

GARDEN OF THE GODS (prior to 1870) *

The American Indian forms a link between "the remote past" and archeological discoveries of human habitation on the American continent some 5000 years before the birth of Christ. Such early activity is evident in Mexico and the Southwest. In contrast, the settling of Ute Indians in the Pikes Peak region is far more recent. This hardy race belongs to the Aztec linguistic family. They lived in skin tipis in the Bayou Salado or South Park. They defended their hunters' paradise against all invaders. Until the 1880s they spent cold winters camping on "the old red land". By 1492 the Ute Pass Trail was a well travelled thoroughfare through the front range of the Rockies. During three succeeding centuries, hunters, trappers, traders, explorers, Plains Indians and numerous others swarmed around the mineral springs, the valley of Fontaine and Bouille Creek and such surrounding areas as the Garden of the Gods and Camp Creek.

In May 1858, Julia Archibald Holmes (the bloomer girl), her husband and the Lawrence party of gold seekers probably had not intended to visit the Garden of the Gods. They were camped on a stream which they named "Camp Creek". A severe electric storm caused them to seek shelter in a cave in the Gateway Rocks of the Garden of the Gods. Soon afterward, Julia was to win fame as the first woman to climb Pikes Peak.

The Indians' "old red land" was bounded roughly speaking by Camp Creek to the east, the confluence of Ruxton and Fountain Creeks on the south and the valley of the Fountain (called Ute Pass) to the west. Any name by which it may have been called was permanently changed in August 1859. M. S. Beach (who relates the following incident) and Rufus Cable rode from Denver to start formal action in locating a townsite, soon to be called Colorado City. While exploring nearby spots, they came upon a beautiful park. Beach suggested that it would be a capital place for a beer garden when the country grew up. Cable, a "young and poetic man" exclaimed, "Beer Garden! why it is a fit place for the Gods to assemble." We will call it the

"Garden of the Gods". And by that name it has since been known.

Dorothy E. Smith