any of my friends are annoyed
by this report about me, tell them I am alive and kicking.

May God bless you all,
Affectionately your father,
Wm. Larimer, Jr.

Among the first arrivals in the spring had been Mr
Enos McLaughlin with his wife and child. They were
from Leavenworth and though in comfortable circum­
stances financially they were not very well supplied with
provisions; while we had many little delicacies not usually
found in a sutler's camp. As we were getting tired of
running "Bachelor's Hall" and were overrun with the
hungry who were arriving from the States and who kept
me busy boiling beans most of the time, we conceived the
idea of breaking up housekeeping and turning over our
stock of provisions to the McLaughlins and boarding
with them. Our proposition was eagerly accepted, so
that we had the honor of being about the first who had
the comforts of home life and a "mother's" cooking.
We thus became the envy of many, even of those who
had plenty to eat. The arrangement turned out satis­
factorily to all parties interested.

One day, as we were seated at the table eating a good
meal, there came in a tall, gaunt fellow who looked as
though he had been living on prickly pears ever since he
left the Missouri River. He had with him a gun about
as long as himself and it looked as though it had been in
use since the days of Daniel Boone. He was footsore and
weary. His condition worked on our sympathies, so we
invited him to eat with us. It was the meal of his life!
He was so delighted that he was for making a deal with
us to allow him to become one of our family. He told
us that if we would allow him to stay with us a few days
while resting and doctoring his feet so that he could be
successful as a hunter, he would supply us with any kind of game we desired. He claimed that as a hunter he had no equal. At this time there was no beef in the country and we had to depend on bacon and salt meats; the oxen were all too poor for beef except those wintered in the country and they were needed for mountain trips. We finally consented to his proposition. At every meal we used to discuss the merits of the game he was to furnish and in two or three days he concluded, from our obvious hints, that we could brook no longer delay and that fresh meat we must have or his presence was not desirable. So after about three days, at the breakfast table he announced that he was in fine trim. The old gun was brought down and put in order and he commenced asking each of us what kind of game we most desired. Some spoke for one kind and some for another: we finally settled that it was to be a fine deer or an antelope. He said he thought he could strike off eastwards towards what was called the “cut-off” and in a short time bring in a fine antelope. So he started. Night came when he was to return, but no hunter came, and no meat. Another night followed with the same result. By that time we realized that the joke was on us. He had evidently made for the States thinking that he had played his part well. And he certainly had, for he had enjoyed the best that Denver could afford in the way of food and comfort, when few could find a woman’s cooking or a bed other than under the open sky. But thus he recuperated for his trip back to the States and no doubt after arriving there has often told the story of his visit to Denver with a gleeful chuckle at his trickery!

I will close this chapter with one other sample of the contempt with which father regarded the threats of the new arrivals:—

DENVER CITY, K.T.
24th April, 1859.

Dear Rachel:

I have a chance to write by the illustrious Jack Henderson. We have had hard times here lately, I assure you. The hand-cart men and footmen came here without money, provisions, guns or anything
else, and their numbers are so great that they annoy us very much. Will and I have quit keeping house and gone to board with Mr. McLaughlin, a very nice place so Will and I are doing fine. I gave over the remnant of our provisions to Mr McLaughlin. McLaughlin is from Leavenworth and brought letters from John. He has a wife and child. I am to pay what I please. While we kept house we had to feed everybody, now we avoid it. We could not stand it, besides we have all been short of flour lately. Today 75 sacks came in from New Mexico and it was sold in one hour. A lot more is expected this week and so on, and if we have no more people we could get along, but we hope the immigration will hereafter come provided. About thirty wagons have gone back with any quantity of hand-cart gentlemen, and the country is better off without them. I presume that those that have gone back will turn others; be it so, we will still have plenty and this thing is better than I ever said it was, but it wants time only to prove it.

I am often told that reports have gone back that I had to leave Denver City for fear of being attacked. This is all stuff. If the least attempt was made on me or any of the old settlers here, the man attempting it would be strung up in ten minutes. It is supposed that fourteen men have starved to death on the Smoky Hill route. Five out of a party of nineteen have got in and think the balance perished. There are a lot of teams coming by the same route expected in a few days, said to be all right. The trouble with this route is that after they leave the Smoky Hill, there has been no direct road and they wander off in every direction. The trains we expect, of some nine or ten wagons, will make a good trail. The families from Leavenworth are said to be all safe.

The Indian story I wrote in my last may not be true. We hear so many stories here you cannot believe any of them. There is said to be trouble about water after you leave the Smoky Hill. I feel much relieved today in relation to this route as I had a hand in recommending it.

Will and Mr Fisher are going to the mountains to mine, about forty miles from here and ten miles from Boulder City, or they may go to Jefferson twenty miles from Boulder. I am going with them to get them started and will stay a while.

Since the murder of Capt. Bassett everything has been blue here but we are now recovering. I received a letter from Annie and Mr Jones by the last mail. I have not answered them yet. Please mail the annexed letter to Annie and Thomas.

Yours truly,

Wm. Larimer, Jr.
CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Gold Fever of 1859—Exaggerated reports—Gambling—William McGaa, alias Jack Jones

THERE is no way of telling how many people were in the country during the winter of 1858–59: perhaps five or six hundred had been there during the summer and early part of the fall of 1858, but when winter set in more than half of them had returned to the States. Practically all of the Lawrence Party left and only a few of the Georgia Party remained. Dr Russell and perhaps five or six others were as many as stayed. Of all who left, very few returned the following spring. Their reasons for leaving were varied: some because of disgust as to the probability of finding gold in paying quantities; and some because they knew that if they remained they would have to work providing themselves winter quarters and provisions. Others left because they feared that the Indians during the winter would make a raid on us and massacre us all, and still others thought that we should have a very severe winter which would prevent all prospecting and that they could return again in the spring with greater safety.

Of those who remained some took farming claims, ranches, and wooded lands: a few did prospecting and others remained around the town. After we had all made our locations and completed our preparations for the cold weather, the time was put in very pleasantly. Those who liked to hunt found plenty of game, such as deer, antelope, wild turkeys and much small game. They
were all over the prairie, we could see scores of them from our cabin door any time.

Though we were many a mile from Pikes Peak, this region was known as "Pikes Peak Country" also the "Cherry Creek District". As I have already said, there were only a few prospect holes on Cherry Creek, and in all the region around there was never found (as long as I was in the country) enough gold to fill a goose quill. It was on the banks of the Platte River several miles above Denver that all the mining of the winter of 1858-59 was done. At that point was the only man personally known to me who made a business of hunting for gold. His name was Andrew Jackson and he was from Oskaloosa, Kansas. He could be found every pleasant day three or four miles up the River, busy with his rocker and pan trying to get a few grains of the glittering metal. Some days he would wash out two or three dollars worth. It was in little scales and of fine quality. I was accustomed to visiting him two or three times a week. It was his operations which furnished the material for extravagant letters to the States and which caused the overrunning of the country by thousands of prospectors in the spring of 1859.

The newspapers on the Missouri River were always ready to publish anything they could get from the gold-fields, and the eastern papers would eagerly reprint such news items. Almost invariably the papers would add another zero to the row of digits sent by the correspondent: thus "$2.50 per day" with a rocker would become "$25.00 per day" when inserted in the newspaper and naturally this was enough to excite the cupidity and envy of all the readers. It was surely not the intention of the original correspondent to thus deceive. This I know very well as my father was one of these correspondents and his letters were published more generally by the press than those of any other person in the country, and he never reported mines as turning out better than $2.50 or $3.00 per day with a rocker, at this stage of the operations.

There is no way of telling how many persons, excited by
these erroneous newspaper reports, left the Missouri River points early in 1859 to try their fortunes in the new gold country. It has been estimated as high as 100,000. This estimate may seem high, but I feel sure I would be safe in saying that from 70,000 to 80,000 certainly did leave the eastern points; though many of these never reached the western country to which they had started.

Many, on starting from home, had put inscriptions on their wagon covers, such for instance as the famous “Pikes Peak or Bust” to which was added for the return trip “Busted by God”—when really it was by their own folly. “Root, Hog, or Die” was another expression that I remember. With them all, however, in spite of their disappointments, there was quite a spirit of pleasantry; for the most part, they took their misfortunes philosophically. Nor had this migration of scores of thousands been undertaken wholly without protest or warning: optimistic newspaper reports were not the only kind which appeared, as may be seen by one or two samples from the New York Tribune which are but reprints from other papers, or instance:

"LEAVENWORTH, Tues., May 17, 1859. Letters from Denver City state that there is great scarcity of provisions in the mines at Pike's Peak and much suffering among the emigrants, several deaths were reported from starvation and the emigrants arriving were in destitute condition. . . . No remittances of dust or rich discoveries are announced. . . . " From N. Y. Daily Tribune, Wed. May 18, 1859.

and also

DENVER CITY, KANSAS TERRITORY,
April 18, 1859

Starvation at the Mines: We have all sorts of rumors in relation to the gold prospects—some for and some against; but the real trouble is: Hundreds of emigrants have arrived and are arriving without either money or provisions, mining tools, guns or ammunition, and our stock is running down and none arriving. This is a feature in affairs here we made no calculation for. We supposed all would come with at least three months' provisions, but it is not so. Hundreds have arrived that we have taken into our houses and boarded and we have not got it to spare. We are doing all we can to satisfy all, and so far
we have succeeded, but if it continues we will soon be out of everything. I hope no one will come here without provisions. Money will not buy provisions if we have not got them. Men cannot prospect or do anything else without provisions. This every sensible man coming into this country should understand. Besides, we have rather cold weather for the season. The mountains are still covered with snow and little has been done lately.

If my letters have not been altered after passing out of my hands, all I have written may be depended upon in relation to the gold. But whoever thought of men ever coming here to starve? I heard, yesterday, of a man that died from starvation on the way, and another not expected to survive, and I now say that any man or set of men who come here must come as all the emigrants did last Fall, provided with everything, or they had better stop at the next poor house.

We are out of provisions and expect to buy a supply from those that come in this spring and summer. New Mexico has some flour, but no bacon, and not enough of either to breakfast 100,000 people. I am told that some fools did write to their friends not to bring flour—that New Mexico could supply us. This is shocking. We have received, all told, from New Mexico, say five or six hundred sacks of flour, which is now about all used up.

I say, in conclusion on this subject, that I hope no one will come here without a good outfit, and the numbers of people here alarm us without they have supplies of their own, as we have nothing to spare, if enough for ourselves”.

From the Leavenworth Times of May 12, reprinted in the New York Daily Tribune of May 24, 1859.

But there was also another evil which worked hardships for many of the immigrants, for there was, of course, a large number of gamblers who lived off the immigrants. Not a few of those fellows who turned back did so because they had lost their all trying to woo fickle Chance. I have myself seen big, strong and otherwise sensible men put up their last dollar on “three card monte” so sure were they that they could turn up the winning card, yet seldom failing to lose. They would then turn and walk away with tears on their cheeks. Men gambled there who had never gambled before: some because they were homesick and having a few dollars thought they could raise enough to return home. On Blake Street, on the south side between 14th and 15th Streets, the whole length of the block was occupied by gambling stations, the gamblers
standing in the street and the patrons on the sidewalk. All kinds of games and devices of chance were running openly there, while across the street Denver Hall was in like full operation, as a gambling den.

One of father's letters home, dated in the first part of February of 1859, gives a picture of life in Denver that is of interest. He says:

"You have no idea of the gambling carried on here in Auraria. They go it night and day, Sundays and all, and Oh! how they drink. You cannot conceive anything so bad as they carry on here night and day, but they do not disturb me or anybody if you keep away from them. Denver is free from them at present, but we expect it will not be long so. Still they are peaceable and quiet except among themselves. They all treat me very respectfully. I know everybody here and they all know me.

Neither Will nor I go out at night and in fact Will never goes in daylight. He is not across Cherry Creek twice a month. Will is certainly an exemplary boy, everybody remarks it. The Rev. Fisher thinks Will a saint, and he is certainly worthy of the compliment, and a general favorite of all that know him. He is growing rapidly and has never been sick a moment. The weather is delightful and looks like spring. Occasionally we have had some very windy days reminding one of Nebraska, but not cold.

I have a perfect run of visitors daily and hourly. The Auraria Town Company have been cursing me ever since I came into Denver, but the other night* they turned in and gave me a donation of four lots 66 by 132 ft. Omaha size, which is about equal to twelve lots in Denver. This is a nice present. They and I are now cheek by jowl good friends. They say they appreciate my energy highly, that I have beaten them fairly. By April we shall have 200 houses in Denver and 150 in Auraria. Denver is now as large as Auraria in houses, but they have more people.

I am Denver City, I have never been out of it but one night since November 20th. In all I slept alone about four nights,—sole proprietor of the town when Will was up in the pines. Others lived here then, but it so happened all were off hunting and in the pines but me . . .

Tell Col. Thorne that Charley Blake is building a house 96 by 60

* Smiley in his Story of Denver (p. 111) says this donation was made on Feb. 18th, but the above letter was begun on Feb. 1st and closed on Feb. 15th, so that the donation must have been made known to Gen. Larimer prior to the 15th of February, whatever may have been the date of the Directors' sanction.
He says it will make a good theatre building, but not built exactly for that purpose.

The news from the mines was never so good as today the 15th. I have no doubt but we have as good mines as California. Gold has been discovered in quartz rock: let those who doubt, doubt no more. This city is all O.K., I assure you . . .

Say nothing about Arapahoe City as no one knows it here, not even Lawrence.*

Afft. Yours,

Wm. Larimer, Jr.

Notwithstanding the large number of unwise speculators and gamblers referred to above, there were, among those who came into the country that season, many who became our best citizens and who did much to build up the country and add to its prosperity, and whose descendants now occupy the highest places of responsibility and trust in this large American city. These are the men who had faith in things unseen and were possessed of the same convictions that were expressed a little later by Horace Greeley in the following words:

"Yet I feel the strong conviction that each succeeding month's resources will enlarge the value of mining operations and diminish the difficulties and impediments which now stretch across the gold seeker's path, and that ten years hence we shall be just beginning fairly to appreciate and enjoy the treasures now buried in the Rocky Mountains."


We pioneers had confidence in the country and had never once entertained the thought that it was not all right, until the spring immigrants arrived and threatened to hang us for inducing them to come to the country.

One pretty day, I was sitting on some house logs admiring the beauties of the mountains and thinking of the discontented throngs in the city and the valleys around. In my mind was forming the contrasts between the beauty

* Arapahoe City was a town projected by Col. S. S. Curtis on Clear Creek, at about Christmas time of 1858. It was a short distance east of the present Golden. It did not survive many months. The allusion to Mr. Lawrence in this letter was probably due to his presence in Leavenworth at this date. See Smiley's Story of Denver, page 261.
and the quiet of nature as compared with the ingratitude and turmoil of humanity. There in the distance was Pikes Peak and all the long range of snow clad heights glinting with the rays of the unclouded sun. While I was thus enjoying it, Jack Jones came along and I began asking him some questions about the scene for I knew that he had lived among and roamed over these mountains for years. I was speculating as to the distance of the different peaks. He sat down by me and together we spent an interesting hour. Jack wanted everybody to know that he was more than an ordinary man. He commenced by telling me that his true name was William McGaa and that at one time his father had been Lord Mayor of London, which, of course, I had to believe whether true or not. He also told me, perhaps with equal truth, how far it was to the top of Pikes Peak, Longs Peak, the Snowy Range, and to all my questions would answer with positive and undeniable statements. At this time I had not been to the mountains nor even to the foot of them. His talk finally drifted off to the northern country. Seeing that I was interested in him and that I was a gullible boy, he began to fill my ears full of his travels and adventures. He said, among other things, that away north of Laramie there was a barren country which was called the “Bad Lands”, that the Indians, who were very superstitious, would never venture into that section of country, but in some way he happened to wander into it and that he saw there sights such as mortal man had never seen before. He described the country as being entirely destitute and barren of every living thing, both vegetable and animal, and that at one time he came to a place that seemed to have once been inhabited by a race of tiny people not more than eighteen inches high, that he saw the ruins of villages and towns, and that everything was in a perfect state of petrification. He said he saw large pine trees with their limbs and branches turned to stone, and among them deer that were petrified in the very act of running and looked as natural as the living. Jack told me of all these wonderful things with much satisfaction to himself and no doubt
left me with the thought that I believed all that he told me. He might, indeed, have made me believe that his father had been the Lord Mayor of London if he had only left out this story of the bad lands; yet, as it turned out, this was probably the truest part of his story.

Jack was one of the original members of the Denver Town Company though he early made an assignment of a part or all of his interest therein to Dr. Kunkel whose name, therefore, makes the forty-second in a list which is supposed to contain only forty-one original members of the Town Company. One of the Streets of Denver was named McGaa after Jack's true family name, but when poor Jack left the town and Ben Holliday came into prominence the name of the street was changed and that came nearer to breaking Jack's heart than all the other vicissitudes of his life combined.

Jack Jones and John Smith were almost inseparable, they built a cabin together, a sort of two-family affair. Smith had a son, John, who was about my age or perhaps a little younger; we often met on the hills hunting our ponies. The old man was very fond of him. John's mother was a Cheyenne. John was best contented when with the Indians and lost his life in the massacre at Sand Creek during the bloody onslaught of Col. Chivington's command. Both Smith and Jones were very fond of horse racing and gambling. As the country became more thickly settled they drifted back to the farther frontier, civilized life and habits had no charm for them: they loved the Indians best.
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Establishing a Stage Line—Clerking in the Postoffice—Personal reminiscences—A shooting affray—An Indian massacre—Colonel Alexander Majors—Denver Hall—Other gambling dens

On March 28th, 1859, Mr Sargent, who later for a long time was a resident of Denver and who built land kept the Tremont Hotel, left Leavenworth with a party who located stations and distributed stock up the Smoky Hill route for the Overland Stage Company or the Leavenworth and Pikes Peak Express Company, as it was first called. This company had been organized at Leavenworth, and was made up of men who were associated with Russell, Majors & Waddell in transportation business on the plains.

As Mr Sargent and his party came down the Cherry Creek Road they stopped at our cabin, for it was the first house they came to on entering the town. This was an eventful occasion as the establishing of a stage line brought us so much closer to home and friends. We were glad to see the party and were surprised, too, for we were not expecting them so soon.

Among the party was Beverly D. Williams who was Superintendent for the company, Dr. Fox who was the General Agent and had charge of the express business and also of the store they established, and Martin Fields who had charge of the postoffice branch of the express business, for it was some time before the government established a mail service,—the mail all came by express. Mr Sargent was General Roadmaster and with several assistants had charge of all the stock.
I was employed as an assistant to Mr Martin Fields* and had the honor of handing out mail to the anxious ones at 25 cents for a letter and 10 cents for a paper. They were all C. O. D. and not prepaid as now-a-days.

Denver was the objective point of the company and they immediately set to work locating and building, so as to be ready for the arrival of the first coach, which was soon due. The establishing of the stage line was considered a big thing at that time; it brought letters from our friends in six or seven days from the Missouri River. This, compared with 60 to 90 days to which we had heretofore been accustomed, was looked upon as something wonderful.

It was sometime after the arrival of Mr Sargent with his party locating the route and establishing the stations that the first coach bearing passengers arrived. These coaches carried mail, express and passengers. The first coach left Leavenworth on March 28th, arrived at Denver May 7th, and reached Leavenworth again on its return trip on May 20th, 1859.† This, perhaps, was one of the

* The New York Daily Tribune of Monday, June 20, 1859, says:

"The Pike's Peak Express arrived at Leavenworth on the 12th instant, in seven days from Denver City. We copy the following correspondence from the Leavenworth Times:

"Our Gold Budget: General News

"On Monday next a convention of delegates for the purpose of framing the constitution for the future State of Jefferson is to meet. I look upon that body as a farcical entity, and there is no doubt that its proceedings will be of a like character. The best evidence of the improved condition of things in this latitude can be found in the increased activity in the mail department of the express office. Hundreds of letters are received daily and Mr. Fields has been obliged to engage an assistant, which he has found in a son of General Larimer. The female element has received extensive accessions during the last few weeks. Over a dozen respectable representatives of the fair sex are now to be found in Denver and Auraria."

† "Leavenworth, K. T., Friday, May 20, 1859: The first Overland Express from Denver City arrived here this morning, having been ten days out. It brings $700.00 in shot and scale gold; and four passengers. . . . The express route is 625 miles in length and has been pronounced to possess superior facilities as is evidenced by those of the first trip." Tribune, May 21, 1859.

"Leavenworth, Sat. May 21, 1859: There was a celebration here today in honor of the arrival of the first Overland Express. It passed off with great eclat. The procession was composed of military, firemen, and civilians. . . . A thousand persons participated in the affair. The occasion was one of enthusiasm." Ibidem. May 23, 1859.
most enjoyable occasions since the settlement of the country the year before. Up to this time we had had practically no mail facilities for Saunders’ Express, which made the trips to Fort Laramie 200 miles away, was quite uncertain in its goings and in its comings. The first time he was gone six weeks. It is amusing now to think how our mail was addressed. All our friends knew that Fort Laramie was our nearest post office, so our letters came to us addressed “Cherry Creek near Pikes Peak via Fort Laramie”. Sometimes they had on them only “Pikes Peak via Fort Laramie”. But we generally received our mail if we gave them time enough. It was more than three months from the time we left home until we heard from those whom we had left behind. So it is no wonder we rejoiced to think we could hear from home in seven or eight days.

Of course the stage company located in Denver in preference to Auraria: to some extent that was arranged before we left Leavenworth, as my father had talked town matters over with Mr Wm. H. Russell and later had made Mr Russell one of the original members of the Town Company and had given all his associates in the stage business large donations of lots in the town.

The jubilant spirit which the incoming of the Stage Company instilled into the hearts of the pioneers is somewhat shown by the following letter from father to my brother John:

DENVER CITY, K.T.
(Begun May 9th: Ended May 12th), 1859

Dear John:

... Russell’s train changes the whole face of matters here. They are locating in Denver City. Denver is all O.K. Since writing the above the Denver City Company met and donated nine original interests to the Leavenworth & Pike’s Peak Express Company. That company consists of ten persons. Wm. H. Russell now holds one original share in Denver City, so you see we are now all right, if not before. Your Mr Smoot & Co. owns two shares in the Express Company and consequently owns two original interests in Denver. Wm. H. Russell & Co also owns two shares in the Express Company and now two shares in Denver. This is fine: their monied influence will make this now the certain point.
Will and I are delighted with this move. Judge Smith only wanted to give 1,000 shares but we preferred the way we passed it as we have them now fully committed to help along the town, procure the capital and hasten the railroad. I shall sleep soundly tonight. The news from the mountains is better today than ever before. You may hear big gold news now soon, still say nothing. We will send on substantial proof shortly. The immigration is now coming in from the Smoky Hill and the Russell Express route up the Republican, also the Arkansas route. The Platte River route has gone up,—everybody gone back or nearly so.

The Express Company is going right to work to building and so is everyone. You have no idea what a change there is in Denver this afternoon. The news from the mountains this morning is very encouraging. I saw one piece of gold that weighs eighty-seven cents; it looks right. I have no doubt but large deposits of gold are here and that hereafter the tide will change rapidly. Still we have plenty of people here, unless they come as they should do with plenty to eat, and men that understand mining gold. Many come here that can do but little anywhere.

Will, Mr Fisher and I start this afternoon (12th of May) for the mountains about thirty miles. There is a general rush to that point this morning. I have no time to write more.

I heard that Davidson upset his skiff and lost everything but his old clock, I guess that was about all he had. Will has a letter enclosed for Annie: if you write them tell them I wrote them.

Everything is quite lively this day and I tell you that all is right here, but do not advise anyone to come as we have plenty of people here until the country is fully developed and more flour comes. Will and I can get along: have no fear for it. I will write you after I get back from the mountains which may be in one or two weeks.

Yours, God Bless You,

WM. LARIMER, JR.

The coaches used in this service were large, strongly-built vehicles, known as Concord Coaches. Each one cost about $800 and was especially fitted for the heavy work required of it. Nine passengers could be accommodated with ease on the inside of each. They were softly cushioned and in winter were warm and comfortable. They were altogether the finest stages ever run in the West. Each coach was drawn by four fine, strong, Kentucky mules, which were changed every twelve to twenty miles. The drivers were well paid, intelligent, experienced, reliable and fearless. An accident was a rarity. The stage fare
between the Missouri River and Denver was at first $150 but later $100 each way. There were said to be fifty-two coaches running on the Leavenworth-Denver line.

When the coaches would arrive with the express, we would close the office while sorting the mail. This would take an hour or more as the mails were heavy. While this was going on, long lines of people were gathering and usually by the time we were ready to begin the distribution there would be two lines formed around the block. Each person had to take his turn, though any individual was allowed to inquire for his party or family. This sometimes made trouble, as some man who had money and did not want to go to the rear of the line would give two or three dollars to some fellow, who was closer to the window, for his turn. I could often see these trades made from the window. Up to that time we had no private boxes, so all the mail went to the general delivery, and necessarily so, since collection was made for the transportation at time of delivery.

The post office was usually the first place immigrants inquired for. They soon found that it cost 25 cents for a letter; then it was that they could distinguish the difference between mail and express. There was no mail opened on the road, of course. The average time consumed in traveling across the plains was about thirty days: the stage made it in about six. This naturally led travelers to expect to hear from home immediately on arrival. As everybody came to the post office where I was the clerk, I had a fine opportunity of getting acquainted with every new arrival.

Our office was often the place of amusing incidents. Our patrons were continually trying to play smart tricks on us. Frequently they would return letters and demand the return of the money. At first we did not see the trick. A letter that was not worth 25 cents to them after they had learned its contents was almost sure to be brought back with the claim that it was not their letter but was for someone else of the same name. We at first assumed everybody to be honest, and conscientiously desiring that
the right person should have his mail, we would refund the money. But it was not long before we discovered that we were paying out almost as much money as we were taking in and were loaded down with letters marked "Opened by mistake". We saw the necessity of changing our methods of doing business; so, in case of doubt, when mail was called for, after questioning whence they expected mail we satisfied ourselves (in case, as a last resort, a letter had to be opened to prove its identity) by opening it ourselves at the supposed owner's request. I remember, on one occasion, of opening a letter: the applicant requested me to read a little of it, in that way he could tell. I did so. It commenced by saying: "Your wife has been raising hell ever since you left". The man said: "Hold on, I think that is my letter", took it and paid for it and disappeared into the crowd which was constantly hanging around the window. Another case of about the same character was a letter from some point in Iowa. It commenced by saying: "Your brother was hung for horse stealing . . .". He also took his letter and paid for it without any farther public reading.

Some reminiscences of the men connected with the stage line and the postoffice may not be out of place for I recall my contact with them in those days of my youth with great pleasure.

Beverly D. Williams remained in the country a few years and on October 3, 1859, was elected our first Delegate to Congress, but after serving until the spring of 1861, he returned to his native town of Danville, Ky.

Martin Fields the first postmaster was succeeded by Judge Amos Steck who remained in charge of the mail department of the Express Company until the Federal Government established its own mail service. Fields was afterwards a pioneer mail agent on the Hannibal & St. Joe Railroad and was killed, during the war, with many others at Platte River bridge near St. Joe. Judge Steck had been one of the first arrivals in the spring of 1859, and was the first man to pay cash for a lot in Denver, buying quite a number for a mere trifle with an idea of
speculation. Major John S. Filmore was one of Steck’s friends. He was from Watertown, Wisconsin. Major Filmore and Wm. McClelland and I were Judge Steck’s assistants in the mail department where I had resumed work (after my return from a visit in Leavenworth) on June 8th, 1860. Judge Steck’s tenure of office began when the Pikes Peak Express, after operating for only a short time, was purchased by Messrs John S. Jones, and the firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell. They reorganized it under the name of the C. O. C. & P. P. Express and placed him in charge of the Denver City end. General Hall’s tribute to Judge Steck in his History of Colorado (p. 214) is a very deserved one and I cannot do better than to repeat his words:

“A more accommodating or efficient agent could not have been named. Possessed of a remarkably retentive memory for names, faces and events, it was the work of an instant for him to answer any inquiry that might be made. No matter how complex, strange or unpronounceable the name of the applicant, if there was or was not a letter for him, Steck knew it without examining the boxes. If a man applied at any time thereafter, even after a lapse of a year, Steck recognized him immediately, and called him by name. He rarely made a mistake. His efficiency and his breezy welcomes became the subject of current talk all over the land. To this day the pioneers at their annual or periodical gatherings take infinite pride in relating their experiences at the office of the C.O.C. & P.P. Express.”

The Judge lived to a ripe old age in this city of his adoption and breathed his last amidst a gathering of his fellow pioneers on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Denver.

Park McClure was the first postmaster appointed by the Federal Government. This was during Buchanan’s administration. McClure was one of our original colonists but not a fair sample of them as he was rough in his manners and of a quarrelsome disposition and had but few friends in the country. He was postmaster only a short time. McClure and Dick Whitsett, who had made the overland trip with us in 1858, had some dispute which terminated in a duel. When this occurred we were at Leavenworth. Whitsett wrote my father giving a history of their troubles
and an account of the duel and concluded by saying: "General, I plumped him". He had shot McClure in the groin. Later, when the war broke out, McClure with Charles Harrison and about seventy others, left the west to join the Southern Army; and soon afterwards they were reported to have been killed by Indians in Indian Territory. If this be true, there is no doubt in my mind that this was the party that was killed by Osage Indians in what is now Montgomery County, Kansas. Out of a party of twenty-two, twenty-one were killed; the one escaped by getting in the brush and timber of the Verdigris River. I have already published my views on this matter, so I will repeat them here in the original form:

Captain Larimer's attention was called a few days since to a revival of the story of the massacre of twenty Confederate Officers in Kansas, in 1862 by the Indians; which appeared in the Kansas City Journal of May 27, 1895. This tragedy occurred on the present site of the City of Neodesha, and the Captain's comments are as follow:

"Time has not dimmed my memory to such an extent but that I think I can give some light upon the subject. At that time I was a citizen of Colorado; the war had fairly begun and there was quite an element in sympathy with the South and among them was this party, who no doubt held commissions from the Southern Confederacy to recruit a few regiments of troops in the West. Meeting with much opposition and a strong desire, upon the part of those who did not sympathize with them, to dig and prospect for gold, and keep out of the war, this party left the country and went East with the intention of joining the Confederate forces. There were about twenty-two of them. Some time after they had left Denver the news came back that they had all been killed but one, by the Osage Indians in the Indian Territory. This one who escaped was undoubtedly the one who sent the message to Colorado telling of their fate.

A number of years afterward, on the opening of the Osage land in the southern part of the State of Kansas, it was my lot to settle there. It was about the time that the Indians moved to their present location in the Indian Territory. I engaged in the cattle business and was closely connected with the Osage Indians, and knowing some of the Colorado men personally, they having been among the early pioneers, I became interested in obtaining what information I could in regard to their fate. It was after many inquiries that I found one who was willing to tell me anything about it, saying that it happened during the war times. Finally I succeeded in finding one who was in the fight.
The Osages during the war were divided, some sympathizing with the North, and others with the South. Many enlisted and some of them were in the Kansas regiments. A portion of these were at home on a furlough at the time of the massacre. The Colorado party was encamped on La Bette Creek, in La Bette county, which was then unorganized and the home of the Osages. The Indians came upon them and demanded their surrender. They flatly refused and made for their guns. As I understand the story, it was in the early morning; and during the night previous to the fight it had rained. Everything was wet and the Colorado party, finding out the condition of their guns, were demoralized, and retreated on horseback and afoot towards the West, keeping up a running fight, until they had reached the banks of the Verdigris River, a few miles north of Independence, Kansas. There twenty-one were killed and one escaped in the brush and crossed the River. A small Creek known as Rebel Creek marks the spot as nearly as it is possible to locate the final battle. The bodies of the Colorado party were not buried by the Indians, nor can their graves be located."

Kansas City Times of June 3 1895 and Independent, Kansas, Tribune of June 5, 1895.

Smiley in his Story of Denver (p. 349) also records the same testimony and states that Charlie Harrison and W. P. McClure were two of the band who thus lost their lives.

Of those who were most intimately connected with the stage line, Mr W. H. Russell died in the spring of 1871 at the home of his son in Palmyra, Marion County, Mo., and his partner, Mr W. B. Waddell died at Lexington, Mo., in September of the same year. But at the age of seventy-five, Colonel Alexander Majors, a bright-eyed old man with a step as light as a boy’s and the general aspect of a well-preserved man of fifty, was still living in Kansas City and engaged in the commonplace occupation of soap making. Mr Majors was a Kentuckian and the century was only fourteen years old when he was born. His parents carried him to Missouri when he was about two years old and he was reared about five miles east of Independence. Perhaps more than either of his two partners, is Majors entitled to have his name and career embodied in the lasting history of the development of our western country, for he is the man who established the first pony express line on the plains; and the pony express
was the forerunner of the stage lines and the railroad trains. His first experience with a baggage or express train was in 1848, when he took a caravan to Mexico.

Later, when he established the pony express from Sacramento to St. Joseph, the shortest time in which San Francisco had communicated with New York was twenty-one days. Majors' riders receiving the dispatches at Sacramento carried them at a gallop to the telegraph office in St. Joseph and shortened the time to ten days. 150 riders and about 600 ponies were in the service. The stations were ten or twelve miles apart along the route. As the rider neared the station another pony was brought out; the foaming steed was brought to a halt with a jerk, the rider slid from his back, the saddle and the dispatch pouches were changed to the fresh pony in a flash, and the courier was away on the next lap of his journey. One rider usually traveled three laps in a stretch, but there were some men in the force who every day rode six lengths, or say seventy miles, changing ponies five times. The ponies soon became trained to it and entered into the spirit of the occasion, and they sped along the trail so rapidly that the riders were in no danger except from ambush, and there was hardly any more trouble from the Indians than from white highwaymen, nor much from either. The Indians had a superstitious fear of the service, the objects and effects of which they could not comprehend.

Before the Sacramento line was designed by Mr. Majors, transcontinental communication was accomplished by way of San Antonio, so his new route shortened the distance considerably, and as the traveling was done through both the day and the night, about 200 miles were covered each twenty-four hours. Majors and Russell together were a bold and brave brace who stinted no expense to accomplish the vast enterprises that they undertook. This is well certified by their contract in 1858 to transport the government expedition in command of Albert Sidney Johnston from the Mississippi River to Utah. There were 16,000,000 pounds of baggage to be transported a distance of 1,250 miles. It required 40,000 oxen and 3,000
teamsters to accomplish the work: and it was done in record time and record manner to the entire satisfaction of every party concerned.

While hardly a part of personal reminiscences, yet it was such a gathering place of all local celebrities, that I cannot longer defer a description of Denver Hall, already referred to several times in this book. Denver Hall was a building completed by Blake & Williams before the spring immigration of 1859 began. It was first intended as a hotel, but as the influx of people brought so many gamblers among them, it was found more profitable to convert it into a gambling house. The building was about 100 ft long and 40 ft wide. It had a canvas roof, and as there was no glass for windows, canvas was used over the window openings also. The front part was partitioned off from the remainder by canvas and it was in this front end that the gambling was carried on. The rent paid for it as a gaming den was fabulous in amount. A kind of lunch restaurant was conducted in connection with it, and there were a few bed rooms for sojourners, as the hotel feature was never wholly abandoned.

Denver Hall was the headquarters for everybody, and the maelstrom into which all "tenderfeet" or "pilgrims" were sucked as they arrived from the States. There was exceedingly little money in the hands of the old settlers and as the gamblers needed real money in their business, they lay low, like spiders, in this den awaiting the new comers as so many victims to be drained of their riches. And soon the new victims came, and ever in increasing numbers did they partake of the proffered temptations.

In Denver the field for such business was big and gamblers from the States and Territories kept constantly arriving until finally Denver Hall was vastly over-crowded.

The tables were arranged around the sides of the room. One evening when the Hall was as crowded as usual, I remember some fellow, who was well loaded with Taos Lightning, became dissatisfied about something and flourishing his revolver a few times shot it off through the roof. The house was very soon cleared of its inmates; the can-
windows served a good purpose as exits. It was surely a comical sight not soon to be forgotten by an eyewitness. In later years Denver Hall became known as the “Elephant Corral”.

Even in comparatively early days Denver Hall was not the only gambling house in our neighborhood. Cibola Hall was another one of like character, but was on the west side of the Creek. It, too, had quite a merry business. It was here that Jim G—— started on the road to ruin, which cost him his life at an early age, as already narrated. It is said that he was a part owner of Cibola Hall.

Another one of the gambling houses was The Criterion. It had its full share of the business, too. It was considered of a little higher order than the others, however. A man by the name of Jump was its proprietor. It was here that Charlie Harrison made his headquarters and plotted his devilments. I have already commented on Harrison’s career and end, but I might add the following words written by Gen. Hall, who, in speaking of the lawlessness of the times, says:

“The recognized leader of the desperate crew was a young man named Charley Harrison, a Southerner by birth. The day after the author’s arrival, meeting an acquaintance whom he had known in Central New York, and who claimed some intimacy with Harrison, he was shown a revolver with which it was asserted Harrison had killed five men, here and elsewhere, and he was then only at the beginning of his career. On July 12th he shot a Mexican negro, named Stark, for which he was tried, but acquitted on the plea of self-defense.”

In all these Halls it was fashionable to have an orchestra of some kind to attract attention and entertain the crowd. Sometimes they would have very fair music, but usually it was quite perfunctory and mechanical. Violins were used principally, and the musicians as a rule were of the class that took up their wages at the bar. Every little while they would stop playing to get a drink. After getting about a quart of Taos Lightning each, they would be asleep, mentally at least; though muscularly they would keep on with the same old see-saw of the same old tune over and over again, while the click of glasses and the
rattle of feet and the rustle of cards and the interchange of vapid oaths and loudmouthed threats set up an opposing din, in the befouled atmosphere. Occasionally a female gambler would make her appearance and for a few days would be the attraction. Sometimes a good singer would be introduced to lend added attraction to the music,—it was anything to please and draw the crowd! It is the necessary accompaniment of all frontier life, where the flotsam and jetsam of the world congregate during the first boom. It has been the history of every gold field or diamond field discovered during modern times, and doubtless will be the custom until time’s end.
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

A trip to the Mountains—The career of “Old Brown”—Gregory’s gold discoveries

We had been contemplating a trip to the mountains for some time, and wanting to get away from the excitement attendant upon such an influx of immigrants, we concluded to make the trip at once. There had been but few discoveries up to this time, Gregory’s Diggings was one, and another one was on Clear Creek at Idaho. The latter was, I think, called Jackson’s Diggings, —at any rate it was a Diggings at the forks of the Creek about forty miles from Denver. It was for this latter point that we started on May 12, 1859. Mr Fisher, our Methodist friend, my father, myself and a Mexican teamster and four yoke of cattle made up our outfit. We loaded lightly with provisions and a few traps sufficient for a couple of weeks only.

It was from Baden-Baden that we made the start into the mountains and it is my recollection at present that it was an almost perpendicular ascent right from the start. There was no road, but we found that some of our friends who were a day or two ahead of us had blazed the trees so we could follow them. By two days’ climbing we arrived at the top of this high mountain which was afterwards named “Idaho” and we were still some five or six miles below the forks of Clear Creek. Notwithstanding our light outfit we found the ascent very difficult but by the aid of ropes and pine trees we accomplished it finally, but we now realized that we had traveled by wagon as far as we could. We were in a quandary what to
do; but we finally concluded that, if we could get our outfit to the Creek at the bottom of the mountain, we would send the Mexican back with the team to Denver and take our chances of getting up the Creek some six miles farther.

We had a very quiet ox named "Brown" that I had driven from Leavenworth the fall before. I thought old Brown and I were well acquainted from our long association and many days of hard travel, and that he had as much confidence in us as we had in him. So Old Brown was unyoked and preparations were made for packing such things as would be absolutely necessary for our few days' visit at the newly discovered mines. The ox stood the operation of packing to our entire satisfaction, never once moving out of his tracks. He inspired in us the strongest confidence that we had solved the problem of means by which we should have our pack carried to the foot of the mountain without much physical exertion on our part. When all was ready we undertook to start the ox. It took only a moment for him to shake off his docility, his very first step was made with a bound, then he bucked, he kicked, he bellowed and he made things lively enough to compete with a "broncho busting" exhibit. He kept it up, too, until the contents of his pack were scattered all over the mountain top. At the first kick he struck a sack of flour and the contents made the mountain look buried in a snow storm. Flour was twenty-five cents a pound and scarce at that, so that we regarded Old Brown's friendship for us more expensive than the labor of carrying our baggage would justify. We gathered up what we could of the wreckage and proceeded to pack it down the mountain by hand and sent Brown back to Denver by the Mexican.*

*Andrew Sagendorf, one of the friends who was in the party which preceded General Larimer on this trip, as above mentioned, has written another account of this episode which has been printed in the Commonwealth Magazine and reprinted in Field and Farm. The following extract will present the point of view of an "outsider":

"By hitching all the teams to one wagon we could get up to the top of the mountain, but getting down the other side was the difficult part of the undertaking. The teams were taken from the wagons, a tree felled and tied
By the time we had gathered up the debris, our friends had accomplished the feat of getting two wheels of their wagon down the mountain and making a cart of it. This we borrowed and hitching a yoke of oxen to it and strapping our traps on it, we started up Clear Creek. The principal part of this route was crossing and recrossing the creek, without bridges of course and with only an occasional tree chopped and felled across the water to be used as a foot-log. A man who had just descended the mountain with a mule jumped on his mule and started to ford the stream. He had gone but a little way when away went the man and mule under the water. But after considerable scrambling about they finally reached shore alive though badly frightened. Mr Fisher also met with a mishap. He was afflicted with rheumatism and was much afraid of getting wet. The continual crossing and recrossing was at the risk of getting wet every time we did it, but Mr Fisher took the greatest precautions; he fixed for himself a seat on top of our load, which ran to a high point, but was behind one as a drag; then some of the party would guide the machine, and the remainder would pull back on the limbs of the tree. In that way we got the wagons down in every place but one, and that was so steep that General Larimer, President (sic) of the Denver City Town-Company, concluded he would leave his wagon at the top and pack his supplies down. He had a pair of young cattle one of which was very gentle, a great pet, indeed, and he decided to use that one as a pack animal. He got out a sack of flour, some bacon, bread, canned goods, coffee, baking powder, and some cooking utensils, consisting of coffee-pot, frying-pan, tin cups, etc. The ox stood perfectly quiet while all this stuff was being fastened on his back, and, so far as we could determine, rather enjoyed the experience. But he deceived us grossly, for when all was secure and the word given to go, he went with a vengeance. He jumped and bucked, and bucked and jumped and the clattering of the cooking utensils made him buck and jump some more. The packages burst, and flour bought on credit—sugar, baking powder, coffee and salt filled all the space on the mountain not occupied by the steer; and the celerity with which the cooking utensils went down the hill, bounding from rock to rock, amused all of us—except General Larimer. While the rest of us were rolling on the ground, and laughing as we had not for many months, we could now and then get a glimpse of the white, set face of the General as he stood, partly doubled up with hands on his knees, gazing now at the revolving and bounding ox, and now at the surrounding territory which was rapidly whitening with the flour as it settled down from the heights whither it had been propelled from the broken sack. The ruin wrought by this playful pet was complete and it was too serious a matter to raise a smile on his face, ludicrous as it seemed to us."
well tied with ropes. I was walking and driving, and whenever need arose I would start the oxen into the water headed diagonally against the current in the direction I wanted them to come out on the other side. I would then start up the creek to find a favorable crossing for myself. All the time I was watching the team and could hear old Mr Fisher hollering “Gee!—Haw!” etc. Once I looked around just in time to see one wheel go up over a boulder while the other struck in a hole, then quickly jolted against another boulder. All the time the frightened man was sprawling on the top of the load and holding to the ropes with both hands. He stuck to it well, but the rocking was finally too much for him; he lost his grip and fell off into the middle of the creek. Of course this was sport for a boy though it might mean agony or death to the rheumatic parson. Even my father who had been looking for a crossing for himself could not help laughing on the sly though he had to reprove me for my brazen enjoyment of the old gentleman’s misfortune. Fisher’s rheumatism stuck rather closely to him after that throughout the rest of our trip. We soon reached the forks of the creek and found two or three hundred people staking claims and prospecting. It was about this time that Gregory was making his discoveries* and rumors of rich diggings were

* "Gregory was a lazy fellow from Gordon county, Georgia, and drove a government team from Leavenworth to Fort Laramie in 1858, intending to go to Fraser River, but being detained at Laramie by want of means had drifted off to Clear Creek and with some others had encamped at a point between Denver and Golden. . . . It is said by Hollister, in his "Mines of Colorado" that he prospected in Jan. and found the color in the north fork of Clear Creek; and that being out of provisions he was forced to return to camp. It does not appear that he made any further effort for several months. He was finally grub-staked . . . by David K. Wall, and induced to lead a party consisting of Wilkes De Frees, his brother and Kendall, to the mountains and streams where he had seen the color. The party set out in April, proceeding from Arapahoe up the north fork of Vasquez or Clear Creek, climbing many successive ridges, and floundering through snow banks, until they came to the mouth of a gulch near the head of the creek and consequently well up in the mountains. Here Gregory suggested that it would be well to dig and look for float gold. While the other men dug he looked on. They obtained a fair prospect and went on excavating. Then said Gregory to Wilkes De Frees, who had grub-staked him, ‘Bring your shovel, and come with me.’ They went about 300 ft. farther up the side of the gulch, when Gregory pointed to the
flying everywhere in the mountains. This was very pleasing to us as it tended to quiet the immigrants and give our prophecies credence.

We camped at the forks of the creek for a week or so, prospected some and took in the sights generally. By this time prospectors were increasing rapidly in numbers and the new comers were getting reconciled to the situation. But as no one in our small party was much inclined to undergo the hardships and labor of digging and washing gold, we did not attempt much prospecting, but began to think of the return home.

The only way we had to get back home was to walk and carry our blankets and provisions. We divided our load according to our ability to pack,—coffepot, frying pan, grub and blankets were all we had: but they were enough. I had my share of them, and looked and felt loaded down like a pack mule, but I was generally in the lead through the three days it took us to make the return trip.

Before we reached the plains we met a party of six to eight persons who, to our knowledge, had made threats against my father in Denver. We were a little afraid they might attempt to carry out their threats, but they did not. We passed each other without a word spoken.

ground and said: 'Here is a good looking spot; stick your shovel in there, Wilk.' DeFrees obeyed, turning over a few shovelfuls of earth. 'Give me some in the pan' said Gregory again, and DeFrees filled the pan half full of dirt, which the Georgian proceeded to wash at a little stream running through a gulch close at hand. The product of that half pan of dirt was half an ounce of gold. Gregory went back for another panful, with the same result. Claims were immediately staked off. The effect of his extraordinary fortune crazed the weak brain of poor Gregory. All through the night sleep deserted him, and his companions heard his self-communings. He sold his discovery claim, under the impression that he could easily find another as good. The price he obtained, $22,000, was a fortune to him. . . .

The above is the account as given by H. H. Bancroft, but General Hall in his History of Colorado says that this is not an altogether true account, and he proceeds in Vol. 1, p. 193, to give what he regards as the correct account as related to Mr. Byers by the man who had grubstaked Gregory, namely, Wilkes De Frees; but for our purposes there is not much difference in the interesting features of the discovery which Gregory made in May 1859.

(Editor.)
After climbing the mountain to its summit again, the plains beyond looked good and our little log cabin in Denver seemed to us a palace. One cannot enjoy home comforts fully until after experiencing discomforts elsewhere, and it is on the return from such a trip as we had had that one can best realize the import of Payne's sentiment that a very humble place is a palace if it only be one's home.
CHAPTER NINETEEN

Horace Greeley visits Denver—Visits the gold diggings—Newspaper correspondents, Richardson and Villard—Villard's bill—Greeley's nomination for the Presidency—His physical collapse

ONE of the great events at that time, following close on the establishment of the stage line, was the arrival of Horace Greeley. It was generally known that he was expecting to pay us a visit, so we were not taken by surprise. I remembered how he looked as I had seen him when I was a small boy on his visits to my father's house in Pittsburgh, so I recognized him at once as the coach came up to the office in Denver at eight o'clock that Monday morning, June 6th, 1859. He was leaning out of the window taking the whole landscape in. Quite a crowd of his admiring friends were at the stage office to greet him. With his head sticking out of the side of the coach, his face was wreathed in smiles as if to say: "How do you all do?" Mr Greeley occupied the back seat on the left side of the coach. He alighted without any formal reception though my father showed him particular attention because of their long-time friendship. There were other passengers in the coach; and among them was Albert D. Richardson a correspondent for the Boston Journal who is the only one I now remember as of any prominence.

Arrangements had been made for Mr Greeley's entertainment at Denver Hall, the only public house of entertainment in the town. However, one night at Denver Hall was enough for Mr Greeley. The next morning father met him and he said: "General, can't you find me
a better place to stay? every time I woke up in the night, which was quite often, I heard some fellow say: ‘Who’ll try me a whack’”. There was a nice little cabin not far from ours on Larimer Street of which we took possession and we had a bed fixed up in it the best that could be under the circumstances. A woman who had arrived by stage and who was to take charge of one of the stage company’s stations was engaged to provide him his meals. His time was constantly employed in sightseeing, visiting, camping, and writing to the New York Daily Tribune. He visited us quite often and would bring his letters to our cabin for me to mail for him as I was then a clerk in the postoffice. I remember they were big, fat fellows and addressed to “Tribune—New York”.

In the evening of the day of Mr Greeley’s arrival he made an address in Denver Hall. He stood at a table placed in one corner of the hall; surrounding him were gambling tables on all sides. But when he commenced to speak the gambling ceased and he received the close attention of all those present. He was not backward about expressing himself on the liquor and gambling questions, but he devoted most of the time to agriculture of which he was a strong advocate. He advised the people not to go wild over the digging of gold but to turn their attention to farming and the gathering of the golden crops that would furnish sustenance to the world. He gave some very good advice, particularly at that time, as the immigrants were very much discouraged at the prospects. But good as it was then for immediate application, all the wiser does it now seem to have been as a prophesy for the future,—the far seeing vision of a great mind.

At six o’clock the next morning, Mr Greeley and Mr Richardson and Henry Villard, correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial, who had arrived in May*, started

* Mr. Henry Villard did not arrive in Denver in the same stage coach as Horace Greeley, as some authors have written. This is evidenced by the New York Daily Tribune of September 12, 1859, where is published a letter from him dated “Denver City, August 27, 1859,” in which he says among other things:

“... I was the first newspaper correspondent that sent the news of
on a trip to the mountains to investigate the prospects for gold. This was their prime business in the country, their newspapers having sent them for this purpose. They went up Clear Creek to the Gregory and the Jackson and the other newly discovered mines. They saw with their own eyes enough to convince them that the country was destined to be what was claimed for it,—a rich mining country, though these were only placer diggings as no quartz mining had been done up to this time.

Mr Greeley had met with several mishaps while crossing the plains. As a rule mishaps were very unusual, so the drivers seem to have been paying their distinguished traveler undue attention on this trip. Once the mules attached to his coach got frightened at some Indians and stampeded, upsetting the coach and injuring him quite painfully, the effects of which were plainly perceptible after he arrived in Denver. Now, during his trip to the mountains, in crossing Clear Creek on the return journey, the
developments of rich diggings in the Gregory Valley to the eastern papers and that two weeks before Mr Greeley arrived. Before I made up the letters containing the startling news, I spent an entire week unknown to the miners in my capacity as reporter, watching the work of most of the identical claims that were afterward mentioned in the report. For days I attended the scraping out of sluices, retorting, etc., and held in and weighed with my own hands most of the yields successively received per day and hence I was able to vouch for the richness of the Gregory mines long before Mr. Greeley made his advent in this locality."

It is obvious, therefore, that General Hall, among others, was incorrectly informed, since he states in his History of Colorado (vol. 1, p. 213) that "On Saturday, June 7th, two coaches of the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express arrived bringing nine through passengers,—among them Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, Albert D. Richardson, staff correspondent of the Boston Journal, and Henry Villard of the Cincinnati Commercial."

In the first place June 7th, 1859, was not a Saturday, nor did Horace Greeley arrive on a Saturday, nor on June 7th, nor in the first stage coach that arrived at Denver, nor did Henry Villard arrive at the same time. Greeley arrived on June 6th, which was a Monday, and Villard was at least three weeks ahead of him. A newspaper clipping preserved by Mr Larimer says the first coach arrived at Denver on May 17th, but this is improbable also as contemporary records in the New York Tribune show that the first Overland Express arrived at Leavenworth on its return trip from Denver on Friday, May 29th. It is a reasonable surmise that the clipping should have said May 7th instead of either May 17th or June 7th. See Mr Greeley's own testimony on page 200. (Editor's Note.)
stream was high and the current was swift, and he was swept off his mule and both of them were carried down the stream. By the assistance of friends he was saved though with difficulty and after a bad fright and a thorough wetting. In the following chapter some account of these mishaps will be quoted from his letters to the Tribune.

On his return to Denver, he remained some little time writing letters, mingling with the people and visiting while recuperating from his injuries. Much of his leisure time he spent with my father in our cabin talking politics and world problems. On one of these visits I recall that my father asked him who was his choice for President. The election was then more than a year off and Mr Lincoln had scarcely been heard of outside of Illinois. Mr Greeley said he favored Edwin Bates of Missouri.

At last Mr Greeley thought he was well enough to continue his journey, and so by Overland Express at 3 p.m., Tuesday, June 21st, he left Denver westward bound for San Francisco via Salt Lake City, and in the Tribune of the subsequent weeks is a series of letters describing this transcontinental trip.

A. D. Richardson remained in Denver as a permanent resident. He often came into our office to gather items of news for his paper, for after discontinuing correspondence with the Boston Journal he established a small paper of his own at Golden City. He was very plain in dress and quiet in manners, pleasant and agreeable, and well thought of by all who made his acquaintance. Although he came to Denver as correspondent of a far eastern paper, he was nevertheless a resident of Kansas Territory and had served in 1857 and 1858 as Assistant Adjutant General and in the winter of 1858-9 he was a member of the Territorial Legislature, (and Smiley says that he had been appointed one of the Commissioners to organize the projected new County in which Denver was situated and that performance of the duties of this commissionership was one of the motives of his coming to Denver in the spring of 1859: Editor). Richardson lost his life at the hands of McFarlain: his death under the circumstances was particularly
Dear Sir:

You will please pay Twenty-three Dollars, the amount of a bill enclosed in the accompanying letter to Mr. Smith, the Bearer.

Respt'y,

H. Villard

Mr. W. H. H. Larimer,
Leavenworth City.

Received (payment of) the above.
St. Louis, Dec. 29th, 1859.

Mr. Larimer:

Your father authorized me to request you to pay the following bill on delivery of the horse.

Total amount paid to Mr. Iliff for recapturing the horse... $5.00

$6.00

$2.00

$5.00

$5.00

$23.00

Resp'y, H. Villard.

St. Louis, Dec. 29th, 1859.

Mr. Larimer:

Your father authorized me to request you to pay the following bill on delivery of the horse.

To amount paid to Mr. Iliff for recapturing the horse... $5.00

$6.00

$2.00

$5.00

$23.00

Resp'y, H. Villard.
sad and much regretted by his many friends. In 1867 his western experiences were published under the title “Beyond the Mississippi”, but I have never seen a copy of it.

Several of us Denverites, who had spent the winter of 1858–9 at Denver, returned to our homes in eastern Kansas in the fall of 1859. My father and I were among the number. Father went by stage but I went by a four mille team of my own. The two of us reached Leavenworth at about the same time. I took three men with me. They agreed to board me and do all the work in return for their transportation. It was a pleasure trip for me compared with our trip out-bound the year before with oxen and a heavily loaded wagon.

A short time before we left Denver, I remember Mr Henry Villard’s coming into my father’s office and saying to him that he wanted to go to the States and that he could not afford to buy a stage ticket. My father said to him that he had a horse on Iliff’s Ranch and that he could ride if he wished to do so and would leave the horse at Harvey Edgerton’s stable in Leavenworth. Villard said that he would do it: so father gave him an order on Mr Iliff for the horse.

He rode the horse from Denver to Leavenworth and left him at Edgerton’s stable as he promised. But sometime afterwards, I received a letter from him dated at St. Louis, December 29th, 1859, of which I here give a facsimile together with a facsimile of the bill which was inclosed with the letter.

The receiving of this letter and bill came as a great surprise to me as I had heard the entire conversation between Villard and my father. There was nothing said about capturing the horse, the ranchman always delivered you the horse without charge. There were no horse-doctors in the country at that time and no directory of Denver and Auraria, that I ever heard of, in 1859. However, I was foolish enough to pay the bill and I got him to write “Received payment of the above” on the bottom of his letter, though this has become so mutilated as to barely show in the facsimile. My father was not in Leavenworth
at the time this letter and bill were presented to me. They were presented by a man named Smith who was, as I remember, an auctioneer in Leavenworth.

Before my father died, I said to him that a man by the name of Henry Villard had been appointed Receiver of the Kansas Pacific Railroad, and that in my opinion it was our old Denver friend. He said, No, he did not think it possible for such a man to get that high position; yet it was true, and he afterwards became President of the Northern Pacific Railroad and died in 1900 worth millions of dollars, as the St. Louis Globe of December 30, 1900, intimates.

HENRY VILLARD'S BEQUESTS.

Family Well Provided For; and Institutions Remembered.

NEW YORK, December 29.—The will of the late Henry Villard, who died at his country home, Dobbs' Ferry, in November last, was offered for probate in the Westchester County Surrogate Court at White Plains to-day. The value of the estate is not given.

To the widow, Fannie G. Villard, he leaves $250,000 outright and all the household furniture; to his son, Oswald, $30,000; to his daughter, Heine, $25,000 and the income of $25,000 yearly. To his son, Harold, he gives a share of the residuary estate. To his sister, the wife of Gen. Alexander, of Munich, he gives 20,000 marks.

After the specific bequests are paid, one-half of the residuary estate will go to the widow, and the balance to the children. The bequests include: Columbia University, $10,000; Harvard University, $50,000; Dobbs' Ferry Hospital Association, $30,000; New York Infirmary for Women and Children, $500; German Society of New York, $400; Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, $250; Hospital at Speyer, Germany, which he founded, 60,000 marks; museum at Kaiserslautern, 50,000 marks; the town of Speyer, 60,000 marks; the income from which is to be applied to the making of loans to deserving mechanics.

The executors of the will, which was made on June 23, 1900, are Horace White, Charles A. Spofford and the widow, Fannie G. Villard.

The sequel to Mr Greeley's visit was longer in coming. But it was the presentation by my father of Mr Greeley's name as presidential candidate. Although father always voted the republican ticket, he made an exception
in Mr Greeley's case and for that campaign joined the Liberal Republican Party which made Mr Greeley their candidate. My father was on the Electoral Ticket in Kansas: and the following letters had passed between him and Mr Greeley:

Leavenworth City, Kas.,
April 25th, 1871.

Hon. Horace Greeley,

Dear Sir: Your many friends in Kansas desire to have your views in relation to your name being brought before the next National Republican Convention in 1872, for nomination for President.

Without any disrespect to General Grant, we believe that no living American statesman has the claims of yourself for President.

Very respc't. your friend,

Wm. Larimer,

New York Tribune,
New York, May 1871.

My Dear Sir:—I have yours of the 29th ult., asking pointed questions with regard to our political future.—I must respond in great haste.

I trust never henceforth to be an aspirant for any office or political position whatever, but I fully purpose also never to decline any duty or responsibility which my political friends shall see fit to devolve upon me, and of which I shall be able to fulfil the obligations without neglecting older and more imperative duties.

I have not yet formed a decided opinion as to the man who ought to be our next Republican candidate for President, but it seems to me advisable that he should be a steadfast, consistent believer in the good old Whig doctrine, one Presidential term.

Yours,

Horace Greeley,

Gen. William Larimer,
Leavenworth, Kansas.

Mr Greeley did become a candidate and a nominee and I have a letter in my possession and of which a facsimile is on page 199A, which was written by Mr Greeley shortly before the election. Therein will be seen that he gives my father credit for nominating him. It also indicates that he thought he would be elected to the Presidency as he invites father to call on him in Washington.
Greeley lacked many votes of landing him in the White House. How his hopes were blasted is, of course,

well known to all men; and Greeley himself, in writing to his friend, Col. Tappan of New Hampshire, says:
"I was the worst beaten man who ever ran for high office and I had been assailed so bitterly that I hardly knew whether I was running for the Presidency or the Penitentiary. In the darkest hour of my suffering my wife left me; none too soon for she had suffered too deeply and too long: I laid her in the ground with hard dry eyes. While I am used up I cannot see before me. I have slept little for weeks and my eyes are still hard to close, while they soon open again."

Quoted in Hollister's "Life of Colfax," page 387, Note.

In the Leavenworth *Times* appeared the following article:

**A Valuable Gift.**

*The Gold Pen of Horace Greeley Presented to General William Larimer.*

"Yesterday afternoon a little package came by express from New York addressed to Gen. William Larimer, of this city, and containing the gold pen used by the great journalist and philosopher, Horace Greeley. This very valuable gift was sent to General Larimer by Ida L. Greeley as a recognition of the earnest and heartfelt services rendered her father during the last Presidential campaign. The pen has a solid gold handle elaborately chased and a fine jewel set in the head. It shows the wear and tear of newspaper work, but it is still as good as ever. These lines were written with the instrument, and if they do not exhibit any particular brilliancy it is the fault of the hand that guides and not of the pen from whose point so many rich editorial paragraphs have fallen. Gen. Larimer feels exceedingly proud of this souvenir of his old political friend, and happy in the thought that he was thus kindly remembered by the daughter of the veteran editor. It will be remembered that Gen. Larimer was one of the first men to mention Horace Greeley for President, and the family never forgot his kind services during the hotly contested conflict."
New York, May 7, 1872

My old and valued friend:

A thousand will claim to have first proposed me for President. Your letter was the first that ever gave my name to the public. I trust you may live to see the fruition of your zealous efforts. Call on me in Washington next winter.

Yours,

Gen. Wm. Larimer,
317 Delaware St., Leavenworth, Kansas.

HORACE GREELEY.
New York, May 14, 1872.

Dear General: Our friends are now organizing. We shall soon be in shape for action. Everything looks well here, and every day widens and deepens the current. If we are beaten it must be the work of causes not now operative.

Yours,

Horace Greeley

Gen. Wm Larimer,
Leavenworth, Kansas.
Chappaqua, July 29th

General Larimer,

Dear Sir,

I return you with heartfelt thanks these letters of my dear father’s. I shall in a few days select some souvenir of him that I think will gratify
you and express it to your address. If I ever should go to Kansas or you and Mrs Larimer should come East, I hope I may have the pleasure of meeting you both,

Very Truly Yours,

Ida Greeley.

New York, March 11, 1873

Dear Sir:

I am greatly obliged by your favor of the 6th inst. of course the talk about anybody being responsible for his nomination for the Presidency is preposterous. For my own part I was opposed to his nomination up to within two weeks of the Ohio annual Convention, and again and again with my grounds of opposition. When he finally told me that he wanted me to go to Ohio to vote for him, and undertake the work, I made up my mind as a matter of course to do my best for him. He wanted me there, and

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to look after the tariff, and
that I did. But I feared have
been an exceedingly poor friend
of his, if I had not also done
the best I could for his nomina-

The death was not due to
grip political disappointment,
but, mistrusting to the exor-
nious overwork which con-
suming for years finally cul-
mulified with tremendous
strain of the trip West,
and the return to his wife's
death-bed overwork he watched
almost sleepless for a month.
No human frame can endure
some what he then underwent.
I am a living witness that he
 consumed seven attention for
weeks to his political situation
than most of his friends, and
From the date of the Vermont election to the substantively made-up mind to the probability of the certainty of defeat. They grossly slander and outrage this memory who falsely say that he died because of political disappointment.

I am to thank you for the suggestion about Monroe's politics. Many of them fully coincide with facts within my own knowledge, and the part I am glad to accept on your statements.

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

[Address]

[Signature]
Dear Sir:

I am greatly obliged by your favor of the 6th inst. Of course the talk about anybody being responsible because of his nomination for the Presidency is preposterous. For my own part I was opposed to his nomination up to within two weeks of the Cincinnati Convention, and again and again stated my grounds of opposition when he finally told me that he wanted me to go to Cincinnati to represent him, and I undertook the work, I made up my mind as a matter of course to do my best for him. He wanted me there mainly to look after the tariff, and that I did. But I should have been an exceedingly poor friend of his, if I had not also done the best I could for his nomination.

His death was not due to any political disappointment but almost entirely to the enormous overwork which, continuing for years, finally culminated in the tremendous strain of the trip West, and the return to his wife's death bed over which he watched almost sleepless for a month. No human frame could have borne what he then underwent. I am a living witness that he gave far less attention for weeks to the political situation than most of his friends, and that from the date of the Vermont election he had substantially made up his mind to the probability if not the certainty of defeat. They grossly slander and outrage his memory who falsely say that he died because of political disappointment.

I have to thank you for the suggestions about Kansas politicians. Many of them fully concur with facts within my own knowledge, and the rest I am glad to accept as your statements.

Very truly yours,

Whitelaw Reid.

Hon. Wm. Larimer,
Leavenworth City,
Kan.
CHAPTER TWENTY

Horace Greeley's description of crossing the plains—An accident—His description of life in Denver—The author's retrospect regarding the settlement of Denver and surrounding country

THE accident to Mr Horace Greeley, while en route to Denver, mentioned in the preceding chapter, has been described by the Editor himself in the New York Daily Tribune of June 20, by the following letter under date of June 1, 1859:

"... The unusual dullness of this letter is partly accounted for by accident. Two evenings since, just as we were nearing Station no. 17, where we were to stop for the night, my fellow passenger and I had a jocular discussion of the gullies into which we were so frequently plunged, to our personal discomfort. He premised that it was a consolation that the sides of these gullies could not be worse than perpendicular; to which I replied with the assertion that they could be and were—for instance, where a gully, in addition to its perpendicular descent had an inclination of forty-five degrees or so to one side the track. Just then a violent lurch of the wagon to one side, then to the other, in descending one of the jolts, enforced my position. Two minutes later, as we were about to descend the steep bank of the creek intervale, the mules acting perversely, my friend stepped out to take them by the head, leaving me alone in the wagon. Just then, we began to descend the steep pitch, the driver pulling with all his might, when the left rein of the leaders broke, and the team was in a moment sheared out of the road and ran diagonally down the pitch. In a second the wagon went over, and hit the ground a most spiteful blow. I of course went over with it, and when I arose to my feet as soon as possible, considerably bewildered and disheveled, the mules had been disengaged by the upset and were making fast time across the prairie, while the driver, considerably hurt, was getting out from under the carriage to limp after them. I had a slight cut on my left cheek and a worse one below the left knee, with a pretty smart concussion generally, but not a pain started nor a tendon strained, and I walked

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away to the Station as firmly as ever, leaving the superintendent and my fellow passenger to pick up the pieces and guard the baggage from the Indians who swarmed about the wreck. I am sore yet, and a little lame, but three or four days' rest—if I can ever get it—will make all right.

It is the first and only accident that has happened to the express line, though it has run* out some thirty passage wagons from Leavenworth and perhaps half so many back from Denver, and this was the result of a casualty for which neither driver nor company was to blame.

Three days hence I hope to be at Denver (185 miles distant) whence our latest advices are very cheering to the hearts of the legion of faint and weary gold seekers we have passed on the way. I trust, for their success, that this news will prove fully true. But you will have heard by telegraph before this can reach you. . . " H.G.

Of Mr Greeley's debut at Denver City, June 6, the correspondent of the Cincinnati Commercial was quoted in the New York Daily Tribune of June 29, 1859, as follows:

"On Monday morning last this community was startled by the appearance of Horace Greeley, who, like another 'Deux ex machina,' unexpectedly dropped among the astonished denizens of this and adjoining places. He arrived on one of the Express coaches having made the run from Manhatten, twenty-two miles east of Fort Riley, in twelve days. When he emerged from the stage, he was in a rather dilapidated condition, in consequence of his being upset some three hundred miles east of this place. He was bruised all over the left side of his body. His countenance bore a variety of extemporized plasters; his inexpressibles revealed several tears and the use of his left leg had become almost impossible, by the severe cut he had received immediately below the knee. These bodily afflictions to the contrary notwithstanding, he landed in as jolly a disposition of mind as though he had just arisen from a dinner at Delmonico's, and not from the hardship of a trip across the plains. The news of his arrival soon spread among the frequenters of the many places of public resort in the immediate neighborhood of the Express office, and a numerous gathering was soon to be in front of the latter.

The distinguished visitor was at once taken charge of by a number of leading citizens. While he was being conducted to the Denver House the crowd broke forth into three lusty cheers, which were received by their subject with evident gratification. The venerable old hat and blue colored umbrella formed points of general attraction.

During the day the veteran was kept busy by receiving several hundred of residents and transient sojourners in this place, who were anxious to pay their respects to so well and favorably known a per-

*See footnote on pages 192–3.
sonage. In the evening the object of their attention addressed the people of this and neighboring towns, in the large apartment of the hotel, bordering the street, and serving the purposes of a bar-room and gambling saloon. It was certainly an odd sight to hear the time-honored champion against intemperance and loose morality generally, hold forth in one corner against the identical vices that were practiced in the other. I think it was the first time that the never yielding Horace found himself in the capacity of a public speaker in a grog shop, and in the direct vicinity of faro-banks.

The next morning the Express Company rigged out Mr. Greeley, Mr. Villard, et al., and they started for the exploration of Clear Creek valley and the Rocky Mountains.

The party, seven in number, reached Gregory's Diggings forty-five miles from Denver City on the morning of the second day, where the appearance of Greeley produced great excitement. Dr. Cast, the president of the mining district, conducted the party through the diggings.

During the day, Mr. Greeley was requested to treat the mining population of the Valley of Rallston Creek, a tributary of the South Platte, to an extempore address. He consented; and soon after sunset some 2500 individuals were gathered around a veritable pine stump, from which Horace commenced holding forth. He first described the impression he had received from his visit to the mining valley, and, at the same time, advanced a theory of his own as to the original formation of the quartz beds—of the richness of which he expressed himself to be fully convinced. He then proceeded to mount his usual cold-water hobby, which he rode with evident gratification to himself and a good many of the audience, for a considerable time. The gambling fraternity also received some scorching at his hands. He concluded by giving a description of the present condition of the political world of America and Europe and exhorted his hearers to temperance, industry and perseverance.

A number of other speakers, among whom the Superintendent of the Express Company, A. D. Richardson of "The Boston Journal" and Judge Smith were the most prominent, followed and it was at a late hour of the night that the meeting dispersed.

"This was undoubtedly the first Anglo-American meeting ever held in the heart of the Rocky Mountains. As such it had a peculiar significance and charm in the eyes of all participants. Although the first cause of the opening of this cheerless wilderness—the thirst for gold—is by no means peculiarly creditable to civilized humanity, yet the illustration of the rapid and irresistible expansion of Anglo-Americanism—whose impulses neither walls of rock nor unbroken forests, nor the ruthlessness of savage occupants, can withstand—afforded this gathering, and was of an original as well as a striking
character, and could not fail to deeply impress the beholder. Nor was it for external reasons exclusively that the occasion was fraught with so much interest. The illumination of the place of meeting by dint of pine torches; the unique and picturesque costume of the audience; the vigorous vibrations of the voices of the speakers and the cheers of the crowd from the surrounding mountains; the frequent discharge of firearms and the distant song of those who were encamped in the upper part of the valley—all united to heighten the grandeur of the spectacle.

The party returned to Denver City the next day and made their report."

In Hall's *History of Colorado* (I: 224–5) Captain Berthoud is quoted as relating the following incident which I have mentioned in the preceding chapter as having taken place during Mr Greeley's trip to the mines:

"Horace Greeley, mounted on a mule, dressed in rough garb of a traveler, with his old white hat firmly press upon his head, rode up to the bank. He was bound to see all that Pike's Peak promised to its votaries. He had heard that Vasquez Fork, like another Pactolus rolled over golden sands; that in the mountain peaks west of the Platte the miners had discovered gold everywhere, and that what was needed was work and small capital to produce untold wealth for all. In view of this he had sallied out, and now before him roared a vicious, impetuous, mountain torrent that must be passed. Fearlessly he plunged in, mule and all, and right manfully did he buffet the angry waves; but the waves prevailed; mule and rider and old white hat stood not upon the order of their going, but danced merrily down to swell the turgid Platte. Horror-struck at the accident, the whole population ran to the rescue. The mule landed first. A sturdy miner with a boat hook soon rescued the dripping and half-drowned editor, and by the seat of his unmentionables drew him ashore."

Thus Mr Greeley was saved to leave to posterity the following account of his experiences and observations in Denver City during the subsequent weeks of his stay there. The article was published in the *Tribune* of July 21, 1859, but was dated at Denver exactly one month earlier:

The rival cities of Denver and Auraria front each other from either bank of Cherry Creek, just before it is lost in the South Platte. The Platte has its sources in the South Park of the Rocky Mountains, a hundred miles southwest of this point but Cherry Creek is headed off from them by that river, and winding its northward course of forty or fifty miles over the plains, with its sources barely touching..."
the mountains, is a capricious stream running quite smartly when we came here, but whose broad and thirsty sands have since drank it up at this point, leaving the log footbridge which connects the two cities as useless as an ice-house in November. The Platte aided by the melting of the snows on the higher mountains, runs nearly full-banked, though the constant succession of hot sands and dry winds begins to tell upon it, while Clear Creek (properly Vasquez's Fork) which issues directly from the mountains just above the crossing on the way to the Gregory Diggings, is nearly at its highest and will so remain till the inner mountains are mainly denuded of their snowy mantles. But, within a few days, the foot bridge has been completed over the Platte, virtually abolishing the ferry and saving considerable time and money to gold-seekers and travelers, while another over Clear Creek precludes not only delay but danger—several wagons have been wrecked and two or three men all but drowned in attempts to ford its rapid, rocky current. Thus the ways of the adventurous grow daily smoother and they who visit this region ten years hence will regard as idle tales the stories of privation, impediment and "hair breadth 'scapes" which are told, or might be, by the gold-seekers of 1859.

Of these rival cities Auraria is by far the more venerable—some of its structures being I think fully a year old, if not more. Denver on the other hand cannot boast of any antiquity beyond September or October last. In the architecture of the two cities there is, notwithstanding, the striking similarity—cottonwood logs, cut from the adjacent bottom of the Platte, and roughly hewed on the two perpendicular sides and chinked with billets of split cottonwood on the inner and with mud on the outer side, forming the walls of nearly and quite every edifice which adorns either city. Across the center of the interior, from shorter wall to wall, stretches a sturdy ridge pole, usually in the state of nature, from which the "shooks" or split saplings of cottonwood, their split sides down, inclined gently to the transverse or longer sides; on this (in the more finished structures) the earthbed is laid, and with a chimney of mud-daubed sticks in one corner, a door nearly opposite, and a hole beside it representing or prefiguring a window, the edifice is complete. Of course, many have no earth or other covering on the "shooks" and so are liable to gentle inundation in the rainy season; but though we have had thunder and lightning almost daily, with a gale in most instances, they have had no rain worth naming as such here for weeks, and the unchinked, barely shooed houses, through whose sides and roofs you may see the stars as you lie awake at nights, are decidedly cooler and airier. There is a new hotel nearly finished in Auraria which has a second story floor; besides this mine eyes have never yet been blessed with a sight of any floor whatever in either Denver or Auraria.

The last time I slept or ate with a floor under me (our wagon box and mother earth excepted) was at Junction City nearly four
weeks ago. The "Denver House" which is the Astor House of the Gold Region, has walls of logs, a floor of earth, with windows and roof of rather flimsy cotton sheeting, while every guest is allowed as good a bed as his blankets will make him. The charges are no higher than at the Astor or other first-class hotels, except for liquor, twenty-five cents a drink for dubious whisky, colored and nick-named to suite the taste of customers, being the regular rate throughout this region. I had the honor to be shaved by the nephew (so he assured me) of Murat, Bonaparte's King of Naples—the honor and the shave together costing me but a paltry dollar. Still, a few days of such luxury surfeited me, mainly because the drinking room was also occupied by several blacklegs as a gambling hall and their incessant clamor of "Who'll go me XX" "The ace of hearts is the winning card." "Whoever turns the ace of hearts wins $20.00," etc. etc., persisted in at all hours up to midnight, became at length a nuisance from which I craved deliverance at any price. Then the visitors of that drinking and gambling room had a careless way, when drunk, of firing revolvers, sometimes at each other, at other times quitemiscellaneously, which struck me as inconvenient for a quiet guest with only a leg and a half, hence in poor condition for dodging bullets. So I left.

"How do you live in Denver?" I inquired of a New York friend some weeks domiciled here, in whose company I visited the mines. "O, I've "jumped a cabin,"' was his cold, matter of course reply. His jumping a cabin was rather beyond my experience, I inquired further, and learned that, finding a cabin deserted and tenantless that suited him, he had quietly entered and spread his blankets, eating at home or abroad as opportunity might suggest. I found, on further inquiry, that at least one-third of the cabins in Denver and Auraria were desolate when we came here, (they have been gradually filling up since); some of the owners have gone into the mountains, digging or prospecting, and taken their united supply of household goods along with them; while others discouraged by the poor show of the mines six weeks ago, when even the nearer mountains were covered with snow and ice, rushed pell-mell down the Platte with the wild reflux of the spring emigration, abandoned all but what they could carry away. It is said that lots and cabins sold for $25.00—so long as there were purchasers; but they soon failing, they were left behind like camp-fires in the morning, and have since been at the service of all comers.

So, in company with the journalizing friend, I, too, have "jumped a cabin", and have kept to it quite closely, under a doctor's care, for the last week or ten days. It is about 10 feet square and 8 feet high, rather too well chinked for summer, considering that it lacks a window, but must be a capital house for this country in winter. I board with the nearest neighbor, and it is not my landlady's fault that the edible resources of Denver are decidedly limited. But even these are improving: To the bread, bacon and beans, which formed the stable of
every meal a short time ago, there have been several recent additions: milk, which was last week twenty-five cents a quart, is now down to ten cents, and I hear a rumor that eggs, owing to the recent increase in the number of hens within 500 miles from four or five, to twelve, are about to fall from a dollar a dozen to fifty cents.

On every side, I note signs of Progress—Improvement—Manifest Destiny—there was a man about the city yesterday who had lettuce to sell and I am credibly assured that there will be green peas next month—actually peas!—provided it should rain soakingly meantime—whereof the hazy, lowering sky would seem just now to afford some hope. (P.S.—The hope has vanished), but I—already sadly behind and nearly able to travel again—must turn my back on these promises of luxuries and take the road to Laramie to-day, or at furthest to-morrow.

H.G.

By 1860 much prospecting had been done in the mountains and good mines had been opened. Quartz mines had been discovered; and considering the country was only one year old, great progress had been made which assured a permanent settlement. Denver had about twelve to fifteen hundred actual citizens through the winter of 1859–60; but there was always a large floating or transient population camping on the bottoms or in vacant cabins. In 1860 I took the census in Denver for the Government (Fox Diefendorf, U. S. Marshal) and I know I got all I could find and there were not quite four thousand, if I remember correctly.

At the time of our settlement at Cherry Creek our neighbors were few and far between. The nearest settlement to the south was the adobe building at Pueblo with a few Mexicans and one white man. The next east on the river was Col. Bent at Bent’s Fort. There were no whites in the mountains to the west until you reached the Mormon settlement of Utah with 500 or more miles of very bad Indian country intervening. On the north Fort Laramie was the nearest settlement. There was our Post Office and it was a six weeks' trip to get our mail. Around the fort and on the North Platte and some of its tributaries were a few Indian traders who also traded with the Mormon immigrants and overland travelers to California and Oregon.
There were no main thoroughfares between the East and the West—nor passes opened through the mountains. For months at a time not a white man passed over the trail between Mexico, Fort Bridger, Salt Lake and Laramie. Fort Lupton, St. Vrain, Vasquez and many of the Indian trading posts on the upper South Platte had been abandoned.

But in 1858 and 1859 a change was beginning. The California Overland Mail was established about the spring of 1858 and was semi-monthly. Prior to this mail was carried by a detachment of troops from Laramie to Utah as the necessity required. North of Laramie there were no settlements as far as the Canadian border, with the exception of an occasional French trader. To the east there was nothing until you reached the settlements of Kansas which did not extend more than two hundred miles from the Missouri River.

There was but one white man living on the South Platte River at the time gold was discovered at Cherry Creek. That man was Crawford Moore, who for a subsequent quarter-century lived quietly on his beautiful farm at Longanozie, Leavenworth County, Kansas. He was the lonely ranchman of Offalleris Bluffs, having located there some time during the year 1857 and was trading with the Indians and freighters during the Mormon War. Mr Moore when but a boy crossed the plains with his parents who were among the early settlers of Oregon. On reaching the boundaries of California, he with others left the party and drifted into California. He remained there but a short time when he returned to Salt Lake and got employment as a mail carrier for the Mormons, to Mountain Meadows and other points. Inspired by his observation in crossing the plains and his knowledge of the wants of travelers, he had a strong desire to become a ranchman. He first established himself on the North Platte near Laramie. He soon gave this location up for one he thought better and which did prove profitable on account of the discovery of gold on the South Platte River. Moore's Ranch was perhaps the best known and most popular
ranch on the plains in those days and will never be forgotten by those who traveled the road in the early sixties.

Mr Moore, unlike most of his brother ranchmen, never married a squaw. He was not unlike most of the young men who ventured on the frontier in those days: he left a sweetheart behind him in a civilized country. In time he married and took his young bride to his home on the plains. It was not long before the novelty of such life became monotonous and the Indians who had always been his friends became troublesome and made war on the whites. This was a favorable opportunity for the young wife to induce him to abandon his home on the plains for a more comfortable one. Having formed a business acquaintance in Leavenworth, where he purchased his goods, he concluded to spend the balance of his days among old friends there.

Jim Beckwith was another frontiersman with whom I became acquainted in those days. Of course he was of quite a different type from Mr Moore. Beckwith was a negro. I called on Jim and his bride in their cabin on the banks of the Platte River, a few miles up the river from Denver, in 1860. He had invited me there to eat 'possum with them. Jim had passed through many adventurous experiences, of which perhaps none was more thrilling or more dangerous than that of his sixteenth year. It was at the “Massacre of the Alamo”—that tragic event in the history of our southwest. It is said that only seventeen escaped from the Alamo that fateful Sunday morning. Of these, Nathaniel Bigford reached Gonzales and joined General Houston with whom he remained for a short time, being killed in a fight at San Jacinto about two months after the massacre. Mrs Alsberry, who with her babe escaped under the flag of truce, was never heard of afterwards and it was supposed that she was shot down in the flight.

Miss Hess made good her escape and spent her life among the Southern Comanche Indian tribes. She died among them about 1892, the grandmother of the tribe. She is the origin of the red hair and blue eyes among the
Southwestern Comanches. Mrs Dickinson, with her baby born in the Alamo, and known as the "Babe of the Alamo", succeeded in making her way to safety, and the daughter was still living in Austin, Texas, in 1892. The mother was afterwards again married to a man named Hanning. She died about the year 1882 or 1883. Mr Hanning followed her about 1889. The negro, a 16-year-old valet to Colonel Travis, who went out behind Mrs Dickinson on the horse, became afterwards the chief of the Crow tribe of Indians in the Crow nation, and was known throughout all the Western country by the name of Beckwith.

For a number of years he left the tribe and went to a place on Clear Creek near the present site of Denver. It was here that he married a colored woman and built him a house, but afterwards returned to his old tribe, and remained until his death, about 1883. His widow Candelaria, at the extremely advanced age of 107 years, in 1892 still lived in her little adobe house in Mexican San Antonio.
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

General Larimer leaves Denver—Begins war service—Recruiting officer—On Court Martial—Battle of Baxter Springs—An officer’s salary in the Civil War—Death of General Larimer

The General had not taken his family with him from Leavenworth to Denver because of the excitement and lack of comforts attendant upon the great influx of persons avidously seeking gold; he decided not to bring them to him during any time spent by him in that part of the West, but this naturally acted to cause him to early sever his connections with the progress of Denver. In the year 1862 he left Denver to return to Leavenworth to spend the rest of his days, as he thought, in peace and comfort following farming and mercantile pursuits. But the spirit that instigated John Brown was in the air, and the controversies which have already been mentioned in preceding chapters as sweeping over Kansas and Colorado Territories were acquiring momentum, and therefore it was but natural that the General should take an active part in what led up to and consummated in the Civil War.

For this chapter of the book we will content ourselves with a brief account of his career in his own words as found in letters written to his family, and notes scattered through a cash book record of his receipts and expenditures, personal and government, during the time that he was raising volunteers or leading regiments through the conflicts of the years 1862–65.

On January 18, 1862, William Larimer with his sons Edward and John, and a team of thirteen mules, one horse and a very light wagon, left Denver, for a return to Leaven-
worth. Short was his stay there, however, for on the 7th of August he was commissioned by Hon. J. H. Lane to raise troops in Colorado, and on the 25th of August he was back at Denver sending out notices to nine other members of a commission appointed to act as recruiting officers in raising soldiers for the war. Each of these officers had the rank of Second Lieutenant. During the next few months he spent his time in raising a regiment of volunteers designated as the Third Colorado Regiment, but the politicians of Colorado seem never to have greatly encouraged Mr Larimer nor promoted his patriotic efforts; so, on the 6th of December, he left again for Kansas, where in like manner under appointment by Col. Ellithorp of Chicago he began recruiting a company for Major-General Blunt's bodyguard. This project failed, not being confirmed by the Secretary of War, but Major-General Blunt was appointed a recruiting Commissioner by the War Department to raise a regiment of cavalry and Gov. Thomas Carney gave Larimer a recruiting commission with rank of Second Lieutenant. He spent four months recruiting his company and when it was done the Governor gave him a commission as Captain, bearing date 7th of August, 1863, and he was mustered into the service of the United States by Lieut. I. R. Kimbal, First Lieutenant.

On the 18th of August, 1863, he left Leavenworth, Kansas, crossed the Kansas River at DeSoto by a rope ferry with his troops and a U. S. baggage wagon and a train of twenty-four wagons loaded with corn; and, after evading Quantriel and his band of skirmishers who were on the lookout for him, seven days later, quartered his men in Camp Williams, near Fort Scott, and there awaited the filling of his requisition for thirty fresh horses. In a letter to his wife on that date he predicted it would be two weeks before these horses should arrive. All around Fort Scott at the time were many other companies encamped, each having cut a place for himself in the forest of wild sunflowers which covered the field.

The following extracts from his diary during this march are of interest:
August 19th. Nothing of importance has transpired in the two days' travel, except the boys milking a few stray cows and bringing into camp a fair supply of roasting corn and watermelons. The drinking water so far on our trip I consider very indifferent, but a full supply.

August 20th. Left camp at 6:00 A.M. reached Bull Creek and went into camp at 1:00 o'clock. We are now 46 miles from Leavenworth City; nothing occurred today. The boys as usual bring in a fair supply of watermelons, the corn is getting too hard for roasting ears. Weather extremely warm and the flies on horses and mules desperate. This is Camp French.

21st of August. Camp Benson, 1:00 o'clock. We left Camp French at 5:30 this morning and passed through St. Mary's and in sight of Piola on our left, say six miles. We also crossed several creeks, and the classic town of Osawatomie, John Brown's battleground if not former residence, quite a nice little village. Camp Benson is about three miles South of this town.

Today, about 9:00 o'clock, three or four men and boys came across from Piola and told us that they were expecting 900 rebels, that the whole County was aroused, and that last night several houses were burned three miles from Marysville East. We passed through Marysville early this morning and were told of a fire about six miles east of them in sight supposed to be rebels; still no certainty as one of the men thought it was a straw pile burning; but the old lady, his wife, I think, said it was a good house, that she knew it, as the house she referred to was missing today in her view. Taking this and the story above referred to, it may be all a mistake about the burning of a straw pile. We have no apprehension of an attack, still we will keep a strong guard all night for fear. I will put out a picket on the main crossing of the Pottawattomie. News has just come to us that Lawrence is burned and quite a number killed, but it is but a rumor.

August 22d. Camp French. We left camp this morning early after quite an alarm all night by people riding in to Osawatomic, etc. Nothing occurred today worthy of note. Warm and dusty.

August 23d. Sunday. Made the usual drive to Camp Croce. Lieutenant Pierson left us this morning to ride into Fort Scott.

August 24th. Arrived at Camp Williams near or within the bounds of Fort Scott. It rained some last night. I slept in the tent for the first time since I left home. We arrived at 12M. I spent all afternoon arranging matters: on my arrival I reported to Major Curtis and he ordered my command off tomorrow to Fort Blunt with such horses as we could get. I remonstrated, but he urged it. I told him we would go, on foot, if he said so, but disliked the horses. In the evening he countermanded the order, and sent me an order to report for duty here.
This evening, the 24th of August 1863, the stage came in with passengers and Leavenworth papers confirming the dreadful report of Lawrence being burned, and from 50 to 75 lives lost by wholesale slaughter by Quantril and his gang. This is the worst news of the war to me, but when I consider I got safely through with my little command of brave men and the large Government train of 26 wagons and mule teams, I feel both glad and thankful.

August 25th. Busy all day arranging camp, drawing forage, wood, etc., and ordering 30 horses from Captain Imley, Quartermaster. The order has gone to Leavenworth to Major Austin, so we will not leave here for at least two weeks.

Under date of 19th Sept., 1863, he wrote to his son Edward:

"In the absence of field appointments for the 14th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry, I am Acting Colonel. We had quite a parade yesterday. I did the job up to the satisfaction of myself and the regiment and received many compliments. We have now two Majors appointed from our own line officers; Lieutenant Colonel comes next; I hope it will be myself, and Colonel when the time comes. Still I can scarcely expect it. I am also now detailed on court martial; we sit every day at 9:00 o'clock. So you see I am busy as Acting Colonel, member of the court martial and doing duty as Captain of Company A, and in command also, because of being the senior Captain present."

On a later date he wrote home the following description of life in camp at Fort Scott:

"We have occasional shooting scraps here. Last Thursday a notorious rebel by the name of Baker who has been in the guardhouse awaiting his trial for some time, a known bushwhacker and captain of a company of his own stripe, was sent for a pail of water,—I guess by arrangements of the soldiers that knew him. When he got to the spring about a dozen men who were hid in the bushes near by, shot him dead. No one knew or cared who the soldiers were who did the deed. Baker had over $100 in American gold and $200 or $300 in greenbacks in his pockets.

"The next day a part of a Company of the 6th Regiment came up with a small train from Fort Gibson, and a number of them got on a spree and the Provost Guard shot two of them. One was killed, the other will survive. So we go! Yesterday morning Major Blair issued an order shutting off all whiskey shops from selling to soldiers. All right: we will now have quiet, I hope.

"The Government is putting up immense quantities of hay; fall weather is fast upon us. The corn fields are as dry as they can get,
fodder all dried up. The corn crop down here is good, except the dry weather set in suddenly, which makes ear corn have the appearance of being frost bitten,—shriveled all up. The growing season was good all over Kansas. I think in all northern Kansas the corn ripened nicely; the southern part of Kansas is naturally dry, and a very poor farming country compared with northern and middle Kansas, in my opinion. I would not want a farm down here if I could get it for nothing. Fort Scott is only five miles from the Missouri line. Peaches and apples are plentiful and cheap, brought in from Missouri. Grapes are brought down from Leavenworth every day in boxes by the boat. You can get only a small bunch, about fifteen to twenty grapes on it, for five cents.

"There are great tradings going on here in ponies. They sell very cheap, much cheaper than in Leavenworth. Still they would scarcely bear transporting to Leavenworth, but might pay well to Colorado. I would say any reasonable number up to 100 could be bought here any day from second-hand purchasers. I intend to watch the cattle trade: so far I have not heard nor seen any. I am told hay can be bought out west of this place in stacks for $2.50 per ton that would or might do to keep young stock through the winter if bought cheap. I find plenty of men here watching every chance to buy cattle, sheep or anything else that is for sale, but I think the great bargains at Fort Scott are over. I would say there are better points than this for trading."

On October 3rd, 1863, he received orders to march at 1:00 p.m. the next day to Fort Smith in command of two Companies, his own, Company A of the 14th Kansas, and Captain Conkley's Company I of the 3rd Wisconsin Cavalry, both to be a bodyguard to General Blunt. But because of his duties on the Board of Court Martial he did not personally accompany his troops, but designed to follow them several days later. He thus was prevented from taking part in the encounter between his men and the rebels in the battle of Baxter Springs, where seventeen of his Company A were known to be killed and five others were missing, and twenty-two of Company I were killed.

A few days after rejoining his men he wrote the following account of this battle. The letter is written from Humboldt while on a skirmishing expedition forty miles from Fort Smith, in Allen County, Kansas:

"The General and command came right up to Baxter Springs which is on a slight elevation. The enemy could not see us and we
could have gone into the Springs in less than two minutes had we gone on, but we halted and the escort got off their horses while the General was ordering up the band to make a display as they marched into Baxter Springs. There were two Companies then our cavalry and one colored Company. While waiting for the musicians the rebels came out of the timber. The General thought they were Union soldiers, who had come out of the Springs to meet him, as the rebels generally wear our blue overcoats. Even after the attack, the escort could have got into Baxter Springs with much less slaughter, perhaps without any, but the General, when he discovered they were rebels, supposed the Springs taken. This was not the case: though the rebels had attacked it, they had been repulsed and had withdrawn and concentrated in the timber. They did not even know the General was coming, but when they saw him and how few accompanied him and his confusion they made the attack and with success I assure you. The bodyguard acted rather bad: they were badly officered. Even before the charge they began to break and scatter in every direction with the rebels after them, running them down and shooting and robbing all with whom they came in contact.

"The number stated, with the band, teamsters and two of the General's servants, in all amounted to 75 or 80 who were killed. With few exceptions those who had horses escaped. My boys joked me saying that if I had been with them my horse would not have been fast enough. Lieut. Pierce had a very fast horse, so had General Blunt. All who stuck to the General were safe as ten or twelve were together; but after the scattering of both parties no number sufficient could ever attack ten armed men. Lieut. Pierce claimed the saving of the General; but in my opinion it was his having on citizen's clothes and his fast horse that saved him. Major Curtis was in full uniform and had a bad horse, one that was very short and with no run in him, so he was lost.

"The way the rebels killed so many was this: they shot the men, wounding them, then they came up to them, took all they had, including their arms, and then held a pistol either to their heart or head and killed them instantly. One of my men, though thus wounded, got off: he begged so hard that the rebel let him go; he had his leg broken only. Another one had his arm broken, but as he did not fall from his horse, he also got off safely. One other had a flesh wound in the arm. While I was at Baxter Springs we had alarms every night; one night I was in the saddle all night.

"We were ordered out here to Humboldt supposing a party of them were here, but we came too late. Thirty or forty of them were here last Sunday, or rather at the Osage Mission about thirty miles from here. We arrived there yesterday and were told by the priest (as it is a Catholic Mission) that they were, no doubt, about sixty miles farther south. We then came to Humboldt expecting to be reinforced
so as to follow them, but the troops left here yesterday morning for Fort Scott. So we lay over here today to rest and shall return to Fort Scott tomorrow, I think. Captain Thompson is with me and in charge of our movement. We have only part of three Companies here, picked men, seventy in all. It has been a very foolish trip, I assure you. I knew it before we left Fort Scott. All I disliked about it was the fatigue of riding to no purpose. I knew we would find nobody here: by the time the news reached Fort Scott since they were here of course they must have left; they do not stay long at one place.

"They killed none at the Mission, but took all the stock they could find. At Baxter they were variously estimated from 250 to 600 in number. Had every man in the bodyguard stood fire and met their charge they could have succeeded in overcoming them. Still they could not have stood against so large numbers, perhaps, but they could have gotten into Baxter Springs where they would have been safe, for they have a kind of fortification around Baxter Springs. General Blunt and no other is to blame. He acted, as Will says, like a Stoughton-bottle; he simply said and did nothing.

"I stand riding well. I rode seventy miles in the twentyfour hours ending last night at dark."

On the 29th of October, Mr Larimer with his forces left Fort Scott, penetrated the enemy's country to the southward with 600 heavily ladened wagons and plenty of soldiers. In writing home of this march, he said:

"This is the stamping ground of the rebels. Every farmhouse along the way, except one, that we have passed since we left Fort Scott is burned, the chimneys only standing.

"You could not believe the desolation of this part of Missouri; we are not quite half way through; our men are enjoying themselves very much. The General has a gay party around him all the time; he fares sumptuously every day.

"We get plenty of beef and fresh pork all the time, the country is well supplied so far. I am busy all the time; I have command of the bodyguard of two companies. Colonel Crawford of the 2nd Colored Regiment is in command. He is a first class man. I like him very much so far.

"I rode out six miles alone this morning to bring in some trains; I am officer of the day, and for that reason have time to write.

"I hope you will enjoy yourselves. I repeat: do not fret for me. I have a nice set of boys who will do anything in their power for me. I only wish you could see our camp, as we camp all together, which only occurred twice since we left. Some nights our camps are six miles distant from each, and one night the prairie grass got on fire and came near destroying the most of the trains. In the evening it
rained, which appears as though Providence had sent it to save our camp. I think Providence will have to take our train through, as General Blunt scatters it so much that at nearly any time, night or day, a portion of it could be easily cut off, it is so long and unwieldy. Still they could only burn it; they could not get it away far without a fight.

By the 19th of November he was writing from Fort Smith, Arkansas, as follows:

“This is a nice place with brick buildings, with a strong stone wall all around. This is a safe fort. Fort Leavenworth is nothing to it.

“I enjoy such good health. I had quite a cold after I got to Fort Scott, but got completely over it in one week, since then I am so well with good appetite. If we get down to some nice point where steamboats could reach us I would like you to come and see me scouting. I send out Sergeants and Lieutenants. My own going is seldom required. The officers send to me for instructions and numbers of men needed to act as details. I have now twelve of my men out at Fayetteville, and six with three days rations are out of the fort 25 miles foraging for everything our horses eat. I guess General Blunt will remain here; I hear nothing of his leaving. General Mc Neil is in command. The weather here is delightful. I have a nice camp stove, and am as comfortable as you are at that nice old fireplace at your mother’s. I have my tent nicely ditched all around. The mode of warfare down here is to take prisoners. Quantrel is about 200 miles from here in Texas with his band. He is reporting in Texas that he killed General Blunt at Baxter Springs, but it was Major Curtis. They really thought it was General Blunt, however; the Major was in full uniform when killed.

“I think I got into the war after the hardest of it is over. It looks so to me down here. Our company will be consigned now to cleaning out Texas. General Banks is away down at the other side of Texas, and we will meet somewhere about the middle of the State, I expect. My company made me a nice present of a sword last Saturday. It is a very nice one, costing considerable money. I have the good will of every member of my company.

“The officers have quite a gay time here; most of them spend every dollar of their salary. Whiskey is very dear at $16.00 per gallon, but they all drink. They all spend every day all, if not more than, their pay. I know however, there may be exceptions. Lieutenant Pierce is notably one of the exceptions. Personally I am not counted in with the command and officers, because I seldom go with them. They all treat me well, as I wrote you.

“I have a very nice riding horse, and I only wish that I had a nice saddle cover and bridle to suit the horse, and also a nice hat. Many
of the officers go very well dressed, and are very gay in appearance; still I look about as well as any of them, certainly well enough.

"News came in today that a Rebel Colonel with two cannon and 300 men had come over to our side at Waldson, 40 miles from here. Upon the whole, secession is fast playing out in this region. I think it possible we may never get into a battle, except small bushwhacking parties. I had strong doubts about getting down here safely, but now I feel as safe as you do at Turtle Creek, and I want you to feel so, too."

Mr Larimer's sojourn at Fort Smith seems to have lasted until April, 1864, and that there was friction now and then between some of the officers is evidenced by the following memorandum of indignant protest recorded in Mr Larimer's diary:

"FORT SMITH, ARKANSAS, 6th of February, 1864.

"On the above date Lieutenant Neimann acting Adjutant of the 14th Regiment, Kansas Volunteer Cavalry, did in the absence of Major Brown, commander of the above regiment, in camp at Fort Smith, Arkansas, on the receipt of an order from headquarters Brigadier John M. Thayer to the Commander of the 14th Kansas Volunteer Cavalry, send his, the Adjutant's Orderly with the order referred to, to Captain Briggs of Company F, 14th Kansas Volunteers to report to headquarters in obedience to said order, when he knew both by memory and official papers filed in his, the Adjutant's office, of said regiment, that Captain William Larimer, Jr., of Company A, said regiment, was the ranking Captain in said 14th Regiment, and reported on the Ultrorning report book for duty on the said 6th day of February 1864, and at his tent for duty, when the above order from headquarters was sent by orderly as above and given to the said Captain Briggs of Company F, 14th Kansas, but executed in direct violation of the army regulations.

WILLIAM LARIMER, JR.,
"Captain."

Mr. Larimer left Fort Smith, Arkansas, on the 22d of March 1864, to join his regiment at Ozark: he went by way of Roseville and joined the regiment on the 24th of March, the day they marched for Camden, Arkansas.

The regiment crossed the Arkansas River four miles below Roseville and camped the second night out, then left the Arkansas River southwardly, crossing over mountains and bad roads and went via Danville, Hot Springs, Rockport and Arkadelphia to join General Steel's army
four miles west of the Little Mission River. General Steel’s army had been fighting the Rebels all the way and General Thayer’s command had engaged them on April 14th, 1864. General Steel aided by Mr Larimer’s forces took Camden on April 15th and General Thayer arrived at Camden on the following day.

On May 1st, Mr Larimer was writing from Little Rock, Arkansas:

“This is the first day for weeks that I have not heard the sound of cannon, and the hardest fight of the campaign was yesterday morning at the Saline River crossing, 60 miles from here. We were 9 miles out at night, the night before, on our way here, but were stopped by orders from General Steel to wait for further orders. We left at 11:00 A.M. and from 8:30 to 10:30 the battle was raging around us all the time. The cannon soon stopped. I knew our army would succeed as neither Gen. Steel nor Gen. Thayer ever was whipped.

However two trains were captured with heavy loss. I suppose you have it long ago by dispatch. I went to telegraph you, but the line was down. General Steel could have held Camden easily, but we could neither forage nor get commissary stores. We got one train from Pine Bluff, and a steamboat load of captured corn, together with the boat. This town was threatened so we hastened off and that brought us ahead of General Steel’s main army, the 14th and the 2nd Infantry Companies. I have slept only one night in the last four. The night we left Camden I was field officer. Colonel Cloud’s brigade and mine had to bring in our pickets after 2:00 A.M., with the prospects of the Rebels overtaking us. The Rebel camp was only three miles out, and but one mile from my pickets. I heard their drums in the morning. I cannot write you anything to give you any idea of General Steel’s campaign. I do not call it a retreat, it was not, but we had to fall back for sustenance for man and horse. A supply train has started out to meet Steel’s army, but before its arrival they will have to eat parched corn, for part of the time at least. I had a good supply myself, I bought it when the train came. We bought from the commissary at low rates, nothing was added for transportation. I have a pack horse, my trunk is behind. I may lose it, as we have the worst roads you ever saw since the last rain. Our camp at the Saline Crossing is the muddiest place that we have had.

“Quite a lot of negroes are with General Steel’s army, probably 1,000 young and old. When I left you could see nothing of them but mud scrapples (?). I think we will be here for some time, so you may write to me at this point. I am so well, and take things easy. I wrote you a full account of our battle... The Rebels are certainly in large force in this region, some say about 80,000 in all. I have not
eaten a bit since yesterday morning until 3:00 P.M. today. I have just had a dinner which I would call a good square meal at the cost of a dollar. I am so glad to get here I do not now feel like wanting to water my horse in Red River, as I so often said. It is said General Banks had to fall back from (illegible), and this injured our success. The Rebels are jubilant, they got 170 wagons and mules from the first train, and 200 from the last, full mule teams and killed possibly 400 or 500 in both, and took 1500 of our men prisoners. We have less than 100 prisoners in all, ourselves."

The Government pay received by William Larimer, Jr. is recorded in his memoranda, as follows:

1863, Apr. 4th to 1863, Aug. 12th. As 2nd Lieutenant \[ $839.46 \\
Aug. 12th to Oct. 31st. As Captain. \[ $269.55 \\
Nov. 1st to Dec. 31st. \[ $263.93 \\
1864, Jan. 1st to 1864, Feb. 29th \[ $550.15 \\
Mar. 1st to June 30th \[ $1,084.48 \\
July 1st to 1865, Feb. 28th \[ $1,093.05 \\
1865, Mar. 1st to Aug. 31st \[ $1,093.05 \\

Thus it is seen that the average pay of a Captain during our Civil War was about $141 per month.
Major-General William Larimer, Jr.,
Pennsylvania Troops
About 1852
Joseph  Thomas  Cassius  William
George  John  Edwin

SONS OF GENERAL WILLIAM LARIMER, JR.
Photograph 1875
CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The close of General Larimer's career—Perpetuation of his name—Military record of his descendents.

THE preceding information regarding the General's career during the Civil War has been compiled from various letters handed down in the family and is necessarily disconnected and incomplete. These letters, of later date, show that he was at Fort Smith off and on through 1864, and at Pine Bluff perhaps throughout 1865, but there are no incidents of special importance narrated in the later letters.

During this period of the General's life, his son, William H. H. Larimer, seems to have spent his time partly at Leavenworth and partly at Denver. With headquarters at Denver, also his son John had engaged in the business of transporting supplies between Leavenworth and Denver, also somewhat in a mercantile and baggage business in Denver, as well as in Leavenworth.

At different times during the years following the General's departure from Denver most of the town lots which he and his son had taken originally in Denver were sold for their account by various agents. Thus gradually their financial interest in the City of Denver was eliminated and they concentrated more and more on farming land and other real estate holdings at Leavenworth and in its vicinity. Yet at least two of their lots in Denver remained in the family until Jan. 26, 1906, when they were sold for $100,000 to Mr. J. Nethercote of the Fifteenth Street Syndicate by Mr. James R. Mellon, a son-in-law, for the benefit of Mrs. Annie Jones, eldest daughter of General Larimer.
This daughter Annie married Mr Thomas Mifflin Jones of Pittsburgh, January 24, 1858. The General's only other daughter, Rachel Hughey Larimer, in 1867 married Mr James Ross Mellon of Pittsburgh, who renewed a childhood acquaintance with her by a visit in Leavenworth in the summer of 1864, when sent there by his father, Judge Mellon, to attend to some of his property interests, as he was en route to Pittsburgh from Milwaukee where he had spent the preceding months as clerk in the office of the leading attorney of that city.*

Allusion has already been made in the earlier part of this book to the interest the General had taken in Woman Suffrage in his first legislative duties in Kansas Territory and in Nebraska. In 1870, in a letter dated February 10th, Mr R. Whitsett, his companion on the first trip across the plains, knowing Larimer's interest in this topic, wrote him as follows:—

"Our Legislature is working away with every prospect of giving the suffrage to woman. The bill has passed the Council and is now in the House. Great hopes are entertained by many that the bill will pass."

This was in the Colorado Legislature, but it was many years later before the hope was realized, though to Colorado is due the credit of being at the forefront in this movement for enfranchising woman.

In February and March, 1875, General Larimer was making plans for going into the banking business with a Mr A. M. Clarke in Carson City, Nevada. On the 10th of April of the same year, he wrote his son that he had had a violent attack of asthma:

"You have no idea how I have suffered; often I feel like smothering: I get it by spells in the night. As a general thing I do not go to bed, but keep on my clothes. I am not seriously alarmed as John Watt of Pittsburgh survived his asthma for twenty years. He finally went to Denver, but it was too late.

"I am very weak and any little work brings on my heavy breathing. For instance, I cannot draw a bucket of water. Putting on my boots tires me. I do not, of course, attempt to do anything.""

* Thomas Mellon and His Times, Pittsburgh, 1885. Page 375.
Mrs James Ross Mellon
(nee Rachel Hughey Larimer)
Photograph about 1898.

Mrs Thomas Mifflin Jones
(nee Annie Eliza Larimer)
Photograph about 1891.
On his farm near Leavenworth, on Sunday morning, May 16th, 1875, thirty six days after writing this letter, the General passed out of all suffering and his busy career was closed. Though gone, he left behind him the influence of a widely active life. Larimer township in Somerset County, Pennsylvania; Larimer Station on the Pennsylvania Railroad; Larimer Avenue in the City of Pittsburgh and Larimer Street in the City of Denver and Larimer County in Colorado and Fort Larimer in Arkansas, were all named in his honor.

During the Civil War, Mr Larimer's highest commission was a captaincy; but the title of General, with which he was usually designated by all his acquaintances, dated from June 4, 1848, when he was commissioned Brigadier-General of Pennsylvania troops by Governor Johnston. He had previously been commissioned Second Lieutenant in the Eighth Infantry of the National Guard of Pennsylvania by Governor Shulze August 3, 1828; and Major of the First Battalion of the Sixth Regiment, Allegheny County Volunteers, by Governor Shunk April 15, 1845.

His brigadier-generalship was followed by commission as Major-General conferred by Governor Bigler December 22, 1852.

Four of General Larimer's sons also served in the Union Army during the Civil War: these were John McM., William H. H., Thomas McM., who belonged to the Seventh Regiment, and Cassius who belonged to the First Regiment of the Kansas State Militia.
CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

William Henry Harrison Larimer—A trip up the Missouri River to Fort Benton, May 1st to July 6th 1867—Difficulties of navigation—Fuel supply

Our author, William Henry Harrison Larimer, was born at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, December 9th, 1840. He was the son of General William Larimer and Rachel (nee McMasters). He received his education in the common schools of Pittsburgh until 1855, when he accompanied his mother, brothers and sisters to Nebraska. As already stated, at the tender age of eighteen, he accompanied his father on the long trip over the plains, mostly afoot, in search for the gold fields of what was then known as the “Pike’s Peak Region”.

He possessed very much in common with those other men of the expedition whose daring and initiative, and whose healthy, impulsive virility made them impatient of restraint and led them on to conquer the wilderness.

After his father had left Denver to return to Kansas and to enter the army, William also returned to Kansas and after various experiences as a trader and merchant, through the warring days of 1863–66, he decided to recoup his health and try his fortune again in the farther west. Therefore in the following chapters we shall follow his trip up the Missouri River to Fort Benton and Helena in 1867, as written by himself.

When we were living in Nebraska, I have seen the boats going up the river bound for its headwaters. I would watch them enviously until they passed out of sight, and many a time I wished I were aboard. In the early sixties, when gold was discovered in Montana, many of
my friends in Denver and Leavenworth wanted me to go with them to that still more distant frontier, but I was so situated in business at the time that I could not well get away. It was not, therefore, until May 1st, 1867, that my chance came.

Five of us from Leavenworth, W. H. Carson, John R. Deal, Lon Hastings, his partner Barnes, and I, engaged passage on the Indian trading boat Jennie Brown for the trip to Fort Benton. This boat was owned by Durfee & Peck, of whom the former lived in Leavenworth and both were Indian traders on the upper Missouri River. The regular fare was $150 but as there were five of us we were taken for the total of $625 and were given the choice of staterooms. As there were only three women on board, the steward’s wife, and a laundress, and an old woman accompanied by her son, we had the largest stateroom on the boat in the ladies’ cabin. Captain Frank Horn was in command. We had about thirty deck hands and sixty-five passengers. The cargo of about 250 tons was principally for Durfee & Peck’s stores on the upper river with some local freight for Sioux City and Yankton, which was the farthest north of any town of consequence; though it was not a large place itself.

A decade or so before the date of my trip Fort Pierre was the only military post on the Missouri River north of Leavenworth, but in 1867 there were five or six, of which Fort Rice was the principal one and Fort Pierre had been abandoned. There were woodyards at frequent intervals along the river, but after we got out of the settlements (which was not far above Yankton) we had to cut our own wood, about 20 to 25 cords per day according to the circumstances. On many days we would have heavy head winds and could make but little headway but would consume great quantities of wood. On such occasions if we could find a good landing place where wood was plentiful, we took care to take on a generous supply irrespective of the time consumed.

Where there is one snag in the Missouri River now surely there were twenty about fifty years ago. At that time
most of the bottom lands along the river all the way from its junction with the Mississippi to its headwaters were heavily timbered and the trees were constantly falling into the river due to the banks caving in and the rushing of the cyclones. Now, practically all these bottom lands have been cleared and made into farms from which our millions of bushels of products are distributed over the world to sustain the lives of countless thousands. But on this trip the snags were still there and navigation was slow. We made no attempt to run at night until we passed the mouth of the Yellowstone. I remember that early one morning I was on the upper deck, the Captain was at the wheel and with a deal of pride he said to me: "I have run all night and never touched a bank or bar". I think that was the only night-run on the whole trip, however. Our boat drew about three feet: after we unloaded a part of her cargo at Yankton she drew about two and a half feet.

Here is a letter which I wrote to my brother Thomas:

STEAMER "JENNIE BROWN",
June 7th, 1867.

Dear Tom:

We are now not far from Fort Rice. We will get there tomorrow if we have no bad luck and the wood holds out. I wrote home from old Fort Sully which will have been received before this reaches you. This is a hard trip to find anything to write about, the same thing every day—eat, sleep and get wood. We have not seen any Indians since we left Sully. A small war party was seen by a boat a short distance behind us the other day. They were in the timber along the river bank. When we see none, then is the time to lookout! We keep a guard out every night. I was up night before last all night. This is a poor country, not good for farming. We see some game almost every day—elk, antelope, deer and an occasional buffalo. We got two antelopes, they were fine as we have been out of fresh meat for sometime.

A party of us went up to New Fort Sully. The landing is some distance from the fort. We stayed at the fort until late. It was 11:00 P.M. when we started for the boat with a captain for a guide. He said he built the fort and knew the road well. The result was we got into the timber and brush, got lost and had a man give out—we thought he was dead for some time, no sign of life—he was an old French Indian trader by the name of Larpender, but he came to.
By the assistance of Mr. Peck, myself and others we kept him with the party, there were eight of us. We did not get to the boat but found our way back to the fort at about 2:00 A.M., stayed until daylight and struck out again. We caught the boat about seven miles up the river just in time for breakfast, 7:00 o'clock.

What made it so bad was it rained all night and dark was no name for it. We had a lantern which was considerable help to us. I was quite sick all the next day, but I am now over it and will not try such a tramp on this trip again.

We had an awful storm yesterday afternoon about 4 o'clock. I was in bed. I heard Carson tumble out of bed and soon I heard the thunder, rain and wind. We had quite an exciting time of it for a short time. The river was like a sea, I never saw it so rough, we could not make shore to land, it blew so hard. The water washed over the guards two feet deep, or the boat dipped.

It washed over a large ice chest and some other things such as buckets and chairs. The best part of it was we were making a bend on some rapids and the wind shifted aft; I tell you we went up stream faster than we have at any time since we started. Afterwards, as soon as we could, we tied up and lay for the night and got on some good wood. It rained all night and is still blowing. We are on the go, we have to have something to keep up the excitement. I hope to hear from home at Fort Rice; write often.

We are now at Fort Rice, will be here until evening. I have been all around. It is a very nice post for this country. I received no letters, though I would have liked so much to have heard from home. Any reports of the Indians making an attack on this fort are untrue, we heard at Sully that they had.

At Fort Sully there were about 180 lodges of Indians. Durfee & Peck had a store there. At Sioux City we took aboard four French Indian traders, who were going to Fort Union to work for the company. They knew all about the northern Indians, they were old men.

At Fort Rice we spent most of the day unloading freight and giving Mr. Peck time to attend to his business with his store. Here I became acquainted with General Whistler who was in command of the post. He told me much of his experiences on the frontier, and he seemed to like it. He told me of the different army posts he had superintended the construction of. From his conversation I should infer that much of his army life had been spent among the Indians. When at Fort Sully it was reported that the Indians had made an attack on Fort Rice and three Indians were killed but there was no truth in this report.

Fort Union was at the mouth of the Yellowstone and was one of the oldest and most important Indian trading posts on the river. Originally it was one of the American
Fur Company's forts. Fort Bufort, a military post, was close by. We had on board two United States Marshals from Yankton who were going to make some arrests. Among those to be arrested by them was a man by name of Campbell at Fort Bufort. When the boat landed the Marshals went ashore and soon found their man and had him on board and we were on our way once more up the river. But we had not gone far when an officer, Col. Rankin, with three soldiers appeared on a bluff where the boat would pass quite near the shore on account of the channel. He commanded the Captain to stop his boat as they wanted this man Campbell. The Captain was a little slow to take the order until they threatened to fire. We were well within speaking distance and they used such persuasive arguments that the boat ran her nose to the shore and Campbell was given up much to the chagrin of the Marshals.

The country through which we were passing was full of game but the trouble was that it did not do us much good unless it could be shot quite near the banks. One day some of the passengers killed two elks in the timber close to the river. They were fine fellows and lay side by side not 200 yards from the bank, so we were able to get them. On the same day two buffalos were killed, but they were too far away to do us any good. We would often see buffaloes swimming the river. On one occasion there was a large herd of them swimming ahead of the boat within range of our guns. We shot one of them but it managed to get ashore and died close enough so that we were able to drag it aboard. It took all the men passengers and the crew to do it, however, for it was a big bull. We had it nicely dressed and anticipated enjoying it for breakfast as we had to depend on game for our fresh meat. When placed on the table we soon found to our sorrow that it was not palatable as it was so impregnated with wild onions. None of us could eat it and the carcass was thrown into the river.

Of course it was not every day that hunters could go out. They had to take advantage of the bends of the
river and the times for taking on wood. I recall that at one place a boat ahead of us was so close to us that we waved our handkerchiefs and were almost within speaking distance, yet it was estimated that by the river's course we were at least twenty-five miles behind them. It was in such places as that, that we could get ashore and hunt and then catch the boat again as she came back on the next bend. One day we picked up a man who, with others, had been hunting the day before but did not get to the right place in the river again in time to catch his boat. He had become separated from the rest of his party and had been out all night without anything to eat. It was a risky chance that he took of catching another boat and finding its captain willing to land for him. There was another place where a lone horseman appeared on the bank of the river and hailed us to say that he wanted to get across the river. We were quite near him and he offered the Captain twenty-five dollars to ferry him across but the Captain refused. Fuel was too dear for the waste of any on such ventures. If we happened to get short of wood where none was in sight, we might have to drop back down the river. We suffered that misfortune once and wooded at the same place twice.

The entire trip was a long and tedious one. At Sioux City we took on a yoke of cattle and a wagon which proved a great assistance in the wood business as some of the trees we cut were necessarily a long distance from the boat. From Sioux City to Yankton and beyond we lost several days by head winds and by getting stuck on sand bars. The most poling we had was near Jim River. We put in the time in various ways, some reading, some playing cards. It was a good-natured crowd, but it would be hard to find sixty-five passengers in those days without finding more or less gambling and drinking.

Before I left Leavenworth I bought quite a large music box and this I would wind up every night before going to bed. The women on the boat slept on the floor in the ladies' cabin. I remarked to Mr Peck that that looked rather tough when we had such nice quarters. But I
justified my own selfishness on the ground that my health had not been good for two or three years and I was not well when I started, so that I would not have attempted the trip at all if I had not been well located in comfortable quarters. Of the three women on board only one was a passenger and she was probably traveling at very reduced rates. There were not staterooms enough to go around, so that some of the men had no rooms.

The traffic on the river was considerable: there was scarcely a day that we did not see a boat, some passing us and we passing others. Cleaning the boilers was another thing that had to be done often: during parts of the trip it had to be done every night. Some of the boats had their pilot house protected against Indian bullets, and sometimes we would have to stand guard over our woodchoppers. At night we would always shove out into the river and haul in our gang-plank and keep a guard on the boat. All this kind of work was done by the passengers.

There were numerous small tribes of Indians that are seldom heard of in these days; many different bands of Sioux, too, that have been absorbed with other Indians. There were no reservations in that country at that time: the Indian was living in his native wilds and lord of himself. I have seen hundreds of bull-boats floating down the river with usually two bucks in each. They could float down or could cross the river but could not go up stream. These boats consisted of a frame made of willows four or five feet in diameter and perhaps two feet deep with a buffalo hide stretched over the frame. Once I saw a squaw crossing the river in one of them; when she landed she drew the boat out of the water, put it over her head and back, and walked off with it.

A letter written to my father from Fort Benton, Montana, gives my impression at that time and so I will let you read it:

Steamer "Jennie Brown"
July 4th, 1867.

Dear Father:

This is the Fourth of July. I presume you are all celebrating somewhere. We are now seventy miles from Fort Benton and will
get there to-morrow sometime, I think we could have been there today but we are making a sure thing of wood. I had the pleasure yesterday of meeting your old friend, Capt. Sam Howe of the Galliton. We were on the Drowned Man Rapids, I was with him about an hour, he was very clever and kind. His boat made the second fastest time from St. Louis this season, forty-eight days. He has now a contract of freighting some government stores from Camp Cook to Benton. He is doing well.

We are now taking on some pine wood which is very scarce. A few of us took a long walk over the bluffs this morning. This end of the river is much more pleasant to travel on, the river is narrow with plenty of water now, and the scenery in some places is grand, such funny shaped rocks. The river is clear to what it is below. We hear that night before last Gov. Meagher was drowned at Benton. A party was having a good time on the "Thompson", he left the cabin and that was the last seen of him. It is supposed he fell over the guards. No effort was made to find his body, it would be of no use as the current is so strong. At the rapids we came over yesterday there is a fall of nearly four feet in a few hundred yards.

Everything in Montana is reported very dull and goods low. There will be quite a stampede from here this fall. My intentions are to stick it out this winter. We are now nearly through. I do not regret the trip, I think it will be a benefit to my health, if nothing else. I have been sick some on the boat but now feel "bully". This is a beautiful day, cool and pleasant. We have had but two or three days that I would call warm. The Indians did not trouble us on the trip, we see them off on the bluffs occasionally. In time I think there will be trouble with them on the river. We are now, and have been for sometime, not paying any attention to them. We go off from the boat on the hills without arms.

I am so anxious to hear from home, and I expect to, at Benton. I wrote to Ed to write to me there. Capt. Howe told me that there was for a short time, no mail communications on the plains on account of the Indians, but now everything is in order again. The last news we have heard from the States was the 15th of May, we do not know what is doing.

As this is the Fourth of July, Lon Hastings said he was going to fire the guns and ring the gong at 3:00 o'clock this morning. Someone got awake before he did and fired. I was very much amused to see him get out of his bunk, he was blowing so much about getting up this morning: he felt cheap!

Quite a number said last night that as this was the Fourth of July, I would have to drink. I have been lecturing on temperance on this trip. There has been considerable whiskey consumed. There is not much drinking to-day, but it is hardly time. We have had one or two very sick men; one was given up to die the other day but is now
doing well—congestive chill. Mr. Peck overdosed himself with medicine a few days ago and it went very hard with him. He is one of the owners of the boat. I will send this down on the boat, will not close until we reach Benton.

July 6th—We arrived here at daylight, all O.K. I received Ed’s letter, and it was quite a treat. We are out sixty-six days from Leavenworth; it is a long way. The Steamboat cards of distance from St Louis vary from 2,900 to 3,100 miles. In time no doubt when this country becomes settled there will be railroads and it will not seem so far

Affectionately your son,

W. H. H. Larimer.
CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

From Fort Benton to Helena, Montana Territory—Bandits—Pioneering life—Misfortunes—Returns from Montana in 1867—Subsequent career and death

Governor Meagher, who was drowned by falling off the steamboat Thompson, was the governor of Montana Territory at the time. It was at first supposed that he met with foul play and was thrown overboard, though it has now been generally accepted that he accidentally fell overboard. On our arrival at Fort Benton a rush was made by the passengers to secure transportation to Helena about 125 miles. Stage accommodations were not nearly sufficient to carry the crowd. Carson and I had an opportunity to buy a span of horses and a wagon from a man who had come over the mountains from Oregon with his family and intended to take a boat here for the States. The fare down the river was only $40 for cabin passengers, and thus it was much cheaper than by wagon trail.

Carson and I got along with our team all right until the second day, when, just as we were starting from our nooning, two road agents appeared coming over the hill within a few hundred yards of us. They were so near to us that I recognized one of them as a man whom I had met and talked with at Fort Benton. My gun was in the front end of the wagon and I was not long in getting it. As luck would have it, they halted when they saw that we recognized them and their purpose; and just then some wagons came over the hill on their way to Benton. The drivers stopped to talk with us and the road agents, noting this
and thinking that we were warning them or asking for assistance, turned and made off in another direction.

There were some Leavenworth parties a little ahead of us, we thought, and so we hastened on hoping to catch up with them; but it turned out that they were behind us, and these too came up just in time. There were three of these Leavenworth people and they saw the road agents off in the hills and supposed that they were after them until they came up with us and heard our narrative. From that time on we traveled together and felt safe enough, although the road agents continued to follow us all that afternoon but at a respectful distance. A short time before we took this journey there had been some parties murdered, robbed and scalped near this same place; it was supposed by Indians, but the scalping may have been done with the intent of diverting suspicion from the actual perpetrators. These road agents undoubtedly thought that we had money. When we were getting our money from the Clerk of the boat there were a lot of loafers sitting around. The clerk said in a pleasant way: "Boys, I don't care much for you, but I would like to have your money". This gave them a tip and no doubt the fellows who followed us from Benton were on the boat at that time ready to get a hint from their confederate.

Our first opportunity to engage in business in this part of the country was on the road about seven miles before reaching Helena. As we were passing along the road a man tried to sell us his ranch. He took us all over it and showed us what he had and said he would sell it cheap. But he valued it too cheaply we thought; and at the same time we had no intention of engaging in that kind of business. He had every kind of vegetable that would grow in that country about ready for market. He had an irrigating ditch, hay stacked, and all work was done except to market the crop and we had the horses and wagon to do that with. It looked like easy money for a couple of thousand dollars. However, we left it and went into Helena which was our destination when we left home. There I met many of my old acquaintances from Leaven-
worth and Denver, but very few had prospered. I met some who wanted me to go with them from Denver when gold was first discovered. It looked as though they who had been at Helena the longest were the poorest. The best gulches had been worked out and not many new discoveries had been made. Quartz mining had not been developed to any great extent. Merchandising was overdone, yet if you wanted to purchase anything prices were out of sight. I paid $2.50 in greenbacks for a shave, shampoo and haircut: the price was $2.00 in gold.

We looked the situation over very carefully and made up our minds not to engage in any business that would tie us in case we wanted to get out of the country in a hurry, and as the ranchman was still anxious to sell, we bought. The ranch was well worth the money, if everything had gone all right. We spent a few hundred building a house and began marketing our truck. Helena was a good market and cash came in fast. Roasting ears, mere nubbins, were sold for seventy-five cents a dozen and everything else on the same scale of high prices. All went well for a time, and then the grasshoppers came upon us. They went for everything green and would almost dig into the ground for something they liked. Turnips and rutabagas they would eat in their entirety, leaving nothing but a shell. As fast as possible we sold everything we could. We tried driving the grasshoppers into ditches where they could be burned or otherwise killed, but to no purpose, so we had to let them have what they wanted.

Of course there were some things the grasshoppers could not get away with: the corn and potatoes and a few other things they left; but it was only a short respite that we had. On the second day of September we had a warm, summerlike day. But on the third of September another calamity fell upon us: the weather became intensely cold and everything that the grasshoppers had left was frozen. That fixed our determination. We immediately commenced to make arrangements to get out of the country. We sold off everything we could and moved into town to
visit among our friends while completing plans for our homeward journey.

After William H. H. Larimer's return in 1867 from Montana, his next venture was in the lumber business at Abilene, Kansas. But it was not long before this became distasteful to him and he then went into cattle raising in Texas. In 1871 he disposed of this and moved to Independence, Kansas, where he bought a hotel. For the next five years he operated this hotel very profitably while at the same time he continued the raising of cattle with much success in partnership with H. H. Crane.

In 1887 he settled in Kansas City where he formed the livestock commission firm of Larimer, Smith & Bridgeport. This was later succeeded by The Larimer Live Stock Company, and still later by Larimer, Stagner & The Perionett Company. Of this latter company he remained the head until the date of his death, so that during the later portion of his life he resided in Kansas City and became a prosperous business man and a prominent citizen.

As a business man he had great natural ability. Though lacking somewhat in the temperament that makes for the most conspicuous financial success, he was able, nevertheless, by virtue of his adaptable talents and likeable personal qualities, to win a considerable fortune and a position of prominence and honor in the community where he finally made his home. Personally he was a generous, courteous, well poised man, of distinguished appearance and with the air of the pioneer and fighter of the West, that had been stamped into him by heredity and by experience,—the effect of his varied and adventurous career.

He was married February 22nd, 1871, to Martha, daughter of David Craig Montgomery of St. Joseph, Missouri. They had two children: William Henry and Annie Eliza.

He died at his home in Kansas City on May 25th, 1910. His daughter married Mr George W. Gallagher, and it is through her and the interest of her cousin Mr William
Larimer Mellon in the career of his grandfather that these papers have come into the possession of the Editor who has prepared them for publication at their request as stated in the preface.

In closing the Editor wishes to thank these two for all that they have done to assist his labors and also to thank Mrs Rachel Larimer Mellon for much advice and assistance in the accumulation of letters and scattered information with which to unify, as far as possible, the whole compilation, as well as for the use of some of the illustrations which appear throughout the book.
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