

# *Reminiscences of Edward W. Wynkoop* 1856-1858

Edited by  
W. Charles Bennett, Jr.

## INTRODUCTION

**E**dward Wanshear Wynkoop was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on June 19, 1836. In 1856 he moved to Kansas where he was employed in the Pawnee Land Office, Lecompton, until 1858. He then he joined a group of entrepreneurs, journeyed to the Rocky Mountains, and was one of the founders of Denver, Colorado, where he remained until the advent of the Civil War. He became a lieutenant in the First Colorado Regiment of Infantry Volunteers, was soon promoted to the position of senior captain of the regiment, and after distinguishing himself at the battles of Apache Canyon and Glorieta Pass, New Mexico, was promoted to major.

After duty in New Mexico, Wynkoop's command moved to Fort Garland and then to Camp Weld, Colorado. In 1864 he was assigned to the command of Fort Lyon, Colorado. There he came into contact with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, became convinced of the integrity and virtuousness of the Indian character, and did all in his power to effect a peace between the United States and the Indians. In September, 1864, he took principal chiefs of both tribes to Denver to confer with military and Indian department officials. He was relieved of the command of Fort Lyon on November 2, 1864, and departed. Colonel John M. Chivington attacked the Cheyennes and Araphoes near Fort Lyon in a fight that is often referred to as the "Sand Creek Massacre" soon after Wynkoop departed the area. Wynkoop condemned the action, was reassigned the command of Fort Lyon, and ordered to conduct an investigation of the affair.

After the Sand Creek investigations Wynkoop was promoted to brevet lieutenant colonel. He resigned his commission in 1866 after serving as a special Indian agent, and was appointed agent for the Upper Arkansas Agency, Kansas, by President Andrew Johnson.

Throughout his service as an Indian agent he was a consistent champion and defender of the Indians.

After the Battle of the Washita, November 27, 1868, Wynkoop charged the army with perpetrating a massacre similar to Sand Creek, and resigned his commission as Indian agent under protest.

Following his resignation, Wynkoop returned to Pennsylvania and engaged in a number of occupations. In 1876 he was a miner in the Black Hills, South Dakota. He was later appointed to positions in the Federal Government and the Territorial Government of New Mexico. Edward W. Wynkoop died September 11, 1891, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, at the age of fifty-five. He left a wife and five children, and was a respected citizen of New Mexico.

The following pages comprise the first part of Edward Wynkoop's reminiscences, written in 1876 and entitled "On the Plains and In the Mountains - Reminiscences of Thirteen Years of an Eventful Life, Amid the Scenes of the Kansas Troubles, Among the Indians of the Plains, with the Hunters, Trappers and Gold Miners of the Rocky Mountains; and in the Service of the Rebellion, Comprising Campaigns in New Mexico, and during Indian Hostilities." The manuscript was never finished, and today is housed in the State Historical Society of Colorado Manuscript Collection, Denver, Colorado, and the Museum of New Mexico History Division Manuscript Collection, Santa Fe, New Mexico. The two copies of the manuscript are slightly different in punctuation and capitalization, and this edited version is a composite of both, the closest to the proper form of today.

It is through the courtesy and generosity of the State Historical Society of Colorado and the Museum of New Mexico that a portion of Wynkoop's reminiscences appear here.

W.C.B.

## CHAPTER I

Should this narrative ever be read by any other than my near personal friends and relatives, I have an apology to make for what must be inevitable in simply detailing the experiences of any one individual: viz.: the frequent occurrence of the personal pronoun "I."

In the fall of 1856, not yet having arrived at manhood, I was a passenger on the steamer *F. X. Aubrey*,<sup>1</sup> on the Missouri river bound for Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. We found ourselves unable to reach

our destination in consequence of our further progress being checked by large masses of floating ice, rendering a walk of twenty miles necessary for the passengers to reach a point where food and shelter could be procured. Rather a rough introduction to the virgin soil of bleeding Kansas.

The poor territory of Kansas at that time was literally bleeding; strife and anarchy prevailing, the country overrun by armed parties of Border Ruffians and Free State Men, these frequently coming in conflict and seeming to strive which should commit the greatest number of depredations, while the peaceable farmer was subject to the rapacity of both parties. Gov. John W. Geary<sup>2</sup> had just arrived and it was hoped and believed by many law abiding citizens that he would succeed in bringing order out of chaos. The young city of Leavenworth was then filled with Eastern speculators, many Indians titles having recently been extinguished, and the land about to be offered for sale. With all this the utmost confusion prevailed.

The writer became an attachee [sic] of the U. S. Land Office then presided over by Gen. Wm. Brindle and had an opportunity of witnessing the frantic struggles of the Speculators in their endeavor to snatch up up the most valuable lands.<sup>3</sup>

Governor Geary made his headquarters at Lecompton, then called the Capital, having with him as a body guard a detachment of U. S. Dragoons. I do not propose to give a history of the Kansas troubles or the administration of Gov. Geary, this being almost entirely a personal experiences narrative, suffice it to say that a short time after the Governor's arrival it seemed as though he was going to meet with entire success in quieting the turmoil, but subsequent events proved to the contrary.

He had been insulted when coming out of the Legislative Hall at Lecompton by an individual belonging to the Pro-Slavery party, who the day after was shot and killed during an altercation coming from the above cause by one of the Governor's Clerks, who succeeded in effecting his escape from the Territory. This renewed excitement, and the Governor supposing his life in danger left for Washington, but all this is a matter of history.<sup>4</sup>

The Land Office to which I was attached was located at Lecompton which during the year 1857 was a lively place; a strange sight for anyone fresh from the East to step in and see our Chief, Gen. Brindle, standing at his desk with a Bowie Knife peeping from under one side of his coat tail and a Six shooter from the other, while all the attachees of the office were armed like Brigands. I recollect a young gentleman just arrived from Pennsylvania, who had been

brought up in a pious family and was of Quaker descent, being horrified a few hours after his arrival to take a position in the Land Office at seeing me buckle on my weapons after Dinner before proceeding to the Office. "I should consider myself no better than a murderer," he exclaimed, "were I to go armed in that fashion; why do you do it?" I replied, "Never mind my boy, if you stay here long you will find out;" and truly in a few days I found my Quaker lad with a bigger pistol and a longer Bowie Knife strapped around him than any of us boasted. Poor fellow, he escaped the perils of Kansas to lay down his life afterward for his country at the Battle of Antietam.<sup>5</sup>

## CHAPTER 2

During the year 1857 our Office was kept very busy with the hundreds of hardy settlers coming in to prove up their claims, and the trials of the many contested cases. Among the latter was the celebrated case between Gen. Jim Lane and Gajus Jenkins, which subsequently caused the affray between those gentlemen and resulted in the death of Jenkins at the hands of Lane.<sup>6</sup>

In the course of time our office was removed temporarily to the little town of Paola, in south western Kansas, for the purpose of selling the lands of the Kaskaski, Peori, Piankisha, Wea and Miami Indians which were held in trust by the government.<sup>7</sup> After being appraised these lands were sold to the bona-fide settlers at the appraised price, but the balance were knocked down to the highest bidder. These lands being situated close to the border of Missouri, the consequence was that here the contending factions, the Missourians and the free-state men of Kansas, were obliged to meet and intermingle. Many Missourians had come over and made settlement on these appraised lands, Paola for the time being became neutral ground as each settler was interested in procuring the certificate for his land. But many a private encounter took place, and at one time a general battle was imminent.

Honorable Robert J. Walker<sup>8</sup> was then governor of Kansas, and thought it a good opportunity while these conflicting elements were harmonized for the time to make his appearance, and by kindly talking to them endeavor to throw oil upon the troubled waters.

A wagon was run up under one of the windows of the land office upon which the Governor stepped. The crowd assembled was composed of hundreds armed to the teeth, about equally divided between free-state and pro-slavery men. The Governor,

with the utmost kindness and considerable eloquence, addressed them in a long speech which was listened to with respect. But just as he retired through the window, a little individual belonging to the free-state party and hailing from Ossawattamie named Foster<sup>e</sup> leaped upon the wagon and in an excited manner denounced Governor Walker, the government of the United States, and things generally, butting particularly at the Governor, and then retired after creating considerable excitement. At this juncture Mr. Perrin<sup>10</sup>, a gentleman who accompanied the Governor, stepped through the window and took his position upon the wagon. He said he did not wish to make a speech, but the incidents that had just transpired reminded him of a little story. There was at one time a farmer, he continued, who owned a male goat. He was a little fellow, but very pugnacious, and he strutted around the farmer's barn-yard with the utmost pomposity. The little fellow had butted everything that came within his reach. He had butted the cows, he had butted the dogs, he had butted the sheep, he had butted the farmer, and he had butted the dairy-maid, and in each case came off victorious, and he sighed for more worlds to conquer. He could find no opponent worthy of his steel and he was melancholy, but after awhile an event occurred in that country. A railroad was built and soon after a locomotive was heard in the distance. Our Alexander the Great had never seen a locomotive. He heard it far off. He listened. It approached. He pricked up his ears; closer and closer it came. He could see the smoke through the woods. Louder and louder roared the monster, until with a shrill scream and roar it broke from the woods into the clearing. Aha! thought the conquering hero, here is the fellow I've been looking for, and with a bound over the fence he took his position in the middle of the track, body braced and head advanced. Along came thundering the monster, and when within striking distance our little fellow gallantly charged it, when strange to relate the monster continued on its course and our combative friend found himself lying in a ditch as dead a hero as Julius Caesar. The farmer from his house had witnessed the catastrophe and now approached to where the defunct was lying. He gazed sadly at his remains, shook his head, and in a mournful voice exclaimed "Ah! my little fellow, I like your pluck but d--n your judgment." A diabolical yell from Mr. Foster's friends. Pistols were flourished and just as Mr. Perrin had his foot upon the window sill preparatory to retiring, an excited individual with pistol in hand and on horseback dashed his way through the crowd and shouted, "Is that personal to Mr. Foster?" After a moment's hesitation Mr. Perrin

replied, "Oh no, only personal to the ram," and made a flying leap through the window.

A scene of the wildest description immediately arose. Instinctively the two parties separated, Pro-Salvory men drawn up on one side, Free-State men on the other, weapons in hand. The writer, not being interested in either side, looked on feeling somewhat like the old woman who saw her husband and the Bear fighting—but just at this moment with promptness, daring, and good judgement, Mr. Robt. Stevens<sup>11</sup>, Commissioner of the Land Sales, leaped upon the wagon before a shot was fired, and shouted to the excited crowd to listen to him. Some attention was given, when in very few but emphatic words he said that having the authority as Commissioner to continue or adjourn these sales at will, he most certainly, if a blow was struck, would that moment close the office and stop the sales. Consequently those there anxious to procure titles for their land would be debarred for the present from the same, and might not procure them for a long time. It was a master stroke: every man there was a settler and had been waiting long and anxiously for his patent, and those who wished to sell not being able to do so without it. Hushed became the multitude; knives and pistols returned to their scabbards, and gradually the crowd dispersed.

### CHAPTER 3

The Land Sales closed. We had an elephant on our hands; Gen. Brindle, the Receiver, had in his possession over Eight hundred thousand dollars in gold coin which it was necessary for him to transport to St. Louis and deposit in the Sub-Treasury. We were in the wilds of Kansas, three days travel from the nearest point on the Missouri River where we could take boat, and the whole intervening country overrun by marauding hands of both parties. The General had received numerous intimations to the effect that an attempt would be made to capture this treasure before it could reach a point of safety. Kansas City was the nearest steamboat landing, and it was generally supposed we would proceed directly thither, which supposition we did not contradict, and when ready for departure started one day about 3 P.M. out on the Kansas City road. Our outfit consisted of four wagons loaded with the gold, with half breed Indian drivers, the attaches of the Office and a guard, the whole numbering nineteen well armed men. We pursued this road until after dark, and then struck off at right angles on the open prairie,

taking a westerly course as near as we could judge for two hours, then halted, unhitched the teams, stationed our sentinels, and remained until 12 o'clock at which time we were aware the moon would rise. When sufficiently light to see our course we continued on, making Lecompton the objective point. While we were waiting for the moon to rise an alarm was given by one of the guard to the effect that there were a body of horsemen not far from us, that from his post he could distinctly hear their voices. I remained in their vicinity until they departed in an opposite direction to our camp, my own opinion at the time was that they were some travelers who had lost their way, but it afterwards turned out that they had been a large party organized for the purpose of attacking us that night, and had only been foiled by the strategy we employed by leaving the road and traveling in a entirely different direction. In all probability, the party whom I reconnoitered were scouts sent out after it had been discovered we had left the road.

We succeeded in reaching Leaveuworth City in safety, and from thence by boat proceeded to St. Louis and deposited our charge in the Sub-Treasury.

#### CHAPTER 4

Gov. Robert J. Walker was succeeded by Gen. J. W. Denver<sup>12</sup>; in fact Governors came and went so rapidly that it became quite bewildering, and apropos of the same, there was a darkey barber in Lecompton named Sam, a slave owned by Judge Elmore<sup>13</sup>, one of the Judges of the U.S. Court, who had been allowed by his master to follow his profession. One day one of these transient governors came into Sam's shop for a shave, which he received in the most approved style, and while arranging his toilet after the operation, he remarked to Sam that he desired to open an account with him and he might charge that shave. "Oh no, 'scuse me Sar," said Sam, "I can't to dat Sar." "Why what do you mean?" angrily exclaimed the Governor, "do you not know me?" Oh yes Gubnor. I knows you and dat's just de reason I can't keep no 'counts. You see Sar, you Gubnors are in de habit of staying such a short time, and sometimes lebe in such a bery great hurry, dat the thing is mighty usartain."

Governor Denver was a gentleman of much ability backed by an indomitable will, and under his administration affairs commenced to assume a much better aspect. He finally succeeded in

restoring Law and Order, for which I do not think he has ever received the amount of credit he deserved.

But it is time for us to leave Kansas and journey westward. It was the original intention of the writer to skip rapidly over Kansas in this narrative, the dismal history of that Territory being known to almost every school boy, but a few personal reminiscences came trooping along, while writing, and he could not forbear to jot them down.

During the spring and summer of 1858 a rumor spread through Kansas to the effect that Gold had been discovered on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. The story ran in this wise: that several Georgia gold miners on their way to California had halted at the mouth of Cherry creek, where Denver City now stands. In consequence of discovering indications of gold and that after prospecting and becoming convinced of the fact of its existence they gave up their original intention of proceeding to California and returned to Georgia for the purpose of organizing a party sufficiently large to afford protection against the Indians, also to procure provisions, tools, etc.<sup>14</sup> The Country referred to was only known at that time as the Pike's Peak region, so called from its vicinity to that Peak of the Rocky Mountains. Governor Denver, then Governor of Kansas, took much interest in this matter, for although the new El Dorado was seven hundred miles distant with the desolate plains intervening, that whole country at the period mentioned was included within the boundaries of the Territory of Kansas.<sup>15</sup> The Governor had in his office a large map, and he showed me where he had marked out a new Territory, christening it Shoshonee<sup>16</sup>; which territory took in a portion of Kansas, Nebraska and New Mexico, and to the best of my recollection, the boundaries which he had drawn were very nearly what now included the Territory of Colorado. The new gold country, in fact the whole plains of seven hundred miles in extent, was laid down on the map as Arapahoe County, Kansas.

At length an attempt was made to organize a party to proceed to Pike's Peak and make explorations. The effort proved successful; seventeen men were enrolled among which was the writer, and Governor Denver appointed County Officers from among the members of our expedition, with the object upon our arrival at the Rocky Mountains of organizing the County of Arapahoe, the only inhabitants of which were buffalo and Indians. The writer had the honor of receiving the commission of Sheriff. My duties I suppose were to keep the buffalo and Indians in order, a nice crowd to



summon a jury from. Indeed, we were quite a party of officials; we had a Probate Judge, County Commissioners and Sheriff.<sup>17</sup>

Our party rendezvoused at Topeka, seventeen in all. We were provisioned for one year and had concluded to take the Arkansas river route for the reason that it was the beginning of fall, and that being the most southern, was considered the most practicable route.

With many kind farewells, good wishes, and hearty cheers, we drew out one bright afternoon<sup>18</sup> on the great Santa Fe trail, directing our course towards the Arkansas River. Not one of the party had ever crossed the Plains, and at that date such adventure was supposed to be somewhat of a serious undertaking, and when we cut loose from civilization we felt as though we had drifted out to sea, an inexperienced crew. But we were all well mounted with the exception of the drivers, and felt an excitement and exhilaration that precluded any sense of disaster.

Our trip to the Mountains was like that of many others since, and requires no particular detail. Buffalo and Indians were abundant, and with one or two exceptions we failed to suffer for want of water or grass. We passed through thousands of wild Indians; the Kiowa, Camanche, Arapahoe and Cheyenne tribes, without any molestation on their part, and the nearest approach to any trouble with them was on an occasion when they had right on their side. Before reaching the plains while camped at Council Grove, which was then the outpost of civilization, one of our party exchanged a horse for a Mexican mule, with a Kaw Indian whose tribe occupied a reservation there. Some three hundred miles west of Council Grove we came upon a large band of Kiowa and Camanche Indians, who seeing the mule for which our comrade had traded, claimed it as the property of one of the Kiowas, and stated that the mule had been stolen from them by the Kaw Indians. The rider of the animal was disinclined to deliver him up, and it became a serious matter with us what should be done. Before starting we had all subscribed to articles of agreement, among which was one that in all vexed questions we would be governed by the voice of the majority. A consultation was now held, a vote taken, and the majority decided not to deliver over the animal. We stated what the result of our counsel [sic] was to the Indians, and saw at once that it was received with much displeasure; threatening gestures were made, and other evidences indicated that we were liable to get into trouble. However, we proceeded on our way without any further demonstration on the part of the Indians, and saw no more of them that night. The next morning a short time after we had broken

camp they caught up with us. Whether they followed with the intention of forcibly taking possession of the animal, or simply from the fact that they were traveling our way, it was impossible to tell. However, another demand was made upon us, and the same answer returned. That morning while traveling along an act of carelessness on my part came very near being a serious matter and might have resulted fatally to our whole party. An Indian rode up along side of me and proposed a race. I was well mounted and the challenge was no sooner given than accepted. But while at full speed and almost side by side, my horse being a little in the advance, the cock of the rifle which I carried across the saddle in front of me somehow came in contact with the pommel and the rifle was discharged. The ball in all probability must have passed directly in front or under the neck of the Indian's horse. At the crack of the piece a yell broke from the Indian, while almost simultaneously a shout arose from his people who were in the rear. As soon as I could check my horse I returned to where the Indian had already halted, and endeavored by signs to explain to him that the firing was the result of an accident. He seemed sensible enough to comprehend and intimated his satisfaction to me. In the meanwhile a large body of Indians were dashing up to us with frantic gestures and wild yells. Our train had come to a halt and I saw our party had closed in around the wagons. It was an exciting scene for a few moments and I own that I felt very uncomfortable as the Indians closed around us. My late opponent in the race shouted to them in a loud voice, and I saw that he was making the proper explanation. They seemed to be satisfied though I noticed many scowling looks cast upon me. I made my way and I rode back to the train where I explained the circumstances, and we proceeded on our way. I made a present to my Indian friend to console him for his fright as well as to reward him for his intelligence and generosity. The Indians bore us company all day and camped near us that night, but at daylight the next morning they had disappeared and we saw no more of them. In thinking over this affair of the mule since, I have often wondered how we avoided a difficulty and retained the animal. The only account for it is that in my subsequent experiences with the wild Indians of the plains, I know for a fact that they are not the first to precipitate a war; and whenever Indian hostilities have taken place war has been forced upon them by the action of the whites. We were at peace with all the Plains Indians at that time, and I believe they thought that any endeavor on their part to take forcible possession of the animal would result in bloodshed, and in all probability bring on a war.

That we committed an act of great imprudence by not delivering up the mule I am well satisfied. The animal undoubtedly was theirs from the fact that they stated it was stolen from them by the Kaw Indians, and it was from those Indians we had procured it.

## CHAPTER 5

Will anyone ever forget the first sight they caught of the Rocky Mountains? I never shall; it was on the thirty-fifth day after leaving Topeka, on a clear bright frosty morning. We had first come up on to a piece of table land, where there was one simultaneous cheer, which rang clear and hearty over those bleak plains, cheers from only seventeen throats, but no seventeen men ever gave such cheers before. We almost imagined they were carried back over seven hundred miles of desert to the ears of our anxious friends, for there before us, darting their snow capped points up into the clear blue sky were the three Spanish peaks of the Rocky Mountains.

How we gathered around and shook hands; how we congratulated one another; how we dragged the Medicine chest out of the wagons, can only be known and appreciated and felt by those who have been similiary situated. But those who came after us could not have had the same feelings; we belonged to the Pioneers, we supposed in our innocence that Columbus might have had the same feeling when he first caught sight of the new World; or DeSoto when the Father of Waters was made known to him. We did not stop to consider that many eyes before ours had gazed on the same spectacle; and anyone who had suggested such a thing at the time would have been immolated.

It was at a distance of about a hundred miles that we caught our first sight of the Spanish Peaks, and not until after a days further travel could we see the range of mountians above which these towered. The Peaks are three in number and grouped together. We were still anxious to behold what we considered our goal, viz.: Pikes Peak, which in our imagination stood sentry over treasures of untold wealth which laid there waiting for us to gather. It was after three or four days travel that the Peak arose in view. It lies some distance North of the Spanish Peaks; the sight of it did not create quite so much enthusiasm as at our first view of the Mountains, but it was with a quiet satisfaction we realized the fact of our being so near our destination. And now it was we began eagerly examining the sands

of the river for any appearance of the tempting metal, and the wildest excitement was created. One day, while we were about going into camp, one of our party who had been in the advance came dashing back to us, his eyes blazing, his whole manner indicative of the utmost excitement, exclaiming: "Hold on boys, we need go no further, I have found here, right here in the river, whole bushels of gold." A thrill ran through the whole party and we hastened under his guidance to the bank of the river, threw ourselves from our horses and down on our knees. We examined the sands through the clear water, and sure enough there were myriads of shining particles, in quantities sufficient enough to be scooped up with a shovel. Oh! How our hearts beat, how we danced and sang and capered. What visions of the future beamed upon us, for there right before our very eyes lay a hundred times more wealth than would suffice for the most exorbitant desires of our whole party. But alas. What sound was that, that jarred on our nerves and made the blood turn to ice in our veins? It was a discordant laugh from one of our number, and when we turned with looks of dismay toward him for explanation, he pronounced the single word "Mica." Did the reader ever hear of an individual who had invested his small capital in a lottery ticket, and when the grand prize of a hundred thousand dollars was announced as having been drawn by ticket number Ninety-nine, proceeded to examine his and found that was the number on it? And when he frantically rushed to claim his fortune and was asked to take a second look at his ticket found it was Sixty-six: no further comments necessary.

As for myself in those few moments of transport, perhaps I saw not far distant a Palace on Fifth Avenue, Cottages, a villa at Newport, the fastest Yacht, the best blooded horses in the Country, Magnificent banquets with gold plate and the best brands of Burgundy, a grand tour through Europe and now to drop from this height to the mud floor of a log cabin, a dinner of pork and beans; and all because I had my ticket upside down. If the Kiowas had attacked us that night they would have found some fighting men in camp.

We at last reached the mouth of the Fontaine qui Bouille<sup>10</sup>, a stream that empties into the Arkansas river close to the base of the Mountains about twenty five miles south of Pikes Peak. Here we found some Mexieans and a couple of Americans who had gone into winter quarters; they had but recently come over from New Mexico. They told us that we could not reach the mouth of Cherry Creek where it was supposed the gold had been discovered until the spring,

on account of the divide which separated us from that point being impassable in consequence of the snow. After consultation we concluded to winter at the point we had reached, and immediately made preparations for erecting suitable shelter.

Close to the mouth of the Fontaine qui Bouille are the remains of an old Spanish fort, which had stood there when this whole country belonged to Mexico, and had been garrisoned by Spanish soldiers. It had been built of adobes (sun-dried brick), and many years ago the whole garrison had been massacred, with one exception, by the Indians; their remains all lie buried in one common grave in the centre of the plaza [sic]. A few years subsequent to our arrival at that point I saw in New Mexico the sole survivor of that massacre, in the person of an old Mexican woman nearly a hundred years of age, who had been a child at the time of the occurrence. The place was called by the Mexicans La Pueblo<sup>20</sup> and the adobes notwithstanding their age were still in a good state of preservation; it was with these that we concluded to build our winter quarters and accordingly set to work about it. But before they were completed we suddenly made up our minds to attempt at all hazards the passage of the divide<sup>21</sup>, and endeavor to reach the mouth of Cherry Creek, which feat we accomplished without the peril we anticipated, and succeeded in making the point where Denver City now stands, in safety to men and animals. In fact we had made the whole trip from Lecompton to our destination without misfortune of any kind, with but one slight accident to one of our men, who had placed his hand into a buffalo's mouth which he supposed dead, for the purpose of cutting out his tongue, when the mouth closed, crushing his hand.

#### POSTSCRIPT

When Wynkoop, Larimer, et al arrived at Cherry Creek they found that two townsites had already been laid out. After some deliberation Wynkoop and his two associates took possession of one of the townsites, St. Charles, on the east side of Cherry Creek. It was decided soon afterwards to rename the town (or "city" as many of these early real estate speculations were called) "Denver City," after Governor James Denver. Tradition has it that Wynkoop was responsible for suggesting the name.

Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>A side-wheeler named (misspelled) for Francois Xavier Aubry, prominent merchant on the St. Louis-Santa Fe-Chihuahua overland trade routes. The steamboat called regularly at Kansas ports during the years 1853-1860.

Donald Chapin, *Francois X. Aubry, Trader, Trailmaker, and Voyageur the Southwest 1846-1854* (Glendale, Arthur H. Clark Co., 1975) pp. 11, 162, 174.

<sup>2</sup>John White Geary, the third territorial governor of Kansas Territory, served from September 9, 1856, to March 12, 1857.

<sup>3</sup>After the designation of Leecompton as the territorial seat of government in August, 1855, a United States land office called the Pawnee Land Office was established. The first register was Ely Moore, of New York, and the first receiver was Thomas C. Shoemaker, who, appointed at the same time as Moore, served little more than a year. The office had hardly opened for business when Shoemaker was succeeded by General William Brindle. Brindle was married to Wynkoop's sister Emily, and Wynkoop soon found employment in the Pawnee Land Office as the general clerk in the receiver's department.

Albert R. Greene, "United States Land Offices in Kansas," *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, v. 8 (1903-1904), pp. 3-4, 6.

<sup>4</sup>When the territorial legislature met in January, 1857, it immediately placed itself in opposition to the governor. A man angry in the delay of his receiving a commission as sheriff of Douglas County, William T. Sherrard, waylaid Governor Geary, hoping to provoke Geary to action so that he could kill him in self-defense. However, Geary walked away from the confrontation without saying or doing anything, and Sherrard could not bring himself to kill the governor without any cause.

The house refused to censure Sherrard, and a public meeting was held February 14, 1857, which Sherrard and his friends attended, hoping to turn it into a riot. During this meeting Sherrard was killed in self-defense by John A. W. Jones, a secretary to Geary. Because of the incident Jones was forced to depart Kansas.

The legislature continued to oppose Geary's every act. His life was threatened repeatedly. Finally he wearied of the situation and departed for Washington in March, 1857.

David E. Meese, "No Property in the Late Course of the Governor, the Geary-Sherrard Affair Reexamined," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 42, no. 3 (Autumn, 1966), pp. 237, 238, 239.

<sup>5</sup>Hardman Peterkin, head clerk in the receiver's department.

Albert R. Greene, "United States Land Offices in Kansas," *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, v. 8 (1903-1904), p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>James Henry Lane killed Gains Jenkins on June 3, 1858, in an argument over a long contested claim dispute. Both men were prominent figures in the Free State movement. The contest between Lane and Jenkins was perhaps the most famous land dispute which arose in Kansas. The claim in question was the NE 1/4 of Sec. 36, Tp. 12, R. 18, and lay west of Lawrence adjoining the town.

William E. Connelley, "The Lane-Jenkins Claim Contest," *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, v. 16 (1923-1925), pp. 21-176.

<sup>7</sup>This is a reference to the public sale of lands of the Kaskaskia, Peoria, Piankeshaw, Wea and Miami Indians in southeast Kansas which had been held in trust by the Federal Government since 1854.

The Kaskaskia, Peoria, Piankeshaw and Wea Indians signed a treaty in Washington with George W. Manypenny, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, on May 30, 1854. This treaty was ratified August 2, and proclaimed on August 10, 1854. The Miami Indians also signed a treaty with the United States, on June 5, 1854. This treaty was ratified August 4, 1854, and proclaimed the same day. Both groups ceded the greater part of their reservations, which was then sold.

Wilder noted in his *Annals of Kansas* for June 24, 1857, "Land sales at Paola, Walker and Stanton present."

Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs. Laws and Treaties* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1904), v. 2, pp. 636-646; Anna Heloise Abel, "Indian Reservations in Kansas and the Extinction of their Title," *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, v. 8 (1903-1904), p. 92; D. W. Wilder, *The Annals of Kansas* (Topeka, Kansas Publishing House, 1886), p. 170.

<sup>14</sup>Robert J. Walker, former secretary of the treasury under President James K. Polk, was fourth territorial governor of Kansas, serving from May 27, 1857 to November 16, 1857.

<sup>15</sup>Charles Foster, an attorney formerly of Springfield, Massachusetts. Foster, his wife Elizabeth, and his mother Lucretia had come to Kansas in 1855 and settled in Osawatomie, where he became very active in the Free State movement.

<sup>16</sup>Edwin O. Perrin was a brother-in-law of either Governor Walker or Secretary of the Territory Frederick P. Stanton. He was a New York man, and served at various times as secretary of the National Democratic Committee. He was clerk of appeals of New York from 1868 to January 24, 1880, the day of his death. He lived in Jamaica, Long Island, New York. Apparently Perrin was accompanying Governor Walker during this period in 1857 as he and Walker made speeches in Topeka on June 6.

<sup>17</sup>Foster, Charles M. "Manuscripts Division Card, Kansas State Historical Society; New York State, Secretary of State, *Manual for the Use of the Legislature of the State of New York* (Albany, 1868), p. 218.

<sup>18</sup>This may have been Robert Smith Stevens, a well-known territorial lawyer. Originally from upstate New York, he came to Kansas in 1856 as an Indian contractor, furnishing supplies and constructing buildings and improvements on Indian reservations. Prior to this he had been employed in the Department of the Interior in Washington. Stevens was a land speculator, townsite promoter, railroad builder and promoter, bank owner, financier, and all-round entrepreneur.

<sup>19</sup>Cortez, A. M. Ewing, "Early Kansas Impeachments," *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, v. 1, no. 4 (August, 1932), pp. 311-325.

<sup>20</sup>James W. Denver, fifth territorial governor, was appointed secretary of Kansas Territory in 1857, became acting-governor at the same time, and served as governor from May 12, 1858 until October 10, 1858.

<sup>21</sup>Rush Elmore was a southerner by birth. He was appointed an associate judge of the Supreme Court of Kansas in 1854, was removed in 1855, and reappointed in 1857 by President James Buchanan and assigned to the Second Judicial District. He served in this capacity until the admission of Kansas into the Union. After statehood he located in Topeka and produced law until his death.

<sup>22</sup>Years of rumors of gold in the Rocky Mountains had finally inspired William Green Russell, a veteran of mining in both Georgia and California, to organize a party in Georgia to prospect the Pikes Peak region in 1858. Russell's party camped on a little stream, Cherry Creek, near where Denver, Colorado is situated today. They found too little gold to stir up real enthusiasm, but by chance a trader en route to the Missouri frontier witnessed their operation and conjured up an inflated notion of the importance of their discovery. He carried back with him a small sample of placer gold, and the Missouri and eastern Kansas newspapers and frontier outfitting merchants did the rest.

<sup>23</sup>Redman Wilson Paul, *Mining Frontiers of the Far West 1848-1880* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), pp. 111-114.

<sup>24</sup>In August, 1855, the Kansas Territorial Legislature laid claim to the area where the gold fields were thought to be located. This part of Kansas Territory was named "Arapahoe County" by the legislature, and county officials were chosen for the various positions in the county administration.

The original boundaries of Arapahoe County were described in detail in the legislative act as "beginning at the northeast corner of New Mexico, running thence to the south line of Nebraska and north line of Kansas; thence along said line between Utah and Kansas territories." As defined by the legislative act of 1855, Arapahoe County of Kansas Territory comprised about one-fifth of the present area of Colorado.

From the time of its formation in 1855, Arapahoe County existed on paper only, and the first county officials never ventured to that remote region. However, after rumors of gold spread throughout the Missouri valley, Governor Denver sought to reorganize the county in expectation of a large influx of people.

<sup>25</sup>Governor J. W. Denver's Administration, Letters and Communications," *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, v. 5 (1889-1890), p. 512. The Arapahoe County Organic Act constitutes chapter 37 of the "Laws of 1855, Kansas Territory."

<sup>26</sup>This was Denver's own idea, to create a new U.S. territory called "Shoshone" from the vast domain of western Kansas. No action was ever taken on the idea.

Jerome C. Smiley, *History of Denver* (Denver, J. H. Williamson, 1903), pp. 194, 317.

<sup>17</sup>In early September, 1858, Wynkoop attended a meeting in the Lecompton land office to organize a townsite association for a town to be located somewhere along the base of the Rocky Mountains. It was thought that this type of enterprise would prove to be quite profitable in view of the discovery of gold in the area. A president and a secretary-treasurer were elected, and the association given the name "Colorado Town Site Association of Lecompton, Kansas Territory." Members of the organization each pledged five hundred dollars for outfitting an expedition. It was decided that the expedition would consist of twenty-five men, five wagons, and provisions for one year. According to the original plan, seventeen men were to be mounted, and eight were to be drivers. The members of the expedition were to be well armed with rifles and revolvers, with two Sharps rifles kept in reserve.

After being informed of the intentions of the expedition, Governor Denver decided to make use of its members by appointing them to the various posts in the county administration. On September 21, 1858, Denver issued commissions to the following men and appointed them to positions in the county government: H.P.A. Smith, probate judge; Edward W. Wynkoop, sheriff; Hickory Rogers, chairman of supervisors; John H. St. Mathews, county attorney; John Larimer, treasurer; Joseph McCubbin and Lucillas J. Winchester, supervisors; and Hampton L. Roan, clerk of supervisors.

The primary purpose of the expedition was to lay out a townsite and sell lots. However, members of the party, acting on their own, also prospected for gold.

Ely Moore, "The Lecompton Party Which Located Denver," *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, v. 7 (1901-1902), p. 447; "Governor J. W. Denver's Administration, Letters and Commissions," *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, v. 5 (1889-1896), p. 512.

<sup>18</sup>The expedition departed for the Rocky Mountains on October 1, 1858

<sup>19</sup>Known today as Fountain Creek. Fountain Creek empties into the Arkansas River at Pueblo, Colorado.

<sup>20</sup>There is no record of there ever having been any type of Spanish fortification in the area. This is probably a reference to "El Pueblo," an adobe trading post built in 1841 and 1842 by a group of mountain men and others who were involved in the Indian trade. The fort faced east and was on the north bank of the Arkansas River near the mouth of the Fountain. El Pueblo was occupied until December 25, 1854, when a Ute and Jicarilla Apache war party swooped down from the mountains and attacked the fort, slaughtering fifteen men, wounding two more, and carrying a woman and two children into captivity. Five bodies were buried in a common grave in the courtyard of the fort. After the attack the post fell into disrepair. Wynkoop and his associates probably camped in the ruins of this outpost.

LeRoy R. Hafen, "Fort Pueblo Massacre and Punitive Expedition Against the Utes," *Colorado Magazine*, v. 4, no. 2 (March, 1927), pp. 49-58

<sup>21</sup>Unknown to Wynkoop and his companions, another party from eastern Kansas was on its way to the Cherry Creek area, also with the intention of laying out a town. This party, which had departed from Leavenworth, consisted of William H. H. Larimer, his adult son, and four others.

Larimer was born in Pennsylvania on October 24, 1809, and died in Leavenworth on May 16, 1875. He was described as "a tall, arrogant ex-general of the Pennsylvania militia . . . devoted to the cause of temperance, interested in town-company speculation." He and the other members of his party drove a four-yoke ox wagon carrying pine planks, nails, window glass, tools (for erecting an improvement on a land claim), and a year's supply of provisions.

On an evening walk near their camp, one of the members of the Larimer party observed two men hauling hay south. When questioned, these men informed Larimer that another group of Kansans was camped at the old fort.

Larimer, who had departed Leavenworth October 3, 1858, was not unfamiliar with real estate manipulations. Neither were the numbers of Wynkoop's party, many of whom had worked in the land office in Lecompton. Larimer decided that it would be beneficial to both groups if they collaborated; he was well aware of the advantages of Lecompton party possessed by being officially sanctioned by Governor Denver. Larimer rode to Wynkoop's camp and persuaded he and the other members of the expedition to continue immediately to Cherry Creek, which they did, arriving November 16, 1858.

David Lavender, *Bent's Fort* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1972), p. 382