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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
for the
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK
COLORADO

by

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United States Department of the Interior
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FOREWORD

This study of the History of Rocky Mountain National Park is a compilation from published documents of some of the more interesting phases of the events occurring in the region now comprising one of the major National Parks of the United States. It does not pretend to be a complete history of the area. Many subjects of paramount interest are not touched upon or are merely suggested, while those treated are handled with the purpose of bringing out the salient features of stories which lend themselves well to the preparation of museum displays.

The purpose which led to the writing of the paper was the assembling of data which could be employed in planning historical displays in the museums of Rocky Mountain National Park. Naturally those series of events which could most easily be graphically displayed have been emphasized and detailed analyses of various episodes have not been attempted.

Despite the limitations arising from the purpose for which this paper was prepared, it constitutes an interesting and readable introduction to the History of Rocky Mountain National Park. Its bibliograpy is unusually extensive. The presentation of the paper in this mimeographed form results not only from a feeling that its usefulness should be extended beyond its original purpose but in response to numerous requests for copies.

In order to save time and expense in mimeographing references to source material are included in parentheses in the text. Statements are well documented and can be checked against the sources.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
for the
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK
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Discovery and Exploration.

I. Spanish Expeditions.

"The first explorers of the region now forming the State of Colorado were probably Spaniards. Claims have been made that Coronado's expedition of 1540 led through this country", but it is now well established that he did not touch upon the Colorado territory, although he did penetrate the present boundaries of Kansas, as well as of northern New Mexico and Arizona.

According to Alfred B. Thomas, Spaniards of the eighteenth century were well acquainted with large portions of the region now comprised in Colorado. It became an outpost of New Mexico, and "Santa Fe was the base for Colorado as San Augustin was for Georgia. Three interests especially spurred the New Mexicans to make long journeys northward to the Platte River, to the upper Arkansas in Central Colorado, and to the Dolores, Uncomphagre, Gunnison, and Grand Rivers on the western borders. These interests were Indians, French intruders, and rumored mines. After 1673 reports of Frenchmen in the Pawnee country constantly worried officials at Santa Fe. Frequently tales of gold and silver were wafted southward to sensitive Spanish ears at the New Mexico capital. But in the main it was Indians who furnished the immediate motive for long expeditions to the north." These various Indian tribes in the Colorado area were the Jicarilla and other Apache bands to the south; the Quarteletejo Apaches (possibly the Arapahos of a later date) to the east; the Pawnees on the Platte to the northeast; the Comanches to the north and the southwest; and the Utes to the west. (Thomas, in "Colorado Magazine", November 1924.)

The expedition which marked "the first definitely known penetration of the Colorado region by Europeans" was that led by Juan de Archuleta about the middle of the seventeenth century. The Archuleta expedition went to a spot afterwards known as El Quarteletejo in eastern Colorado in order to bring back some Taos Indians who had fled to this place.

About half a century later, the Indians of the pueblo of Picuries fled, like those of Taos, to El Cuartelejo. In 1706, Juan de Uribarri was sent, with some 40 Spaniards and 100 Indian allies, to recover them. Their route was apparently northeast through Chuchara Pass, west of Spanish Peaks, then along the eastern foothills of the Greenhorn Mountains. They seemed to have touched on the Arkansas in the vicinity of the present site of Pueblo.

"From there, after a short rest, they proceeded east for some five days, traveling sixty or sixty-five miles to El Cuartelejo". (Thomas, 1924, 292-3).

No further penetration of Colorado territory was made until 1719, when Governor Valverde of New Mexico made an expedition to the Arkansas to punish the Utes and Comanches who had been making raids upon the Apaches. This party struck the Arkansas, "apparently above Pueblo".

Rumors of French advance toward the northeastern New Mexico frontier led to an expedition to the Platte River and the Pawnee Indian country in 1720 under the leadership of Villasur. "The command left Santa Fe in June (the 15th) but their movements until the middle of August are almost unknown. In view of the fact, however, that there were with Villasur, men who had accompanied both Uribani and Valverde, we may assume that the Spaniards went, in all probability, over the usual route: first to Taos, then over the mountains east, and finally northeast to the Purgatoire River. Their next stop was at El Cuartelejo where they began their long march to the Platte." (Thomas, 1924, 295) They came to the South Platte River in August. Thirty-four, including Villasur, were massacred by Pawnees (under French influence) on the North Fork of the Platte near the present town of North Platte. "Eleven men escaped and fled back to Santa Fe to tell the news". After this disaster, no further journeys into the Colorado region were made until some time before 1750, when Bustamente y Tegle made a punitive expedition down the Arkansas.

Later, Spanish explorations were made in southern and southwestern Colorado: The Rivera expedition of 1765; an expedition to the Gunnison River in 1775; the Dominguez-Escalante expedition of 1776 through southwest Colorado to the Great Basins; Juan Bautista de Anza's expedition to the San Luis Valley, 1779.

"The expeditions (into present Colorado) are part of the great story of Spanish expansion, and furnish the background of the region

which was later cut off to become the state of Colorado".
(Thomas, 1924, 300).

Whether or not any of the Spanish expeditions into the Colorado region of the 17th and 18th centuries saw the Front Range of North Central Colorado has not been definitely determined. It seems that none of the Spaniards who crossed eastern Colorado approached the Front Range close enough to see Long's Peak, but it is definitely established that they did see the mountain now known as Pike's Peak to the south.

In 1793 all of Louisiana west of the Mississippi River became Spanish territory. By the late 18th century Spaniards had become active in the fur trade of the Mississippi Valley and men of Spanish descent took part in trapping activities under American rule in the 19th century. A notable example in north central Colorado was Louis Velasquez who was active in the late '30's and in the '40's. With Andrew Sublette, he established one of the trading posts on the South Platte in late '30's. He trapped the streams that have their rise in Rocky Mountain National Park. Velasquez Creek was named after him.

(Mexican grants and settlements in Southern Colorado do not concern us in this paper)

II. French Activity Southwest of the Missouri River.

The disaster to the Villazur expedition on the Platte River in 1720 taught the Spanish that the French were advancing toward their northeastern border. This continued advance of the French southwestward from Canada was to bring them into trade relations with the Indians living at the base of the Rockies in Colorado. By the middle of the century French expeditions had crossed what is now eastern Colorado on their way to New Mexico. French voyageurs and traders had begun to look "with covetous eyes" toward New Mexico since early in the 18th century. New Mexico offered to the adventurer "gold and silver and a path to the South Sea. To the merchant it offered rich profits in trade." (Bolton, 1917, 389). The French were prevented from gaining immediate access to New Mexico, however, both because of the exclusive policy of Spain and because of "the Indian tribes which stood in the way". On the Red River highway were the Apaches, and blocking the Arkansas and Missouri highways were the Comanches. In 1718-19, La Harpe was attempting to ascend the Red River, and Du Tisne, the Arkansas. In 1723 Bourgmont made advances on the Missouri

frontier pacifying the Indian tribes and securing permission for Frenchmen to pass through the Comanche country to the Spaniards. Soon afterwards, however, Indian hostilities again arose, between the various tribes, bringing a check to further French advance for some years.

"The next well known attempt to reach New Mexico was made in 1739. In that year the Mallet party of eight or nine men left the Missouri River at the Arikara villages, went south to the Platte River, ascended that stream, and made their way through the Comanche country to Taos and to Santa Fe". (Bolton, 1917, 390) On their return several months later four of the party descended the Canadian and the Arkansas rivers, the others going northeast to Illinois. Mallet was probably the first Frenchman to cross what is now Colorado territory. He did not approach close enough to the Front Range to be able to see Longs Peak, but he did begin trade relations with Indians who lived in north central Colorado.

Encouraged by the success of the Mallet expedition, French activity continued. In 1741 Governor Rienville sent Fabry de la Brayere to explore the Far West, but he failed to reach New Mexico. In 1746 or 1747 "the Arkansas route was made safe by effecting a much desired treaty between the Comanches and their eastern enemies". (Bolton, 1920, 286). Immediately new expeditions were made to the Spanish border. Peace having been attained between the Comanches and Pawnees, French traders again made expeditions to the southwest in 1751 and in 1752. The Spanish were by now alarmed and clapped the Frenchmen into jail. By 1763, Louisiana west of the Mississippi was acquired by Spain and the French menace was thereby destroyed.

However, French voyageurs and traders still carried on their trading activities with the Indians. They did so even after the country was acquired by the United States. Men with French names were common amongst the trappers in the west, and French geographical names arose from this fact. The Chouteau Company of St. Louis was an important firm managed by men of French origin. They were active in the Colorado region.

III. The American Approach: Pike.

The United States purchased Louisiana from Napoleon in 1803. This gave rise to a border problem between Mexico and the United States. "The boundaries of Louisiana had never been determined: but of one thing the Spanish could be sure: the aggressive,

young nation... had thrown its frontier too close to their northern provinces for comfort." Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike, who was sent to explore that part of the Louisiana Purchase around the headwaters of the Arkansas, left St. Louis in July 1806 and entered the limits of the state of Colorado November 11, of that year. Pike was the first official American explorer, but not the first citizen of the United States to enter Colorado. On November 23, the site of Pueblo was reached. An attempt to scale the present Pike's Peak on the 27th was unsuccessful. Pike does not mention any peak that we can identify as Long's Peak, and his party did not go into central or northern Colorado. They built a temporary fort at the site of Pueblo, Colorado. From there they followed up the Royal Gorge to South Park. Later, he and his men were arrested by the Spanish in New Mexico and after examination were released. Pike's expedition was important as a contribution to geographical knowledge and as a fore-runner of the American advance to the Rocky Mountains. (Colorado University, 1927, 48-52.)

IV. The American Approach: Trappers and Traders.

While in New Mexico in 1807, Pike met another American, James Pursley or Purcell by name, who related how, as early "as 1805 he had traded with the Indians on the South Platte, had gone with them into South Park," and had found flakes of gold. It is also known that the firm, Chouteau-De Munn of St. Louis, was engaged in trade with the Indians on the Platte and Arkansas Rivers (1815-1817). In 1817 they were visited by Spanish soldiers and ordered into Santa Fe where all their furs were confiscated. (Colorado University, 1927, 58.)

A. P. Chouteau and Julius De Munn had the way opened for them in 1811 by Ezekial Williams, who led 19 men to the upper Arkansas. In 1812-13 Williams was a captive of the Arapahoes. In the spring he managed to escape, cache his furs and make his way back to Missouri. In 1814, he joined a party of 21 westward bound trappers under Joseph Philibert, hoping to recover his furs and rescue the two companions still held by the Indians. In 1815, Philibert was accompanied by A. P. Chouteau and Julius De Munn, who purchased the outfit and the services of the men which Philibert had left in the mountains. For the next two years Chouteau and De Munn conducted successful trapping business in Colorado, maintaining about 50 trappers in the field. This firm not only did trapping but also

traded with the Indians for peltries. One large trading council was held on the South Platte River a few miles south of present Denver. In 1817 they were arrested by the Spanish authorities and their furs confiscated. This discouraged further trapping in Colorado until Mexico achieved her independence from Spain. (Hafen, 1933, 76-80).

In November 1821 Jacob Fowler and Hugh Glenn at the head of a company of men came up the Arkansas. They trapped in Mexican territory to the south. "The first habitable and inhabited dwelling constructed by private citizens within the limits" of Colorado was at what is now Pueblo (1821-1822), by the Glenn-Fowler party as a protection against Indians. The Santa Fe trade was developing and it had become safer for American trappers to approach the frontiers of New Mexico. Yankee traders were welcomed in New Mexico after 1821, when Mexico achieved her independence and as a result the Santa Fe trail was opened. It crossed the southeastern part of Colorado."

During the next few years Taos, in New Mexico, became a fur trading center for trappers working in southern and western Colorado. James Ohio Pattie was one of these, as was William Becknell, "father of the Santa Fe Trail", William Huddart, and Antoine Robidoux. These of the south and southwest need not concern us further. At the same time as fur trading operations were being developed to the south, other trapping parties were entering Colorado from the north and northeast.

In the late twenties and the thirties the most important group of trappers operating in Colorado was the one associated with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, established in 1822 by General William H. Ashley and Andrew Henry of St. Louis. Their purpose was to engage in fur trade on the upper Missouri River. By 1825 they were chiefly engaged in a new region to the south. (See "Ashley's Long Winter Trail 1825" for Ashley's opening up of an overland route via the South Platte).

"In 1826 the business was transferred to Jedediah Smith, David E. Jackson and William Sublette, the ablest and most experienced of Ashley's lieutenants: They in turn sold out in 1830 to Thomas Fitzpatrick, Milton G. Sublette, Henry Fraeb, Jean Baptiste Cervais and James Bridger." A detailed description of all the wanderings of these trappers even in Colorado is impossible in this brief sketch. Suffice it to say that they followed

the rivers to their sources and explored the mountain parks; they, more than any other group of men, were the real pathfinders of the West." (Colorado University, 1927, 60). Chittenden says (Chittenden 1902, I, 306-7), "the impress which they have left upon the geography of the West is surprisingly great".

Beginning with 1826 the Bent and St. Vrain Company began their activities on the Arkansas River. From 1828 to 1832 they erected Bent's Fort on the north bank of the river about ten or twelve miles above the mouth of the Purgatoire. It was the most important trading post in Colorado and one of the most famous in the West. There were five Bent brothers. "For thirty years their name was almost synonymous with the fur trade of Colorado."

Among the many other trading posts erected from time to time in Colorado and having a more or less fleeting existence, the present paper is chiefly interested with the four established on the South Platte at the base of the Front Range and in view of Long's Peak. These will be considered at some length in their chronological order after treating of the Long, the Dodge, and the Ashley expeditions up the South Platte River.

Brief mention should be made of some of the more important individuals engaged as trappers in the Colorado region. James Ohio Pattie has left a thrilling account of the adventures of the parties which he accompanied. He crossed the continental divide in the winter 1826-7. He says in his "Personal Narrative" that the passage occupied six days and was negotiated with great difficulty through the snow drifts. In 1824 William Beckness, "Father of the Santa Fe Trail", and William Huddart were on the western slope, where they fall in with Antoine Robidoux and his trapping band. Robidoux built Fort Robidoux. By 1831 "trappers were coming in such great numbers that the fur areas were depleted." (Hafen, 1933, 82). In that year a fur trading venture of seventy men led by Captains Gant and Blackwell met with ill success. "Although companies failed and many trappers changed occupation, the fur trade days were not ended. From beaver skins the fur men turned to buffalo robes and these latter became the chief article of commerce in Colorado during the late '30's and early '40's." (Hafen, 1933, 83.) The coming of wagons made possible the development of trade in buffalo robes. The forts on the South Platte were chiefly engaged in the buffalo robe trade.

Fitzpatrick and Beckwourth have been mentioned in connection with the fur trading activities initiated by General Ashley. Kit Carson has not as yet been mentioned. He was among the most famous trappers, but was seldom associated with any fur company. He was a "free trapper". He began trapping in 1826 at the age of 17. In 1830, while at Taos, New Mexico, he was engaged by Thomas Fitzpatrick for work with the Rocky Mountain Fur Company. In going north through Colorado, Carson passed along the eastern side of the Front Range, trapping on the South Platte and its tributaries as he went. (Vestal, 1928, 58.) In 1831 he was associated with Gant, trapping in New Park, (the present North Park), on the Laramie Plains, and along the South Platte. Then he was hired as a hunter for Bent's Fort. Engaged thus for perhaps eight years he found much time for trapping for himself. He hunted and trapped on all the streams north from Bent's Fort and no doubt penetrated the region now within the boundaries of the Rocky Mountain National Park. Enos Mills says Carson camped in Estes Park in 1840. (Mills, 1924, 4.) The knowledge of geography gained by penetrating the canyons and parks of the Rockies made Carson, as well as Fitzpatrick and other trappers, invaluable to expeditions sent out by the United States government. Carson has become especially renowned because of his connection with the Fremont expeditions.

V. The American Approach; Discovery of Long's Peak.

It is certain that early American trappers had seen Long's Peak before 1820, and it is possible that the Spanish explorers and the French seekers for trade had seen this peak, but no record of discovery of the peak was made until the Long expedition up the South Platte River. Major Stephen H. Long made the second official exploration by Americans in the state of Colorado in 1820, more than a decade after that of Pike. "The party of nineteen men traveled on horseback, using pack animals for the transportation of supplies. The season was favorable and the marches of twenty-five miles per day were made regularly with little difficulty.

"On June 27th they reached the eastern boundary of present Colorado. Large herds of buffalo were here encountered, their dusky bodies blackening the whole surface of the prairie. Bands of wild horses also were seen. It is interesting to note that although Americans were just entering Colorado the Spaniards had been in the Southwest for three centuries, and the horse, trans-

planted to the New World, had so thrived that he was now running wild upon the plains". (Hafen, 1933, 71-2).

The Rocky Mountains were sighted on June 30th. The party had left camp at the accustomed early hour and at 8 o'clock the men "were cheered by a distant view of the Rocky Mountains... Our first views of the mountains were indistinct," says James, chronicler of the expedition, "on account of some smokiness of the atmosphere, but from our encampment, at noon, we had a very distinct and satisfactory prospect of them...

"Towards evening the air became more clear, and our view was more satisfactory..... We soon remarked a particular part of the range divided into three conic summits each apparently of nearly equal altitude. This we concluded to be the point designated by Pike as the highest peak." (James, London Edition, 1823, II, 174 and 177).

Thwaites says, "The party mistook this 'highest peak' for Pike's Peak. This mountain called by French trappers, Les deux Oreilles (Two ears), is the one now known as Long's Peak, being named for Major S. H. Long..... Fremont found in 1842 that this name had been adopted by the traders, and had become familiar in the country." (Thwaites, 1905, XV, 271 footnote)

"The bend in the river (South Platte) passed July 3rd, is the point of nearest approach (of the Long expedition) to Long's Peak, still forty miles distant. Near the camp of that evening, at the mouth of St. Vrain's Creek, the important fur-trading firm of Bent and St. Vrain built St. Vrain's fort about twenty years later.

Potera Creek, the old name for St. Vrain's Creek, was from Potera, who had lost his way on it some three or four years before Long reached the locality. As early as 1816 trappers had met with Indians encamped on tributaries of the South Platte. (Thwaite, 1905, XV, 274-5 footnote). They may have been parties connected with the company headed by A. P. Chouteau and Julius De Munn of St. Louis. The Long party noticed evidences of Indian encampment and trading operations. (Idem., 282 and footnote). Long's French guide probably told him of the earlier history.

The movements of the Long party are difficult to follow from the mouth of Cache a la Poudre Creek south to the Arkansas River, "as the nomenclature of the region has in the interim changed

almost entirely. Moreover, the itinerary is carelessly recorded and the map of the expedition is inaccurate." (Idem., 274 footnote). The peak now known as Long's Peak was designated as the Highest Peak and Pike's Peak as James' Peak because Dr. James, historian of the expedition, made its ascent with two companions. James succeeded where Pike had failed. The name, James' Peak, has now been transferred northward to the mountain now pierced by the Moffet Tunnel.

"Long's party continued southward to the Arkansas and after examining the Valley of the Royal Gorge turned eastward and journeyed back to civilization." (Hafen, 1933, 73).

"In his report, Major Long gave a disheartening picture to the country. On his map he labeled the plains region east of the Rocky Mountains 'The Great American Desert', and asserted that the whole region was 'uninhabitable by a people depending upon agriculture for their subsistence'. This opinion persisted in the public mind and appeared in the school books for more than a generation and was a factor in retarding the development of the West. Although we may now criticize Long's report, who could have foreseen what wonders the railroad, the irrigation ditch and scientific dry-farming would do in blotting forever from the map the 'Great American Desert'?" (Hafen, 1933, 73).

"It was many years before the government again attempted any extended scientific expedition in the Rockies; but the public soon became familiar with the trans-Missouri country from the reports of trappers, traders, emigrants, rovers, and occasional government officials, who surmounted countless obstacles reared by savage man and untamed nature in threading the valleys or the eastern slopes of the mountains and tracing the more accessible of the gorges. (Thwaites, 1904, 217).

VI. The American Approach: Colonel Dodge's Expedition of First Dragoons.

The first United States military expedition up the South Platte was made under the leadership of Colonel Henry Dodge in the summer of 1835, but Dodge traversed no new or unknown country. Both his expedition and that of Colonel Stephen Kearny in 1845, "were significant chiefly in connection with our relations to the Indians living on the Great Plains".

Colonel Dodge followed Long's route for the most part. His journal is interesting because of its descriptions of the Indians and of the vast herds of buffalo, wild horses, elk, deer, etc. On

July 15, the party "discovered a beautiful bird's eye view of the Rocky Mountains. This sight was hailed with joy by the whole command. We saw the end of the march - the long wished for object of all our hopes," says Dodge. The mountains "at first resembled white conical clouds, lying along the edge of the horizon. The rays of a setting sun upon their snow-clad summits gave to them a beautiful and splendid appearance." (Dodge, 1836, 19). Thus did Dodge describe the appearance of the Front Range, but nothing was said of Long's Peak, its most prominent feature. Later, as they marched south along the base of the mountains to the Arkansas River, Dodge and his men observed many evidences of the work of trappers and of Indian encampments.

VII. The American Approach: Ashley's Long Winter Trails, 1825.

Between the years 1812 and 1820, William Henry Ashley and Andrew Henry were engaged in mining in Missouri. At the decline of fur hunting in 1812, Henry had withdrawn from the Missouri Fur Company with which he had been actively engaged for several years. He it was who, in 1808, had been the first American to trap on the western side of the Rocky Mountain divide. Henry's Fork of the Snake River was named after him.

Ashley and Henry had been much together in their mining activities, and with the decline of mining and the concurrent revival of the fur trade, it was natural that a partnership should be formed to engage in this business. By 1822 Ashley and Henry had followed hundreds of others to the upper waters of the Missouri River. However, they soon penetrated new territory and began to use new methods of procedure in the conduct of their business. Instead of depending on the savages for their furs they "determined to employ white men in the actual task of trapping, and for the regularly established post to substitute, in large measure, the annual rendezvous. The trapper was to supplant the trader". (Dale, 1918, 67).

"The abandonment of the older territory and the penetration of the transmontane country under changed business conditions led naturally to a new line of approach, and, consequently, to a new method of transportation. The traditional means of reaching the fur country had been by boat up the Missouri River. Those who had followed Lewis and Clark had used the keel-boat." Under Ashley and Henry, horses were definitely decided upon for transportation, and "the reasons for following the customary routes naturally vanished. A less dangerous and, above all, a more direct approach to the mountains was available." (Dale, 1918, 114).

The central Platte route had remained unused because of its un-navigability, and the area which it drained and the region beyond was not penetrated. The substitution of horses for boats "made the Platte available for communication with the interior."

"In general", says Dale, "this was the route which Ashley determined to follow in the year 1824. Thomas Fitzpatrick had returned by the North Platte (from the Green River rendezvous) in the summer and had reported the way feasible. Still Ashley's undertaking was a bold experiment, for it was not till the third of November that he left Fort Atkinson.... He followed Fitzpatrick's course only a portion of the distance. At the forks of the Platte, he selected the south branch instead of the north, in the hope of finding a greater supply of grass in a lower latitude. He was the first white man to travel this route in the dead of winter and the first to use that variation of the South Pass, called by the name of one of his own employees, James Bridger. He was the first white man to investigate the mountains of Northern Colorado." (Dale, 1918, 115-116).

John G. Neihardt, in his "The Splendid Wayfaring", calls this important expedition "Ashley's Long Winter Trail". He describes the journey, following Ashley's own narrative quite closely and supplementing it with Beckwourth's account as given in Bonner, "The Life and Adventures of James P. Beckwourth."

Ashley's party consisted of twenty-six men, nine of whom are remembered by name. General Ashley, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Robert Campbell, James P. Beckwourth, Moses or "Black" Harris, Baptiste La Jenness, LeBrache, Dorway, and Clement (or Claymore). They left Fort Atkinson November 3, 1824, and followed the same Indian trace from the Missouri River to the Pawnee villages that Long's expedition had followed in the Spring of 1820. It was now deeply covered with snow. Provisions began to run low and the men were in desperate circumstances until they reached the Forks of the Platte on December 12th, where they bought supplies of the Pawnees encamped there.

Leaving the forks on December 23, the South Platte was followed instead of the North Fork, because more feed for the horses and more wood for their fires were expected along this route. They met with countless buffalo. The first view of the mountains was obtained about January 20th, 1825, near the mouth of Beaver Creek not far from the present town of Fort Morgan.

The mouth of the Cache la Poudre Creek was reached on January 22nd. Ashley ascended this creek, making a winter camp on its banks on February 4th, "in a thick grove of cottonwood and willows", among the foothills of the Front Range. "Long's Peak loomed large to the southward, seeming to Ashley no more than six or eight miles away, though the distance must have been at least thirty-five miles." (Neihardt, 1920, 181).

On February 25th Ashley's men resumed their way, although the foothills were still "enveloped in one mass of snow and ice.... Our passage across the first range of mountains, which was exceedingly difficult and dangerous," so runs the General's narrative, "employed us three days, after which the country presented a different aspect. Instead of finding the mountains more rugged as I advanced towards their summit and everything in their bosom frozen and torpid.... they assumed quite a different character." The ascent became more gradual and "the south sides of the hills were but partially covered with snow." The valleys "were filled with numerous herds of buffalo, deer and antelope." (Quoted by Neihardt, 1920, 181-2). They reached the Laramie River by March 10th, and by the 23rd, after a hard struggle with snow, they had crossed the Medicine Bow Mountains. The first recorded crossing of the mountains via the Cache la Poudre route had been accomplished. The creek itself did not receive its name until the next decade when a party of French trappers on their way to the mountains buried their supply of powder in a sandbank close to the stream. A plain granite monument commemorates the spot where the powder was buried eight miles northwest of Fort Collins. (Parsons, 1911, 197).

This trail opened up by Ashley was also used by Fremont in his expedition of 1843. It later became known as the Cherokee Trail after a band of whites and Cherokees who used this route in 1849 on their way from Georgia to California. Greeley mentions it in his book.

Trading Posts on the South Platte.

The journals of the expeditions of Long, (1820) of Ashley (1825) and of Dodge (1835) make no mention of fur-trading posts on the South Platte, although they all make reference to evidence of trapping activities along this route of travel. "Within three years after the visit of Dodge's First Dragoons, however, four

adobe 'forts' were established on the banks of this stream, forming a little chain but twelve miles long... Three men have left us rather definite data on the location of the South Platte forts: F. A. Wislizenus, Rufus Sage, and J. C. Fremont." (Hafen, 1925, (XII) 334., see quotations from these authors under their several headings in this paper).

The story of these posts is of especial interest in connection with the Rocky Mountain National Park, as they were the centers of the fur trading and trapping operations in this area (1836-1844). Trading in buffalo robes was here more important than that in beaver skins. Travelers of the late '30's and the early '40's, using the South Platte trail, were entertained at one or another of these forts. Wislizenus (1839) noted three forts; Sage (1842-43), four forts; and Fremont (1843), four forts on the South Platte. "From these three accounts it is clear that four adobe forts existed on the South Platte in 1840." These were Fort Lupton, Fort Vasquez, Fort Jackson, and Fort. St. Vrain. Fort Lupton was built in 1830 or 1837 by Lieutenant Lancaster P. Lupton who had accompanied Colocal Dodge to the mountains. Sometimes this fort was called Fort Lancaster. The ruins are on the present Ewing ranch about a mile north of the town of Fort Lupton. "The fort continued in a fair state of preservation through the early settlement period, and was frequently used as a refuge during the Indian wars of the sixties."

About 1832, so it is said, Louis Vasquez built a log trading post at the mouth of "Vasquez Fork", now called Clear Creek. However, the ruins of what is locally known as "Fort Vasquez" are situated on the Fort Vasquez Ranch about a mile and a half south of the present town of Plattville. This fort belonged to Andrew Sublette and Louis Vasquez in 1839, but they sold out in 1840, according to Beckwourth, who tells of helping to erect the buildings in 1838. (Bonner, new ed. 1892, 373.) "Sage asserts that the post was owned by Lock and Randolph in 1841 and was abandoned the following year". (Sage, 1857, 200.) Sage located this fort six miles above Fort St. Vrain.

Concerning Fort St. Vrain, also known as Fort George or Fort Lookout, Hafen says that it was established in 1837 or 1838 about one and a half miles below the mouth of St. Vrain Creek. "Ceran St. Vrain was a partner with the Bent brothers in the twenties and remained with them for nearly thirty years. Then Fort Bent on the Arkansas held undisputed sway over a vast territory for almost a

decade, when competing interests entered the field. To capture more effectively the fur trade on the South Platte they built a post on that stream to compete with Lupton, Vasquez, and others." (Hafen, 1924, 340). Francis Parkman, in "The Oregon Trail", describing his visit on the South Platte in 1846, says that St. Vrain's fort was "abandoned and fast falling into ruin." In 1859 and the early '60's there was a town on the spot that had ambitions to become the metropolis of the Colorado mines. A granite monument, placed by the Centennial State Chapter, D.A.R., in 1911, marks the site.

Between Fort Vasquez and Fort Lupton were the ruins of another fort noted by Sage and Fremont in 1842 and 1843. It remained unnamed in the annals of history until 1928, when Le Roy R. Hafen published evidence that showed it to be Fort Jackson and that it had belonged to the trading company of Sarpy and Fraeb, formed in the late '30's. During the short existence of this company, it played an important part in the fur trade activity in the region that was to become Colorado." (Hafen, 1928, 9). (Hafen found his data in the Chouteau-Moffitt Collection of fur trade papers in possession of the Missouri Historical Society). Peter A. Sarpy and Henry Fraeb had been prominent in the western trade for some years before making their venture on the South Platte River. "Pratt, Chouteau & Co., successor to the Western department of the American Fur Company (originally founded by John Jacob Astor), financed Sarpy and Fraeb ... in the spring of 1837." Competition between the various fur trading companies became very sharp. In October 1838 Bent, St. Vrain & Co, purchased Fort Jackson, and, being less than ten miles south of their Fort Lockout (Fort St. Vrain), they had no need of Fort Jackson and abandoned it.

"In the years that have since elapsed Fort Jackson passed from remembrance and the almost level surface of the site (near the present Ione) gives today but slight indication of the hidden foundation of the one-time primitive mart. The life and conditions the old fort housed and typified have as completely disappeared from the region." (Hafen, 1928, 14).

Early American Travelers.

I. Farnham's Overland Journey to Oregon, 1839.

Thomas Jefferson Farnham crossed the Rockies through the Royal Gorge of the Arkansas River in July, 1839. He was a young

Vermont lawyer recently settled in Illinois, "who now sought on the western prairies recuperation of his wasting health through outdoor exploits and change of scene. He also avowed a patriotic purpose to take possession of the fair territory of Oregon for the American flag, and to aid in resisting the British fur-trade monopoly." Farnham became the leader of 19 adventurers who left Independence, Missouri, in May, 1839. None of them knew anything about travelling in the wilderness to the west.

According to Thwaites, the Farnham party made a serious mistake in following the advice of certain traders to take the Santa Fe Trail, "for the route across the mountains from the Upper Arkansas to Snake River Valley was infinitely more difficult and dangerous than the ordinary Oregon Trail by way of the North Platte, Sweetwater, and South Pass; it was also less frequented by experienced mountain men, who could offer advice and assistance to the amateur travellers." (Thwaites, 1906, vol. 28, pp.10-11).

When Farnham left Bent's Fort in the middle of July, 1839, only four of his followers remained with him, some having deserted at the Lower Crossing of the Arkansas and the rest at the fort. The latter group crossed over the foothills to Fort St. Vrain, above Denver, striking out from there for the regular Oregon Trail to the north. Farnham, himself, "having seemed a competent guide, with undiminished energy pushed on across the ranges of the Colorado Mountains, through the mazes of its parks and passes, and halted a while at Brown's Hole. This was the most difficult part of the journey. With graphic touches of our author", Thwaites continues, "makes us feel the hardships, hungers, and thirst, the Indian alarms, and the surprise and joy of meeting mountain men; while at the same time he is not oblivious to the rugged grandeur of the scenery, or the delicate tints of sunrise and sunset, and the majesty of the starlit nights among the hills." (Thwaites, 1906, vol. 28, pp. 11-12).

II. Dr. Wislizenus' Tour to the Rocky Mountains, 1839

In 1839 Dr. F. A. Wislizenus, a St. Louis physician of German birth, made an overland excursion along the Oregon Trail to Fort Hall. On the return trip, the doctor and his party did not continue down the North Platte, past Fort Laramie, but crossed over the mountains to the South Platte, taking much the same route followed by Ashley in 1825. The two pages of the doctor's diary that cover this part of his journey give information regarding the three fur

trading posts located near the bend of the South Platte in the late '30's and the early '40's. Wislizenus did not mention Long's Peak as did Ashley, but gave some description of the country to the north and east of the peak.

"On the evening of August 25th," writes Wislizenus in his journal, "we reached again the left shore of the North Fork of the Platte We crossed it with ease We left it immediately to go in a southeastern direction to the South Fork. We reached it in about eight days. On the seventh day we reached Powder Cache Creek and on the ninth day the South Fork itself. The country between the North Fork and the South Fork is mainly a broad plateau with sandy soil, sparse grass, and a few birch groves like oases in the midst of the prairie. Buffalo abounded, and we lived in plenty.. We also encountered several bears....."

"On September 3rd we came quite unexpectedly to the left bank of the South Fork and crossed the river. On the right there are here only some miles apart: Penn's (Bent's) and St. Vrain's Fort, Vasquez and Sublette's, and Lobdon's Fort (Lupton's fort or Fort Lancaster). The outer walls are of half-baked brick. There is much rivalry and enmity between the three forts. In the first fort we found part of the scattered Columbia party from Peoria. (These were some of the men who had deserted Farnham at Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River in July 1839). In the second I met the well-known Fitzpatrick,.... We remained in the neighborhood of the forts for about three days..... Among the news which we heard in the forts ...(was that) of a recent battle between the Pawnees and Sioux The victorious Sioux were still roving about the South Fork, and were very much embittered against all whites, because the man they lost was thought to have been killed by a white man who was with the Pawnees. We were therefore advised to abandon our plan of further following the South Fork and to strike out for the Arkansas. The evening before our departure, several owners of the forts arrived, bringing a new cargo of goods from the United States. Goods are usually transported to this place in great ox teams, and the same road is taken which we are about to follow to the boundary of Missouri." (Wislizenus, 1912, 136-138). On the 7th of September the forts were left behind. The mountains to the west are described as high and covered with snow, "forming a beautiful background for the Platte with its fringed

cottonwood, and for the wide plain that stretched along its right bank". The route followed to the Arkansas was practically the same as that of the Long Expedition in 1820.

III. Rufus B. Sage.

Rufus Sage of New England was in the Rocky Mountains between 1841 and 1844. He visited many parts of Colorado, 1842, 1844. He hunted and camped in the region of Long's Peak in the summer of 1843.

In 1841, Sage had travelled along the Oregon Trail to the Great Basin. Returning to Independence in 1842, he started for the West again, accompanied by two experienced mountaineers, this time following up the South Platte. Buffalo made the plains black as far as the eye could see. Above the mouth of Beaver Creek, "The snowy summit of Long's Peak" was first seen. The mountains "appeared like a pile of dark clouds just rising from the verge of the horizon". Many Indian encampments were passed, first the Pawnee and then the Arapaho. On September 2nd, 1842, they reached Fort Lancaster (Sage, 1857, 208). Sage describes the great rush to the West as follows: "Long's Peak with its eternal snow appears in distinct view to the westward, and imparts to the sunset scenery a beauty and grandeur rarely witnessed in any country. This peak is one of the highest of the mountain range, being upwards of 13,500 feet above the level of the Gulf of Mexico, and issues from its eastern side the waters of the Atlantic, and from its western the tributaries of the Pacific."

"The business transacted at this post (Fort Lancaster or Fort Lupton) is chiefly with the Cheyennes, but the Arapahos, Mexicans, and Sioux also come in for a share and contribute to render it one of the most profitable trading establishments in the country". (Sage, 1857, 212-3).

After making a trip to Taos and to the western slope of the Rockies, Sage returned to Fort Lancaster, wintering at a camp some six miles down the South Platte. Sage made a hunting trip early in 1843 to Vasquez Creek, an affluent of Grand River to the South of Long's Peak. (Perhaps it was Clear Creek, formerly named Vasquez Creek after Luis Vasquez, a trader). In the Spring of 1843, he joined a Texas Company that was attacking New Mexico. It ended by the Texas Company, after having some skirmishes with Mexicans, surrendering to United States Dragoons under Captain Cook, who were

it
guarding the Santa Fe Trail. Meanwhile Sage and a few others made their way back to the headwaters of the South Platte.

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Two months of the summer of 1843, Sage spent at Fort Lancaster, making a hunting trip to the mountains the last of September. He went alone. "My course," he says, "lay directly West some eight miles to Soublets Creek (probably named after Andrew Sublette who was a partner in one of the forts on the South Platte. This stream has been generally known under the name of St. Vrain's Creek)... Sept. 30th in the afternoon I raised camp and proceeded for ten or twelve miles, through a broad opening between two mountain ridges, bearing a northwesterly direction, to a large valley skirting a tributary of Thompson's Creek." (probably named from a trapper by the name of Thompson).

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(Query: Did Sage camp in Estes Park? If so the following is the first description of Estes Park in literature.)

"The locality of my encampment", quoting Sage, "presented numerous and varied attractions. It seemed, indeed, like a concentration of beautiful lateral valleys, intersected by meandering water-courses, ridged by lofty ledges of precipitous rock, and hemmed in upon the west by vast piles of mountains climbing beyond the clouds, and upon the north, south, and east, by sharp lines of hills that skirted the prairie; while occasional openings, like gateways, pointed to the far-spreading domains of silence and loneliness.

"Easterly a wall of red sandstone and slate extended for miles northward and southward, whose counterscarp spread to view a broad and gentle declivity, decked with pines and luxuriant herbage, at the foot of which a lake of several miles in circumference occupies the center of a basinlike valley, bounded in every direction by verdant hills, that smile upon the bright gem embosomed among them.

"This valley is five or six miles in diameter and possesses a soil well adapted to cultivation. It also affords every variety of game, while the lake is completely crowded with geese, brents, ducks and gulls.... What a charming retreat for someone of the world-hating literati! He might here hold daily converse with himself, Nature and his God, far removed from the annoyance of man." (Sage, 1857, 343-4).

On October 29th, 1843 Sage returned to Fort Lancaster, having spent a month encamped in the beautiful valley at the base of Long's

Peak. On November 10th he and several companions went on another hunting excursion in the canyons at the base of Long's Peak. They camped on the right fork of what Sage called the "Soublet Creek", now the North Fork of the St. Vrain. They hunted badger, mountain sheep and deer. On January 1, 1844, they removed their camp to Vasquez Creek, thirty-five miles to the south. (This may have been present Clear Creek, formerly called Vasquez Creek).

Sage left Fort Lancaster for "the states" March 17, 1844, going by way of Bent's Fort and the Santa Fe Trail.

IV. Francis Parkman (1846); George F. Ruxton (1847).

"The historian, Francis Parkman, got much of the color for his valuable historical writings on a journey to the West in 1846. His "Oregon Trail", which tells of the journey, is not only an English classic, but an original source for Colorado history". "George F. Ruxton was an adventurous Englishman who in his "Wild Life in the Rocky Mountains" interestingly re-counts his journey from Mexico into Colorado and his experiences in hunting and traveling there in 1847." (Hafen, 1933, 39).

In Chapter XX of his book entitled "The Lonely Journey", Parkman describes his trip from Fort Laramie to Bent's Fort. He followed the old north and south trappers' trail. He spent three days at Bisanette's Camp on Horse Creek and on the fifth day after leaving the latter place he reached the South Platte. He now saw Long's Peak for the first time. Parkman described his view of Long's Peak in the following words:

"The sky has been obscured since the morning by thin mists and vapors, but now vast piles of clouds were gathered together in the west. They rose to a great height above the horizon, and looking up toward them, I distinguished one mass darker than the rest, and of a peculiar conical form. I happened to look again, and still could see it as before. At some moments it was dimly seen, at others its outline was sharp and distinct, but while the clouds around it were shifting, changing and dissolving away it still towered aloft in the midst of them, fixed and unmovable. It must, thought I, be the summit of a mountain; and yet its height staggered me. My conclusion was right, however. It was Long's Peak,....The thickening gloom soon hid it from view, and we never saw it again." (Parkman, 1849).

At noon of the sixth day, Parkman's party .. "rested under the walls of a large fort, built in these solitudes by L. St. Vrain. It

was now abandoned and fast falling into ruin. The walls of unbaked bricks were cracked from top to bottom. Our horses recoiled in terror from the neglected entrance, where the heavy gates were torn from their hinges and flung down. The area within was overgrown with weeds, and the long ranges of apartments once occupied by the motley concourse of traders, Canadians and squaws, were now miserably dilapidated. Twelve miles farther on, near the spot where we encamped, were the remains of still another fort, standing in melancholy desertion and neglect." (Parkman, 1849, 350).

Early the next morning they passed a large, recently deserted Arapahoe encampment. About noon they reached Cherry Creek where an abundance of wild cherries, plums, currants and gooseberries were growing; and on the night of August 16th, 1846, they encamped among the hills in view of Pike's Peak. Bent's Fort was left on August 27th, and the long journey back to civilization through Indian dangers was begun.

V. John C. Fremont.

"The most famous of the later official explorers of Colorado was the romantic Captain John C. Fremont. Five times between 1842 and 1848 this 'Pathfinder of the West' appeared in Colorado. In 1842 and again in 1843 he visited a region east of the mountains that had been many times explored. In 1844..... Fremont entered Colorado at Brown's Hole on the Green River and crossed the limits of the state from west to east, passing successively through North, Middle, and South Parks; he left by way of the Arkansas River." In 1845 his route was up the Arkansas River. "In 1848, Fremont, now a private citizen, appeared in the role of a railway engineer". (Colorado University, 1927, 65).

In his expedition of 1842 Fremont divided his forces at the Forks of the Platte, the main body of men following the North Platte, and he himself, with three of his party, going up the South Platte to St. Vrain's Fort where he hoped to obtain mules. He arrived there July 11th, 1842. He made a bad estimate of the distance of Long's Peak from the fort, stating it was only seventeen miles west. On the 12th the party started north to Fort Laramie crossing both Cache la Poudre and Crow Creeks.

"Early in 1843, Fremont began to prepare for his second expedition, the first in which he made extensive explorations of parts of Colorado's territory. (Smiley, 1913, I, 117). By July 4, 1843, Fremont was again at Fort St. Vrain, where he and his

companions received a hearty welcome. He made inquiries as to passes over the mountains and learned that the high mountains to the west were crossed very seldom. After a trip up the South Platte to Colorado Springs Fremont determined on crossing the mountains via the Cache la Poudre River while Fitzpatrick should lead the main party directly north to Fort Laramie. On July 26th the parties started. He followed up Big Thompson Creek several miles and then crossed over to the Cache la Poudre. Fremont went up the latter creek, using much the same route followed by General Ashley in 1825.

On the return trip in 1844, Fremont entered Colorado at Brown's Hole, in June. From there the party crossed to the North Platte in Wyoming but instead of following down that river they went upstream to its source in North Park. He states in his report that he followed this course in order not to pass over ground already examined. "Southwardly there were objects worthy to be explored, to-wit: The approximation of the headwaters of three different rivers - the Platte, the Arkansas, and the Grand River, Fork of the Rio Colorado...; the passes at the heads of these rivers; and the three remarkable mountain coves, called parks, in which they take their rise." Three crossings of the divide had to be made. "But, no matter." All of these geographical features were of interest; "and, although well known to hunters and trappers, were unknown to science and to history".

On the evening of June 15, 1844, Fremont camped on the North Platte a few miles southwest of the present hamlet of Pinkhampton in Laramie County. On the 16th Fremont's party passed through New or North Park and on the 17th they crossed the divide into "Old Park", the present Middle Park. By the 21st they were at the headwaters of the South Fork of the South Platte River in the South Park. Passing down this fork on the 22nd they came in sight of Pikes Peak in the afternoon. Fremont returned to "the states" via the Arkansas route. (Smiley, 1913, I, 121).

On his third expedition, John Charles Fremont, now a Brevet-Captain by Presidential appointment, came to Bent's Fort by way of the Santa Fe Trail, arriving there August 2, 1845. A division of forces was made at the fort. One party under lieutenants Abert and Peck, with Thomas Fitzpatrick as guides explored the region south of the Arkansas, then in Mexican territory. Captain Fremont left the fort August 16th with 60 men, following the old trail up the Arkansas River. They did not attempt passing through the Royal Gorge but made a detour to the north. From the Arkansas source

they went across Tennessee Pass, and down the White River to the Green. Continuing westward through the Great Basin, Fremont reached California in December, 1845. (University of Colorado, 1927, 65).

In 1846, now a private citizen, Fremont made a fourth trip to Colorado in the interests of a railroad. He did not go north of the Arkansas River this time. He made the attempt to cross the divide in winter against the warnings of trappers and mountaineers. One third of his men and all of his animals were lost. The survivors went down the Rio Grande to New Mexico. From there Fremont continued his journey to California.

Pacific Railroad surveys conducted by Captain John W. Gunnisen and Lieutenant E. G. Beckwith under the auspices of the War Department, will be passed over in the present paper. Suffice it to say that the railroads of the present day follow routes over the mountains roughly corresponding to those surveyed in the early '50's. The engineers of the thirty-ninth parallel made it "apparent that physical obstacles were not insurmountable." (University of Colorado, 1927, 66).

During the late '40's and during the '50's small bodies of United States troops passed along the base of the Front Range, going between Fort Laramie and Santa Fe for the most part. Kearny's reconnaissance in 1846 for the purpose of overcoming the Indians has already been referred to. Perhaps the most notable of the other military expeditions in Colorado was that of General Marcy in 1857 who wrote a book on his experiences in the West, entitled "Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border".

RESUME OF POLITICAL BOUNDARY HISTORY OF COLORADO

) "That part of Colorado lying north and east of the Arkansas River was originally a portion of the Louisiana country which was ceded by France to Spain in 1762, retroceded to France in 1800, and purchased by the United States in 1803. That part not originally comprised within the Louisiana region belonged to Spain until the Mexican revolution of 1821, after which it formed a part of Mexico. The eastern part of this Mexican territory became a part of Texas, which achieved its independence in 1836, and in 1845 was annexed to the United States; the western part was included in the lands ceded by Mexico to the United States in 1848 at the close of the Mexican War."

"The section of Colorado included in the Louisiana Purchase belonged successively to the district of Louisiana (1804-5), the territory of Louisiana (1803-12), the territory of Missouri (1812-34), and the "Indian Country" (1834-54) when the territories of Utah and New Mexico were organized; in 1850, the western portion of what is now Colorado was included in Utah; the region east of the Rocky Mountains, south of the Arkansas and west of the 103rd meridian was made a part of New Mexico; and the area east of the 103rd meridian and south of the Arkansas was left without organized government, as was the Indian country to the north of it. In 1854, when Kansas and Nebraska were organized, all the Colorado region not included in Utah or New Mexico became a part of Kansas if south of the 40th parallel, and a part of Nebraska if north of that line.

"In February, 1861, the region lying between the 37th and 41st parallels and extending from the 25th to the 37th meridian from Washington (approximately the 102d and 109th meridian from Greenwich) was organized as the territory of Colorado; and in August, 1876, the territory, without a change of boundaries, became a state of the Union." (U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Thirteenth Census of the U. S. taken in the year 1910, Statistics for Colorado, 567).

THE GOLD RUSH OF 1858 and 1859: FIRST PERMANENT SETTLEMENT BY AMERICANS.

It has been shown that Colorado was not terra incognita in 1858 and 1859, the years when Americans flocked to the region to dig for gold and to remain to develop its agricultural resources. "Traders, trappers and explorers, both official and unofficial, had visited North, Middle and South Parks, the headwaters of the North and South Plattes, the Arkansas, the Rio Grande, and had been on all other principal streams of Colorado. Again and again the South Platte and the Arkansas had guided parties of men into the limits of Colorado or had pointed the way back to the States". (University of Colorado, 1927, 68).

"With the decline of the fur trade in the forties and fifties passed the great days of the trading posts; in their stead came the government forts": Fort Massachusetts (1852) in the San Luis Valley for protection against the Utes; Fort Garland taking its place in 1858; Fort Wise (1859), later called Fort Lyon (1861), on the Arkansas. (Ibid., 68). As a result of the uprising of the Plains Indians in 1864, Fort Morgan was established on the south branch of

the South Platte River to guard the stage lines. Its walls were originally of sod, and later of adobe. Nothing marks the spot now. Its site is now included in the edge of the town of Fort Morgan. (Parsons, 1911, 238). The town of Fort Collins, county seat of Laramie County, was named after Colonel William O. Collins, on the site of Fort Collins established in 1864 by the Colonel. It was never a fort, "only a cluster of log houses and tents occupied by the troops. The camp was abandoned in 1874." Parsons, 1911, 198).

Since the decline of trapping in the late '40's the Rocky Mountains of Northern Colorado had few visitors. Nothing to take the place of trapping had come to stir the interest of people in the mountains. "The chief overland trails passed either to the north or to the south of the lofty mountains in which the South Platte and the Arkansas take their rise. The transcontinental railroad was still a dream. The agricultural frontier was no farther west than central Iowa and eastern Kansas. On the prairies there was room for indefinite expansion, and on beyond lay the 'Great American Desert'. So far as any one could foretell, the Utes would not soon be disturbed in their mountain hunting grounds, and the Arapahoes and Cheyennes would be allowed to enjoy without molestation from the whites the land along the eastern base of the mountains between the Oregon and Santa Fe trails, which had been granted to them by a treaty made in 1851. Colorado was remote, not easily accessible, and uninviting. All this was changed suddenly and violently by the discovery of gold on the South Platte and its tributaries in the summer of 1858." (Colorado University, 1927, 60).

In June, 1858, the so-called Russell Company, composed of men from Georgia, Missouri, and Kansas, were successful in gold digging about the present site of Denver. Shortly afterwards, the Lawrence Company reached the Pike's Peak region. "The movement that followed was stimulated by hard times in the Mississippi Valley, the result of the panic of 1857." During the winter of 1858-9 town building, largely of log houses, proceeded in preparation for the expected great rush of the spring. Many of these speculative towns are cities today but many others have disappeared from the map. (See Willard, James, F. in Colorado University, 1927, pp. 101-121, for a more detailed treatment of the gold rush and after). Denver and Boulder are among the cities that owed their births to the gold rush.

The overflow of gold prospecting brought men into the area of the present Rocky Mountain National Park. Little of the precious mineral was found, however, so the bulk of the mining activity was confined to the region to the south. The mining area of Gilpin and Boulder Counties was in close proximity, however.

JOEL ESTES.

Many who came to mine remained to establish homesteads, and among this group was Joel Estes, the first settler of Estes Park in 1860. William N. Byers of Denver, an early visitor, found the Estes family established in the park and named it after its first settler.

"Joel Estes, like Boone, enjoyed being far from neighbors, and wandered into Colorado from Arkansas. One autumn day in 1859, while hunting, he ascended Park Hill and from this vantage point had a wonderful view down into Estes Park. Early in 1860 Mr. and Mrs. Estes and their son, Milton, moved into the park, with their effects upon two pack horses." (Mills, 1924, 6).

"A log cabin was built on Willow Creek, about one block north of the present ranch house near the junction of the Lyons and Loveland roads.... In 1861 they brought in a two wheeled cart." Milton Estes married Mary L. Flemming at Fort Lupton in the Spring of 1861. Their son Charles, born in the Park February 19, 1865, was the first white child born there.

It was three years after the settlement of the Estes family before the first visitors came into Estes Park. Among the visitors of 1865 were the Reverend and Mrs. Richardson. Mr. Richardson, a Methodist, preached in the Estes cabin one August day of 1865.

After a long cold winter of deep snow the Estes family longed for a warmer climate and sold out to Michael Hollenbeck. A few months later a man named Jacobs gave \$250 for the claim, and soon thereafter, "a regular Robinson Crusoe of a character called 'Buckskin'" acquired the land.

"In 1867 the Estes claim came under the control of Griff Evans, and in due course lost its identity by becoming the property of the Earl of Dunraven. Evans remained at the ranch house for twenty years." (For details see Enos Mills, "The Rocky Mountain National Park", Garden City, N. Y., 1924).

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN IN ESTES PARK.

Enos Mills says that "in the autumn and early winter of 1869, and again in 1872, Earl Dunraven, with his guests, Sir William Cummings and Earl F. Fitzpatrick, shot big game" in Estes Park.

"Dunraven was so delighted with the abundance of game and the beauty and grandeur of the scenes that he determined to have Estes Park as a game preserve. His agents at once set to work to secure the land. Men were hired to file on claims, and ultimately about 15,000 acres were supposed to have been secured from the government." (Mills, 1924, 20).

All was not smooth going with Dunraven. His land claims were contested. Twenty-one original claims were contested by R. Q. McGregor and others accusing the Earl's agents of having secured much of the land through loose or fraudulent methods. 15,000 acres, however, were under control of Dunraven's agent for many years.

Finally, Lord Dunraven decided to give up his land-preserve idea. Cattle were pastured on the lands for about 25 years, and in 1907 F. O. Stanley and B. D. Sanborn bought up the interests of Dunraven.

The Earl of Dunraven spent some of his time hunting in the Yellowstone region and wrote a book on it. He wrote magazine articles on the Colorado Parks and mountains and Estes Park in particular. (Dunraven, 1880, 445-457).

Lord Dunraven helped in other ways aside from his writings, in spreading knowledge of the Estes Park region. Frequently he had distinguished guests visiting him. Among these was the celebrated artist, Albert Bierstadt, after whom Lake Bierstadt was named. He came as Dunraven's guest in 1874. He was so delighted with Estes Park that he came again, and made sketches and secured materials for some of his famous pictures. His painting of Long's Peak hung in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington for many years.

In 1874 Bierstadt helped select the sites of Dunraven's cottage and the Estes Park Hotel.

ISABELLA BIRD.

One of the first books to emphasize the wonders of Estes Park and perhaps the first to devote the greater part of its contents to the region, was "A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains", written by Miss Isabella Bird, an English author of a number of travel books.

Miss Bird first visited Estes Park in 1873, arriving late in September and leaving early in December. She boarded at Griff Evan's cabin, being perhaps the first boarder in the Park. (An announcement appeared in the Chicago Tribune of August 13, 1871, that Evans was planning to put up a cheap hotel for the accommodation of tourists.)

Miss Bird's book came out first in October, 1879. A second edition appeared in November and a third in January, 1880. In all there were seven editions. It deserved its popularity, for it is full of human interest, and the descriptions of the mountains, the canyons and the parks are fresh and vigorous. "The wild life was abundant, the trees uncut, and the wild flowers at their best." Miss Bird's experience of climbing Long's Peak with the gallant helpfulness of "Mountain Jim" was a most interesting one to her.

Some of the other authors of an earlier day who wrote of the Long's Peak region were Helen Hunt Jackson, Anna Dickinson, Bayard Taylor, Grace Greenwood, and Frederick Hastings Chapin. Chapin gave two or three chapters to the region, in his book published in 1889.

"ROCKY MOUNTAIN JIM"

"The star character among those who played a part in the early history of Estes Park was James Nugent, "Rocky Mountain Jim". He came to the Park about 1868,"... and built a cabin in Muggins Gulch on the road from Estes Park to Lyons. His cabin stood at the mouth of the first gulch on the right as one descends Muggins Gulch. Jim's associates, his uncertain and irregular past, his braggadocio, bravery, chivalry, liking of poetry, and writing of doggerel, his debauches, moods, kind acts, his big white mule, his picturesque dress, his romantic association with Miss Isabella Bird, the cowardly manner in which he was shot, and his dramatic death-" all made of James Nugent a character indeed.

"Meddling parents, and a lovely maiden in the background, may have started him on his reckless way". He may have been of distinguished birth, but whether from the South, from Canada or elsewhere is not known. "He seems to have served with both the Hudson's and American Fur Companies, and to have bushwhacked in the Kansas 'border warfare'".

"Jim hunted, trapped, kept a few cattle and made frequent trips to Denver and Boulder. Generally he was jovial and generous", and settlers along the way were "always glad to see him and his while mule coming."

"On July 6, 1869, he lost an eye and very nearly his life in a fight with a bear in Middle Park", near Grand Lake. (Mills, 1924, 10-12).

In her book "A Lady's Life in the Rockies", Miss Isabella Bird has left an interesting description of James Nugent and his helpfulness in the ascent of Long's Peak. (See Mills, 1924, 13; and Bird, 1881, 80-93, 99-118. Chapter VII of Bird describes the ascent up Long's Peak).

James Nugent was opposed to Lord Dunraven's hunting preserve idea, while Griff Evans, the settler nearer to Long's Peak, "was associated with those who were scheming to secure the whole of Estes Park for the "English Lord". Jim "opposed it with threatening armed presence and his pen". The upshot of the quarrel was that Evans shot and killed Nugent. "Naturally the old-timers were with Jim, and felt that Evans was hired to get rid of the old mountaineer. Whiskey was an ally, for Evans was drunk at the time of the shooting.

"This was the most serious Estes Park tragedy". (Mills, 1924, 15-17).

Miss Isabella Bird, a young English woman, who was in Estes Park in 1873, in her book expressed admiration for James Nugent's good qualities. Some said she was in love with him, but according to Mills, "Jim was a picturesque and interesting fellow and might easily delight a young lady author without her falling in love with him." She was deeply interested in him and a correspondence was carried on between her and Nugent after she left the Park.

COLONIES AND TOWN COMPANIES: AGRICULTURAL SETTLEMENT.

The '60's saw a slump in mining activity in Colorado, but by the end of that decade the mining industry was placed on a more substantial basis. The Civil War was over and men were

becoming interested in the agricultural frontier. The Indians no longer seriously menaced the roads, and as the agricultural possibilities of the country were better known, farmers immigrated. A large part of the agricultural development was promoted by colony and town companies.

Most notable among the colony companies was the Union Colony established at Greeley in the early '70's. Horace Greeley gave his support to it. Nathan C. Meeker, his agricultural editor, was its principal promoter. Soon, other colonies were planted at Evans and at Longmont.

Through the advertising of these colonies more and more people became interested in Colorado, and more and more settlers went up into the hills and into the parks of the higher mountains.

In 1874 a stage line was established between Estes Park and Longmont, and Mr. and Mrs. R. Q. McGregor settled in Black Canyon. (Mills, 1924, 24). After 1875 many settlers came to stay (for details see Mills op. cit.), and built cabins and raised cattle in the vicinity of Long's Peak.

ASCENTS OF LONG'S PEAK.

The founder of the Rocky Mountain News of Denver, Wm. N. Bryers, made the first attempt to climb Long's Peak in August, 1864. He doubted at the time whether any one would ever succeed in scaling its summit. However, four years later he and a party of six other men, including Major J. W. Powell, W. H. Powell, L. W. Keplinger, Samuel Gorman, Ned. E. Farrell, and John C. Sumner, made a successful ascent. In June, 1868, Major Powell had left Wesleyan University in Illinois with the determination to climb Long's Peak. Leaving the train at Cheyenne, Wyoming, he and his party proceeded to Denver with mules and ponies. From there they followed the Berthoud Trail to Hot Springs in Middle Park. At Grand Lake, "final arrangements were made for climbing the peak." The first attempt to scale the summit was unsuccessful. Finally a way over what seemed an impassable barrier was found.

In September, 1873, the first woman to climb Long's Peak made the ascent as the guest of Professor Hayden of the United States Geological Survey. She was the writer, Miss Anna E. Dickinson, who wrote an account of the experience. (See Toll, 1929, 150 footnote).

"Early in October, 1873, the Peak was climbed by four people not unknown to fame. They were Miss Isabella Bird, ex-Mayor Platt Rogers of Denver, Judge S. S. Downer of Boulder, and 'Rocky Mountain Jim.'" (Mills, 1924, 37).

Abner E. Sprague, who had first come with two companions on horseback into Estes Park in 1868, made an ascent in 1874. He settled in Moraine Park in 1875.

Many people ascended Long's Peak annually beginning with 1874. Seldom have any tragedies resulted from the climb. The most notable death was that of Miss Carrie J. Walton, an eccentric, cultured and wealthy young lady of Waterbury, Connecticut. She died of exhaustion September 23, 1884.

H. C. Rogers made the first moonlight climb in August, 1896; Miss Lucy W. Evans in August, 1903. Enos Mills, who came to the Estes Park in 1884 and has lived in the region ever since, made the first winter ascent in February, 1903.

"In August, 1904, Professor S. A. Farrand, aged seventy-four, and Ethel Husted, aged ten, climbed unassisted to the summit." Mrs. E. J. Lamb made the ascent unassisted on her seventieth birthday. Enos Mills as guide has climbed to the top more than 257 times, climbing it "during every hour of the day and the night and every month of the year".

SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION

"From 1844 to 1860 more than twenty expeditions were sent out by the Government with the object of determining the best route for a railroad to the Pacific. In 1853, Congress passed a bill making appropriations for the determination of the most practicable route for a railroad ... to the Pacific Coast..... The information thus obtained was embraced in a large series of maps and reports (The Pacific Railroad Reports), which were published by the general government. Although so very much had been done toward the development of the resources of the great West; yet, prior to 1868 no important portion had been examined with such care and detail as to render the maps anything more than approximately correct.". From 1868 until well into the '80's, King, Wheeler, Powell, Hayden and others organized expeditions, "with the object of working out certain areas with considerable detail, including

topography, geology, and natural history; and more definite knowledge of the remote West has been obtained within that period than in all the previous years." (Hayden, 1880, 18-19).

Prof. F. V. Hayden conducted an expedition which included northern Colorado in 1873-74. In his geological report for 1875 Hayden gives the following words of appreciation on Estes Park.

"Within the district treated (the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains) we will scarcely be able to find a region so favorably distinguished. Not only has nature amply supplied this valley with features of rare beauty and surroundings of admirable grandeur, but it has thus distributed them that the eye of an artist may rest with perfect satisfaction on the complete picture presented". (quoted in Mills, 1924, 23).

OTHER TOPICS.

- I. The Long Trail, or The Cattle Range of Colorado.
- II. History of Scientific Exploration.
- III. Life of Enos Mills and his Work for the Rocky Mountain National Park.
- IV. The Story of Grand Lake.
- V. Long's Peak and Estes Park in Literature.
- VI. Early Hotels and Inns.

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