

WHAT HAPPENED WHILE THE CABIN LIVED

Elsie Woolsey Chambers

This story, written by Elsie Wolsey Chambers, probably about 1885 while she lived on the ranch, was discovered only recently. Written in faded pencil on a very fragile little scratch pad, the wording was deciphered with great pains by her granddaughter, Elsie Woolsey Hibbard.

Quite recently an old landmark has been removed from this vicinity. It was the unpretentious cabin where Walter C. Galloway lived from 1867 to 1875. The cabin was located on the hundred and sixty acres southeast of the gateway to the Garden of the Gods.

Mr. Galloway was a plain, plodding day laborer but exemplified what persistence can do in securing a come in his own name by staying in one place and cultivating the regulation patch of garden demanded by Uncle Sam, while earning the greater part of his living by day's labor wherever it could be secured. Whether he took any active part in the incidents and enterprises that transpired during those years, I do not know, only this, that he must have lived in peace with his neighbors and the Indians from the condition of his cabin when it came into the possession of Robert M. Chambers who bought his homestead right early in 1875. He received \$1400.00 for his right—and his fee for proving up on the same and felt that he was well paid, and that he could go home quite a rich man. Nothing has been heard from him since his return to his eastern house.

The years from 1867 to 1875 were not uneventful in history making in El Paso County. The residents of this section of country had recovered from the disastrous results of the visit of the grasshoppers in 1865 and were beginning to better the improvements on their claims, and boundaries were established by fencing.

During '66 and '67 the stock business was said to have germinated, and in the spring of '68 there were considerable herds of horses and cattle, and small flocks of sheep in various parts of the county.

While the flourishing crops of grains and garden produce were evidently too great a temptation to the grasshoppers to leave unmolested, these crops were no temptation to the Indians, but the Indians did know the value of horses and cattle.

In August, 1868, a band of Cheyennes and Arapahoes, seventy-five in number, sauntered into town and demanded provisions, for they were friendly Indians and carried certificates from the officers at Forts Larned and Wallace. Instructions from the governor also demanded that these Indians should not be disturbed for they were friendly.

The savages continued their course up in the mountains and murdered a small party of Utes, then returned by way of West Mountain-Creek by September and stampeded a herd of 120 horses near

Edgerton belonging to Mr. Harlen Teachont (*might be Leachont*). A scouting party went in pursuit of the horses but none were ever recaptured.

The people of the surrounded country gathered in the old stockade fort—that was built for the Indian scare of '64—and such arms and ammunition as could be secured were collected for service. Cheyenne Creek and McChane's Ranch were also points of rendezvous.

The scouting party encountered the Indians east of Bijou Basin and were surrounded by them with only a moderate supply of provisions and no water, forty men against five hundred Indians.

The Indians would not come very close and the scouting party reserved its fire for close work. One of the Indian party called out in plain English, "You are spoiling for a fight—why don't you pitch in?????" showing the Indians had a white man to abet them in their depredations.

The scouting party was thus surrounded for twenty-four hours, when one of the party known as "Texas Bill" rode through the enemy's lines in quest of assistance. Though a shower of bullets were fired at him, he only received a slight wound in the ankle.

During the following day the Indians left, and the scouting party moved homeward, meeting a scouting party from Denver within a few miles. No doubt the Indians had become aware of the approach of the Denver party.

The scouting party reached Colorado City without loss, neither had they punished their enemy, but their return gave the home guard confidence against an attack. It was not the policy of the Indians to attack an armed or protected force and they had apparently deserted the country.

People gained confidence in security, and returned to their vocations, just as the Indians anticipated; and a war party swept down Monument Valley taking such horses as they found on the way, and killed and scalped Charles Everhart, who was herding his father's cattle where Colorado Springs now stands.

They also killed Judge Baldwin but could not scalp him as that had been done years before in South America. Near the Fountain, two sons of Mr. Robbins were killed and scalped in sight of their mother, after which they gathered some valuable horses belonging to George Banning and disappeared on the plains. This ended the raids of hostile Indians in this immediate vicinity. There were some depredations continued near the town of Monument and some victims added to the list. The only house burned during this raid was that of Mr. Walkers, near Monument. His grain was also destroyed.

By the first of October the Indians had left the county and the people returned to their desolated homes to save what they could of their summer's crops and gathered together their scattered stock.

Save for some sporadic depredations in the North eastern part of the county the following year, there have been no further serious disturbances by the Indians in El Paso County and the stock business continued one of the leading enterprises in the county.

When Colorado became a territory, February 26, 1861, with a population of 25,329, President Lincoln appointed William Gilpin as governor. From that time until 1867, the following were governors John Evans, A. Cummings and A. C. Hunt. During these years, the many changes of territorial officials appointed at Washington engendered a healthy sentiment for statehood and application for statehood was made while Andrew Johnson was in power, but the bill was promptly vetoed by him and it took fifteen years for Coloradoans to win the independent position of state-hood.

The first effort for government in El Paso County was made by the organization of the El Paso Claim Club in 1859, whose duties were to adjust the difficulties arising between claimants and for the establishment of the office of District Recorder.

Cabins were built along the Fountain and the first real practical farming was done in 1860 by John Bley, Hubbard Talcot and William Talcott.

About this time the pioneers became impressed with the importance of direct communication with the mines, and a "way" was opened through the Ute Pass, by personal effort and sacrifice of time and comfort for months.

Their only pay was hope, and part of the time their only food was venison. No wonder they were proud of their road and resented any suggestion that it was not a good road.

However, in '63 the road evidently needed repair for some \$10,000 or \$12,000 were expended to open the Canyon of Ute Pass. The grasshopper raid of '65 suspended the work on the Pass by compelling the pioneers to look more closely after the where-with-all for family needs.

The work on the Pass was not resumed until '71 when through the influence of Judge E. T. Stone the county commissioners were given authority to issue bonds of the county for \$15,000 and the contract was awarded to Mr. E. T. Colton. His contract for work with Rocky Mountain Rock (?) was as unfortunate as Mr. Jackson in the Strickler (?) tunnel, and he finished his contract with his private means exhausted and himself a bankrupt—and scarcely a recognition of the benefit of his work was to the present generation and would be to all generations in the future.

During the period while the old cabin was occupied as a residence, the years '67 and '69 seem to have been years of puerilities (?) in making history, but in 1870 the Rio Grande railway enterprise made that year, and the following when the first stake was driven for the Colorado Springs town site the most eventful years in the history of El Paso County.

The first newspaper published in this county was the Colorado Journal in '61, a Colorado City paper, but printed in Denver, and edited by B. J. Crowell.

In 1872 the Colorado Springs Co. commenced the publication of the "Out-West" with Mr. J. W. Litter (?) as editor. The "Out West" was transformed into the "Weekly Gazette" in '73 and after Mr. Litter's death in '75, B. W. Stick (*or Stich*) became its editor.

During the winter of '71 and '72, the Manitou Hotel was completed and made ready for guests the following season, but was altogether inadequate, and the tourists were dwellers in tents on the banks of the Fountain In'e Bonille (?).

Colorado City was the county seat and a court house was built in '72 by the united efforts of the county and residents of the city, but the following year the county seat was moved to Colorado Springs, and the court house building in Colorado City was occupied as a school building until it was taken down and replaced by the present Bancroft building.

Colorado College came into being in 1874 and the first sessions of the preparatory department were held in the hall in the Wanless Block (where the Bank Block now stands) with Rev. Jonathan Edwards as principal.

In the spring of 1874, Mr. R. M. Chambers arrived in Denver with his family on April 24th, just a week after a deep snow, having come to Colorado for his wife's health and expecting to locate in, or near, Denver. On the train coming from Cheyenne was Mr. J. S. Wolfe, then of the El Paso Bank, who was looking out for strangers coming into the state, and so well represented Colorado Springs that upon his solicitation, Mr. Chambers made a visit of three days the following week in the Springs, and within that time bought the property on the corner of Monument and Weber on which there was an unfinished house, and secured a boarding place for his family just east of F. L. Martin's residence. There were about four houses on that block and it was considered away out of town.

In three weeks time Mr. Chambers was located in his own premises and to await the effects of the climate. By the fall his wife's health was so far improved that he determined to remain in Colorado and made arrangements for a permanent home by securing the homestead right referred to and moved on the ranch in February of '75, giving it the name of Rock Ledge.

A frame building had been erected during a few weeks previous which was occupied by the family until the stone building was completed in the following summer, and the cabin was relegated to the home of the horses, and as a workshop.

The employees of the ranch also made the cabin their rendezvous when the day's work was done, and many and varied would be the stories that the chimney stones might tell could they but talk. And quite as varied would be the stories the horses might tell of adventure and disappointment toll finding a quiet resting place at last. Cosmopolitan have been the horses as well as the people who have recounted their stories to their companions, from Santa Claus horses, which occupied the cabin the first Christmas Eve that four footed beasts found shelter there, to the bucking bronco. Santa Claus horses were probably the largest oxen ever known in Colorado. Their owner was bringing an invalid son down from the mountains, and night overtaking him, he was lost in the Garden of the Gods and stopped over night. The children were told the oxen were Santa Claus's horses and only knew oxen by that name for some time.

Mrs. Mary H. Graves of Boston who was stopping at the ranch at the time, wrote quite an interesting story of that Christmas which was published in the Boston paper.

Perhaps the writer will interpret the stories of the Chimney stones and the four-footed travelers at a later day.

The cabin has been torn down and the four-footed travelers brought to mind Will Carleton's poem, "Out of the Old House into the New", by forgetting their new stable and standing in their wonted place, behind a few posts and under a few boards that were left, and calling for their feed, wondering where their table had gone. And when nothing but the stone chimney was left, Dot and Dora stood face to face close to the old chimney consoling each other for the loss of the old home.

(The following was probably written later:)

As the years have gone by since 1874, the homestead claim has grown more fruit and vegetables than any other ranch in El Paso County. With its six acres of asparagus, hundreds of apple trees and hundreds of cherry trees besides other fruit, its value has increased many fold and shown what even the apparent barren land, so near to the foothills, may become by patient persistent effort.

The enterprises of the vicinity within the past decade have brought modern ways, and all the aspirations for the opportunities of eastern city life, including business, educational and religious life.

The last of the old land-marks is gone and we are a modern people, at least in our own eyes.

E. W. C. *(Elsie Woolsey Chambers)*