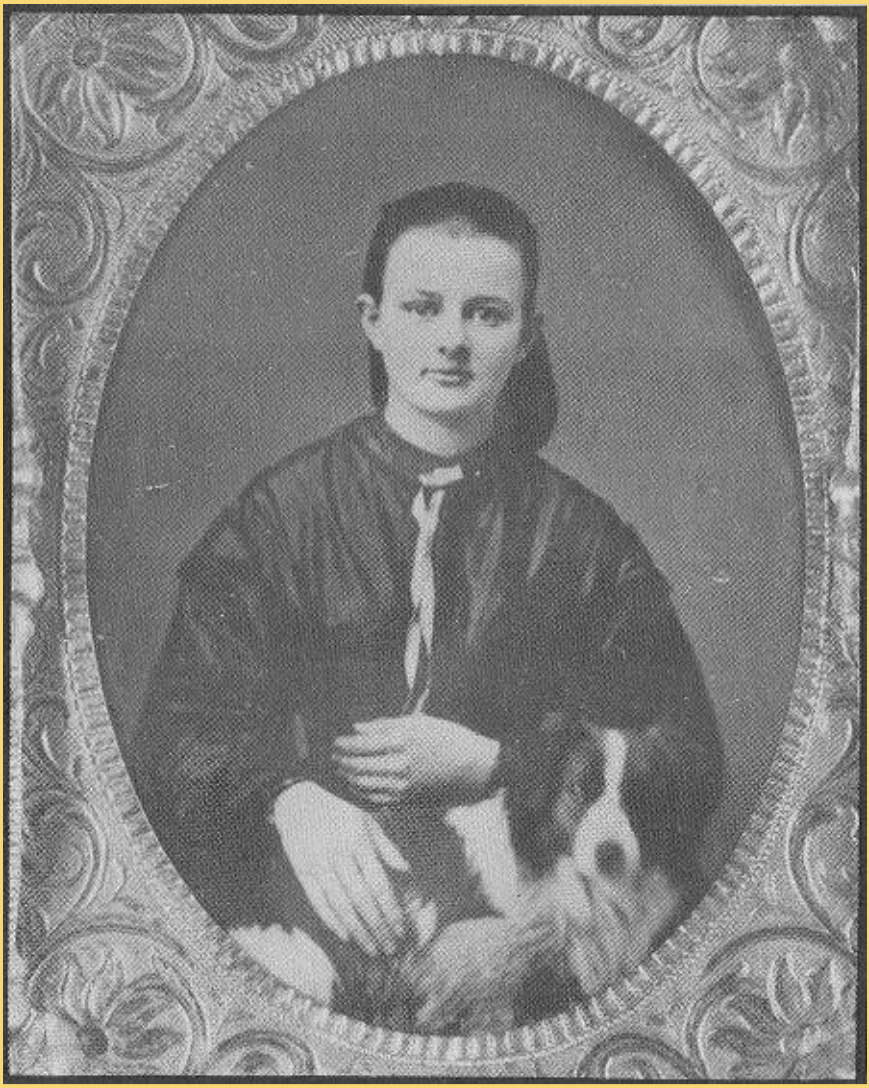
Maggie By My Side



by

Lulita Crawford Pritchett

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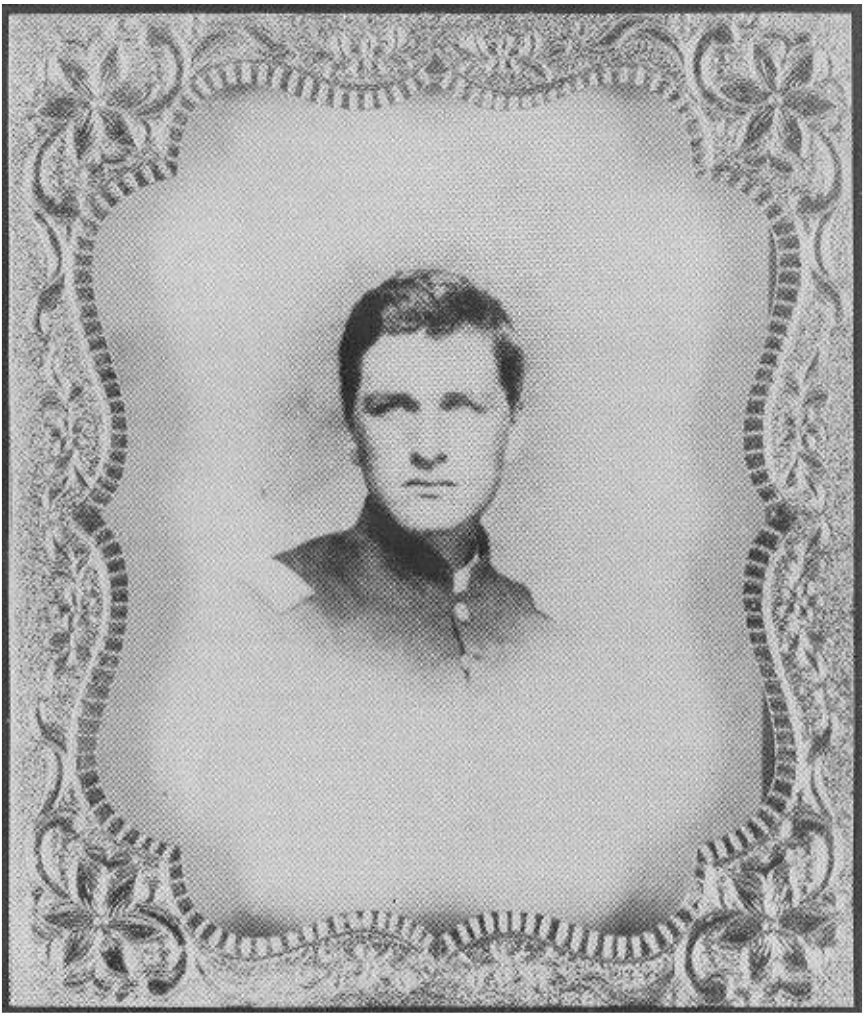

“Jimmy”

FOREWORD

When I was very young, all the mountains belonged to Grandfather. As I rode on his shoulders at Steamboat Springs, Colorado, surrounded by his particular mountains, I could see exactly where foxes used to have a den on the ridge, and where little boy John, with the help of Legs, the greyhound, had once treed a mountain lion.

Later, when I was school age, Grandfather and I walked together to the edge of the hill above Soda Creek so he could show me where the Little Cabin had stood, and were both disappointed to find that the town had cut a street at that spot, and all we could see was raw gravel.

But we could walk down a little farther to the west toward the Warm Iron Spring and tell without a doubt where the Big Cabin had stood because the round boulders outlining the path to the front door were still there. And we could climb the trail up the sagebrush bench at the back and pick tall blue penstemons in the crude breastworks of rock that had been a lookout for Indians at the time of the Meeker Massacre.

Always we paused at the Iron Spring, now called Soda Spring. Ice cold, burbling, noisy, it was our favorite. We dipped bubbles in our tin cup, and as we drank, the fizz up our noses was so strong it made the tears come. Careful not to scrape the yellow iron crust from the rock basin that had replaced the original clay hollow, we filled a jug with water to take home to make lemonade. Usually the cork blew out before we had climbed the hill.

When the chill mountain night closed in, the place to be was by the grate fire in the living room of the spacious stone house, the culmination of Grandfather's building in the valley. First had been the log cabins, then the frame house, then this dwelling of light gray sandstone, quarried from Woodchuck Hill half a mile away.

Parents, children, uncles, aunts, cousins, and visitors were accustomed to gather there for music and story telling. Grandfather sat in his big black leather rocker near the grate where he could reach the wood box, and Grandmother reigned from her easy armchair. They still made a handsome couple—he as straight as the tall soldier he once had been, with Scotch blue eyes and hair that curled crisply even after a lifetime of being plastered down; she, four years younger, with hands work worn, but cheeks firm, chin dainty, dark eyes asparkle, and the air of a girl always about her.

Often the evening was filled with music, such music as shook the chandeliers! Uncle John strummed his banjo or sawed on his "fiddle". Uncle Logan coaxed melody from his harmonica, or sat at the piano and after finding the right key, thumped an accompaniment and sang THE PIRATE'S SERENADE.

"Now, Margaret, play something sweet," Grandmother would say to my older sister.

Margaret would take her violin from its case, tune it tenderly, and with Mother (Lulie) at the piano, would make magic of MEDITATION FROM THAIS, or SCHUBERT'S SERENADE. Everyone would grow quiet listening.

Then maybe Mother and Uncle Logan would sing THE TWO LIVES, a duet. Any guests who could, performed. All of us sang.

Grandfather had a good baritone voice and liked to boom along on the lower notes. Sometimes he would give us a snatch of MAGGIE BY MY SIDE. This was a song popular about the time of the Civil War, and we understood that a certain young lad had sung it in his courting days to a certain girl on a neighboring farm. It went like this:

The land of my home is flitting,
Flitting from my view;
A gale in the sail is sitting,
Toils the merry crew.
Here let my home be,
On the waters wide;
I roam with a proud heart;
Maggie's by my side;

My own love, Maggie dear,
Sitting by my side;
Maggie dear, my own love,
Sitting by my side.

The wind howling o'er the billow
From the distant lea,
The storm raging 'round my pillow
Brings no care to me.
Roll on ye dark waves,
O'er the troubled tide,
I heed not your anger,
Maggie's by my side;

My own love, Maggie dear,
Sitting by my side;
Maggie dear, my own love,
Sitting by my side.

Storms can appal me never
While her brow is clear:
Fair weather lingers ever
Where her smiles appear,
When sorrow's breakers
'Round my heart shall bide,
Still may I find her
Sitting by my side.

My own love, Maggie dear,
Sitting by my side;
Maggie dear, my own love,
Sitting by my side.

My own love, etc
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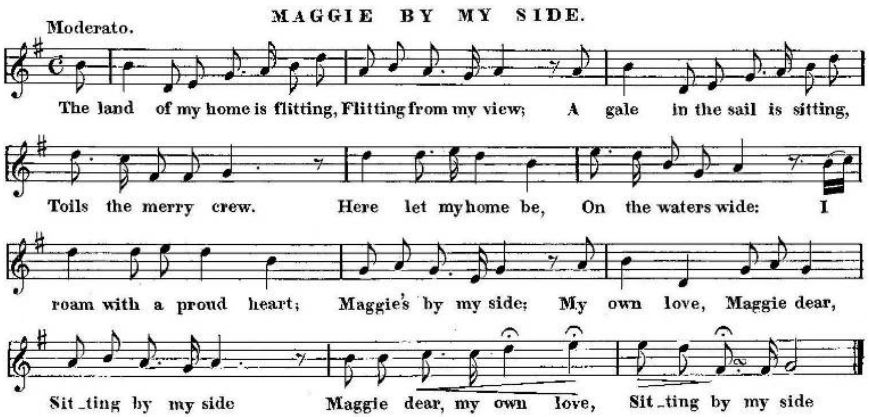


Instead of ocean swells, he no doubt saw endless rolling prairies, and instead of a ship, a wagon buffeted by Kansas winds.

Sometimes he would sing a few bars of HARD TIMES, HARD TIMES, COME AGAIN NO MORE. Memories would soon overtake him, and he would have to stamp out and get more wood, though there was already a box full. Grandmother would have to smooth an imaginary wrinkle from her skirt and blink away a tear.

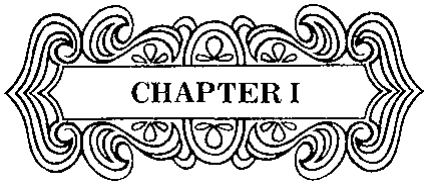
Other evenings were filled with reminiscing. Outside, let Soda

Creek and Bear River make wild, rumbling talk! Inside, firelight rosied the cherry wood mantel and glanced from the elk horn chair. Little folk sat on the floor in front of the grate. We hugged our knees while coyote jibbers from Jackrabbit Hill added just the right flavor to the tales we were about to hear.

The facts concerning the founding and development of Steamboat Springs have been recounted many times. Nowadays, people usually call the river that flows through town the Yampa, an Indian name for the edible tubers that grow so profusely in the valley. Grandfather almost always called it Bear River. How James H. Crawford staked his claim on the banks of Bear River in 1874 is common knowledge. The first Christmas, the first post office, the first school have often been featured. Thanks to the Leckenbys of the STEAMBOAT PILOT local history has been carefully preserved.

Still more can be told. From the viewpoint of a granddaughter who has many times heard these tales from the lips of the original actors, I should like to put the story together, rounding it out with family recollections and personal glimpses.

Lulita Crawford Pritchett



Grandmother's maiden name was Margaret Emerine Bourn, but Grandfather called her Maggie. Grandfather's name was James Harvey Crawford, but Grandmother called him Jimmy. The three children who had been born in Missouri were Lulie, Logan, and John. Lulie's hair was dark, Logan's auburn, and John's undeniably red. Some years later a red-haired little girl, Mary Beulah, was born in Boulder, Colorado to complete the family. Lulie was seven, Logan almost five, and John one and a half that summer of 1874 when the Crawfords finally reached Hot Sulphur Springs.

They had traveled a long way in the last year since they had left the farm six miles south of Sedalia, Missouri. On the first day of May, 1873 in a train of seven wagons and two hacks, they had set out. With them had come the Will Yankees (Maggie's sister Sallie and family), another family named Reed, and several young men bent on adventure—among them Jimmy's brother, Henry Crawford, and Maggie's twin brother, Jim Bourn. The Sedalia newspaper reported that this was the best outfit that had been observed for a long time and it was to be regretted that such substantial citizens were leaving the community.

After thirty-five days of prairie and rattlesnakes, quicksand, buffalo, and Indians, the travelers had reached Denver and camped in the cottonwoods by Cherry Creek. When they had rested a few days, the Reeds headed for the new mining excitement at Breckenridge, and the others started up Clear Creek, which seemed the nearest way into the mountains. The road ended at Empire City, where the Yankees decided to stay and engage in mining.

Jimmy, who was more interested in cattle raising than in gold or silver and whose goal lay in the fabled paradise on the other side of the mountains, inquired about the wagon route to Middle Park. People shook their heads. There was only a trail over Berthoud Pass. He learned that a man named John Quincy Adams Rollins was building a road across the range several miles north at a place called Boulder Pass. Jimmy went to see Mr. Rollins only to be told that the road was so far from finished that it would be impossible to get a wagon over it till next spring.

Disappointed, Jimmy rented a house for his family in Empire City. But he would not be denied at least a glimpse of the land that

had colored his dreams for more than a year. With one of the Missouri boys, a good woodsman named Tom Halsell, he went horseback exploring across Berthoud Pass.

His first knowledge of this part of the West had come through an article in the Missouri Republican. The writer of the article had visited Colorado Territory, penetrating the mountains as far as Grand Lake, where he had come upon a recluse known as "Judge" Wescott. According to the reporter, the region around Grand Lake was wondrous enough, but the country beyond, as Wescott described it, was a fabulous place, rich in timber, streams, grass, and minerals, and known only to a few mountain men.

During the summer of 1872 Jimmy made a trip to Colorado Territory on the Kansas Pacific railroad, which two years previously had been completed to Denver. With him came his brother, Henry and his wife's brother, Fred Bourn. In Denver they were joined by Robert W. Steele, ex-governor of the Territory of Jefferson, whose children had gone to school in Sedalia. Leading a pack horse to carry necessities, they went on foot into the mountains. At Fairplay, Steele had mining interests and left them. The three Missourians walked on over the mountain trail to Georgetown, Idaho Springs, Central City, and Blackhawk. At Blackhawk Henry and Fred found work and Jimmy continued alone to Denver and thence by train to Greeley.

The whole country "smelt" so good to him that he returned to Missouri, persuaded Maggie, and set about disposing of his farm and making preparations to move west the next spring.

If he needed an excuse, the chinch bugs had eaten his crops for two years in succession. Maggie said he had been restless ever since he had been mustered out of the Union Army. In her words he had a "roving disposition" as his forebears had had. Some of them had always been among the first on any frontier. The Crawford branch had come from Scotland to Pennsylvania in the early 1700's, had treked to Kentucky, then to Missouri. Now here Jimmy was in Colorado.

Many miles he and Tom Halsell rode through Middle Park following Grand River till they were stopped by Gore Range. They rode far enough to fill their eyes with lush valleys and ridge upon ridge of timbered slopes.

For the rest of the summer, on the advice of Will Yankee, Jimmy leased a mine in Empire City, worked hard in it, and made nothing. When winter came, he moved his family to a small community eight miles above Golden called Beaver Brook, hired out his teams to do hauling, and chafed at the long, cold months. The other Missouri boys worked in mines or cut railroad ties.

The winter did not drag for the children. They all had whooping cough. After they recovered from that, Lulie and Logan skated on the ice of Beaver Brook, romped with Sport and Spy, the black and white shepherd puppies a man had given them, or played on the mountain under the evergreen trees and learned how to find and chew spruce gum.

Maggie never lacked for anything to do. Her family was so hard on clothes she had to start sewing, but, when she looked for the paper patterns she had brought from Sedalia and stored under the bed, she was dismayed to find that the puppies had chewed them to bits. She had considerable trouble making new patterns.

Towards spring Jimmy and Maggie rode through Bergen Park and Mt. Vernon vicinity picking out cattle. They bought thirty young cows and heifers, trading their hack into the bargain.

The last of May, Maggie's father and younger brother, Fred, sent word they were coming on the train to visit. The family dressed up and made the long drive to Denver to meet them.

And then missed them!

The only good thing about the trip was that the children had their pictures taken. Maggie said, "Once we get into the wilderness among the savages there may never be another chance."

That spring day on the plains was hot. Logan was pouty because his mother would not let him eat his orange till after he had sat for the photographer. Lulie's hair was stringing around, and John could not help wiggling. Anyway, the tintypes that Jimmy paid for showed three solemn child faces quite clearly, and Maggie was satisfied.

When the family returned home, they found that Grandpa Bourn and Fred had hired horses and reached Beaver Brook ahead of them.

For the next few weeks what a fine time they all had visiting! Grandpa Bourn was no tenderfoot. He said he had seen a lot of places in his time but none to match this. Before he had married and settled down on a farm in Missouri, he had played the fiddle in a circus in which he owned part interest. The circus had traveled up and down the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, usually wintering in New Orleans, and once had gone as far as Mexico City.

It was now June, and though snow remained in patches on the mountains, Jimmy decided to head for the Western Slope. He invited Grandpa Bourn and Fred to come along. Fred willingly joined the expedition, but Grandpa Bourn wanted to visit his daughter, Sallie Yankee, in Empire City and see some of the other mining camps. Henry Crawford volunteered to go with him. It was agreed that the two of them would later ride horseback over a trail to meet the others in Middle Park.

Logan

John

Lulie

Early one morning Jimmy packed up his family and started. Maggie's twin brother, Jim Bourn, was not along. He and a new friend, Sandy Campbell, had gone prospecting. Two of the Missouri boys, Ed Hatten and Houston Richardson (Hute, for short), drove the wagons, while Jimmy and Fred on horseback herded the loose stock. Jack and Jim, the mules, pulled Hute's wagon in which the family rode, and four horses pulled Ed's freight wagon.

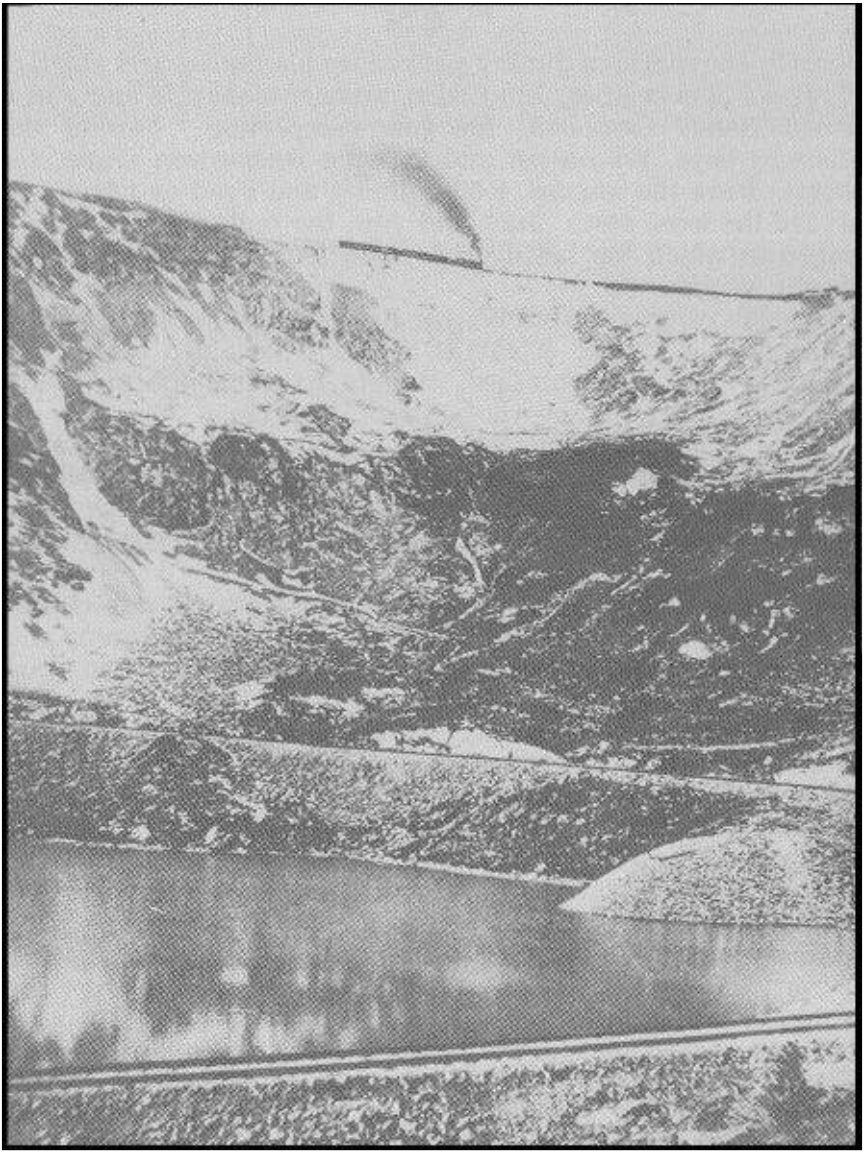
Three days' travel from Beaver Brook the procession reached Rollinsville, a cluster of cabins and tents occupied by Rollins' workmen and their families. Maggie bought some pie plant (rhubarb) from a woman who had a small garden.

A few miles beyond Rollinsville the road ended at Yankee-Doodle Lake, a beautiful green-blue cup of glacial water, behind which rose the stark circling walls of the Continental Divide. Halted by granite that rose a thousand feet almost straight up, Jimmy was obliged to make camp.

On the mountain to the east Rollins' men were wielding pick and shovel to clear a passage through newly blasted rock. Jimmy and his crew pitched in to help. Fortunately, the stock found good pasture in near-by alpine meadows.

People, horses, cows, and mules would have been eaten alive by swarms of mosquitoes that hatched out of melting snow banks if it had not been for the wind. Gnarly timberline pines offered scant protection. Maggie and the children shivered in blasts that tore the fire from under the cooking kettles. Maggie cooked anyhow. She was determined for her family to enjoy that pie plant since it was the last they would have for a long time. The Crawfords were getting beyond pie plant and everything else, nearly. Cooking took forever. She discovered that even boiling water was not very hot at this high altitude.

After several days of back-breaking labor, Jimmy believed he could get his wagons over the rocks and up the mountain. The morning of June 10, 1874 seemed a good time to try. The sun was bright enough here, and those knots of clouds over the range to the north seemed far away. He hitched Jack and Jim to his lightest wagon and in front of them Gray Jane, a third mule, paired with his strongest horse. This combination had never failed him.



Yankee-Doodle Lake at eastern base of Continental Divide. This picture was taken more than quarter of a century after the Craw fords camped near this lake and then drove the first wagons over J. Q. Rollins' toll road. It shows a portion of David H. Moffat's railroad. On October 2, 1904 the first train reached Corona on the summit of Rollins' Pass — elevation 11,660 feet.

It did now. Mules and horse wheezed and trembled and played out after moving the wagon only a few feet.

Jimmy let his teams blow a while. He borrowed a yoke of oxen from Mr. Rollins, which he hitched next to the wagon, and in front of them a second yoke. In front of the oxen he hitched the mules, and in the lead put Jane and the horse.

"Now!" he encouraged. "Jack! Jim!"

Rollins and his men urged the oxen. The animals bulged forward, and the wagon, almost on end, crawled up that mountain. Every few feet the lathered teams had to rest and struggle to get their wind, while men chocked the wheels with blocks of wood.

Maggie and the children climbed afoot. Lulie and Logan scrambled over the rocks like chipmunks. Maggie, with John a heavy baby in her arms, had to pause often to gasp the thin air.

To inch one wagon up that mountain took most of the morning. To get the second one up required an agonizing repetition of the whole procedure. Nobody thought about stopping for dinner or had time to notice the darkening sky.

Slow as the teams were, Maggie and the children were slower. By the time Maggie reached the grass-covered humps and hollows of the summit, men and wagons were out of sight. She was so busy picking her way that she paid little attention to the weather till a cannon clap of thunder jarred the granite, and a violent gust from the black overcast almost wrenched her sunbonnet from its strings.

When she called to Lulie and Logan, the wind stuffed the words back down her throat. The children came anyway, frightened, holding on to huckleberry and grass. John began to cry as hailstones stung him.

Here above timberline on the backbone of the world there was no place to take shelter. The storm was not an old Missouri kind but a howling mountain blizzard with hail as big as hens' eggs. No telling what would have become of Maggie and the children if they had not stumbled on a saddle blanket abandoned by the road crew. Under this the little group crouched, hanging on to their roof for all they were worth. How long they huddled there, growing colder and colder, and more and more cramped, Maggie had no notion. Then, as suddenly as it had begun, the storm ended. The refugees peeked out from under their blanket at ropes of clouds shredding away and sun sparkling on heaps of ice that looked like snow. Ice in June!

When a worried Jimmy was able to leave his teams and tramp back through white drifts, he found his family only a little damp and cold—and quite pleased with themselves.

But Maggie could walk no farther, and the children's short legs had given out. Luckily, Rollins' road crew had left more than the

saddle blanket at this place. Nearby was the running gear of a wagon. Jimmy fetched his mules, hitched them to the running gear, and Maggie and children, clinging to the "hounds" of that wagon, had the most exciting ride of their lives.

For half a mile they traversed open grassy country following the cirque's rim. Abruptly, they came to a narrow rock dike connecting two mountains, a passageway barely wide enough for the wheels and wet and slippery from the storm.

Jimmy drew the lines taut. "Easy, boys! Easy!"

Jack and Jim planted their hoofs carefully, flopped their big ears, and pulled that skeleton of a wagon over the breath-taking causeway with not an inch to spare, while the bug-eyed passengers hung on for dear life and peered down at Yankee Doodle Lake hundreds of feet below them on one side and Middle Boulder Creek a terrible distance below them on the other.

All were relieved when they were safely across, zigzagging up the steep bald mountain on the west. The mules grunted and lunged and rested, and jerked and slipped and wheezed and rested while their flanks heaved and sweat rolled in froth under the harness.

For some distance the way leveled and a view opened to several small lakes fed from melting snowdrifts. Then the tracks angled over the shoulder of the slope, and the travelers could gaze down on a shadowed green arm of Middle Park and blue mountains in the distance.

Over the Continental Divide! At last!

On the western slope Rollins' men had done no road work except to chop a ragged swath through the timber. Beyond alpine willows and stunted pines Jimmy caught up with his own wagons and at the first spot that offered any shelter made camp.

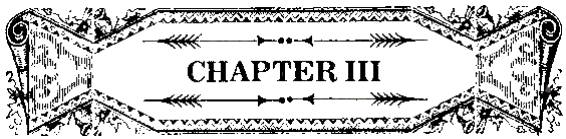
Somebody built a fire over which Maggie managed to cook supper. But she could not eat.

Neither could poor Hute. He had met with an accident as he had been trying to fill a jump-off with rocks to ease the wagon wheel. A rock had rolled down and hit one of the mule's hoofs, and the mule had kicked Hute in the mouth. Though the jaw was not broken, Jimmy worked long before he could stop the bleeding, and Hute's face was so swollen and sore he could not open his mouth.

Next morning both Hute and Maggie felt better and could swallow some breakfast. Maggie needed all her strength. Going down the mountain was as difficult as coming up had been, and she and the children had to walk most of the way. It took all day to make the steep descent. With rope and shovel and axe—and luck—the men toiled. The good strong mules and horses eased the wagons over slides and boulders. Over stumps. Around and through

marshes.

Camp that night was in Middle Park on Ranch Creek. Maggie declared she would have to stay in Middle Park because she would never, never want to go back over the terrible “road” she had just come.



In the spring freshness of a new day Maggie saw sagebrush and wild meadow land flecked with flowers; she saw bluffs and ledges and pine-covered hills far gentler than those of the great range behind. The wagons sloshed across willow-lined creeks, bank full with snow water.

Following a trail of sorts, the sojourners had joggled only a short distance when they passed a Ute camp of perhaps three hundred tepees. Indian ponies, grazing in the flat, threw up their heads and stared at the cavalcade, and Indian dogs snarled at Sport and Spy, who cowered under the wagons. No Indians came near or seemed to notice the newcomers.

They did not fool Maggie. She hugged her baby and said, "They're watching us." Coming across the plains she had several times hidden her red-haired boys from wandering tribes because she had heard that savages liked specially to wear red-haired scalps on their belts.

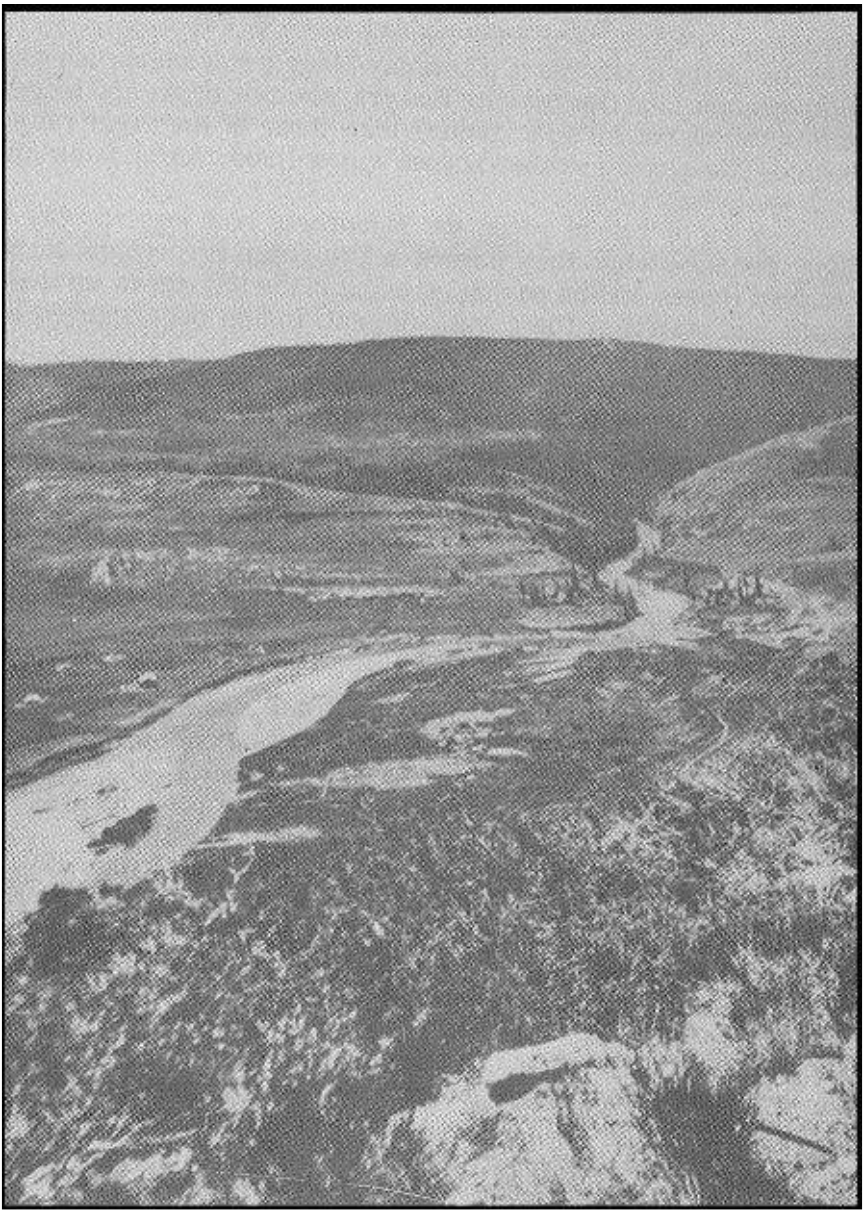
On the evening of the second day the trail wound down to Grand River. In the flat were a number of campers, among them Grandpa Bourn and Henry Crawford, happy to be reunited with their kinfolks.

William N. Byers and his grown son, Frank, were batching in an old cabin while they built a new one. Afterwards the Crawfords learned that Mr. Byers published THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS in Denver. A kindly man with a brown beard, he greeted the new arrivals.

"Welcome to Hot Sulphur Springs! I guess you can smell the mineral in the air, and you can see the white deposit across the river where there's a fine hot spring. Mark my words, this place will soon be the tourist mecca of Middle Park. I own the townsite and I'll give you the lots if you will build here."

Jimmy walked down to look at a canyon with walls five hundred feet high that blocked further travel to south and west. He looked at the river, roaring with melted snow water, that blocked passage to the north. He thanked Mr. Byers and accepted his offer.

Next day, selecting a site well back from the stream near a spring of good drinking water, he and his Missouri helpers began cutting logs from the abundance of timber close at hand. From a rocky point a mountain sheep watched the walls of a cabin go up.



View down Grand River (Colorado River) from Mt. Bross, Middle Park, 1874. "Town" of Hot Sulphur Springs at extreme left of picture on south bank of river — W. H. Jackson photograph U. S. Geological Survey

View up Grand River (Colorado River) from the Hot Springs, Middle Park, 1874

— W. H. Jackson photograph
U.S. Geological Survey

Someone else watched, too—an Indian sitting on a pony a few yards from the busy carpenters. How long he had been there Jimmy did not know. The fellow was a hulking, unlovely specimen with paunchy stomach, sullen face, and a scraggle of black hair. With a kick in the ribs, he brought his pony closer.

"Too many house!" he announced. "Too many white man! Two sleeps, you go!" He made an imperative gesture toward the range.

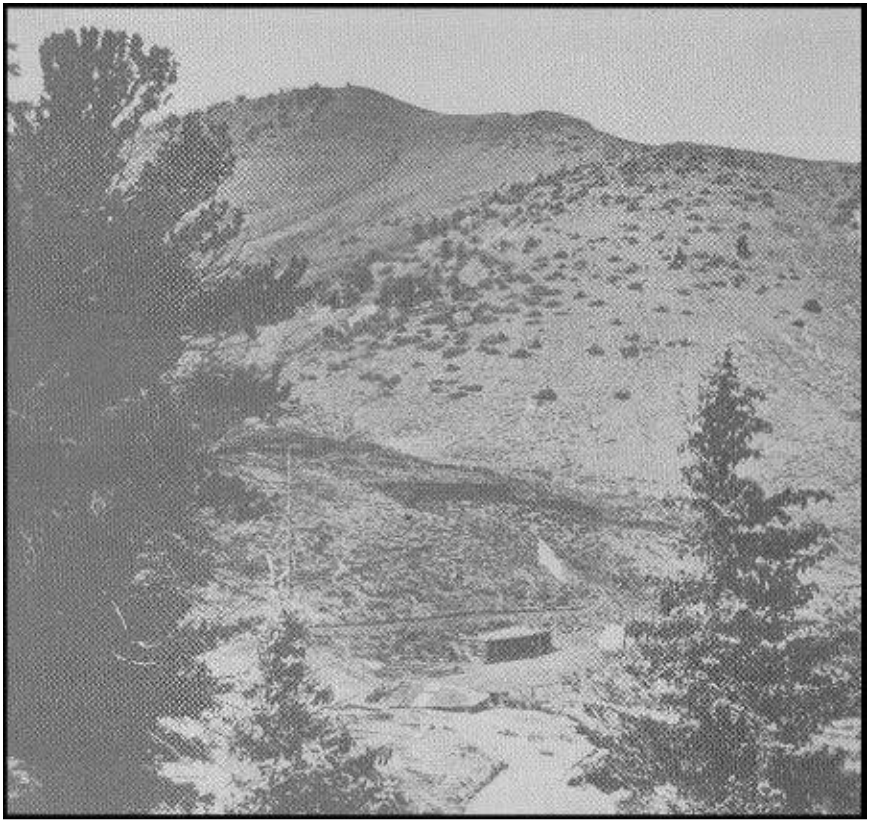
Deliberately, Jimmy went on scaling and notching logs and did not let on he even heard the visitor. This etiquette he had already learned from the Utes themselves.

Pretty soon the Indian rode off.

Mr. Byers stopped hammering on his own cabin and came over. "That was Colorow. He'll bear watching. He's the renegade chief of that band you must have passed away up by Crooked Creek. Yarmonite has a band camped yonder in the draw. He's a good old fellow with one eye. But I sure wish Colorow would take his bunch clear out of the country."

Jimmy wished so, too, and worked harder to finish his cabin.

The two sleeps Colorow had allotted him soon passed. Nothing happened. Other Indians came around begging food, which Maggie gave them. They were generally from Yarmonite's band and seemed friendly.



Hot Springs, Middle Park at foot of Mt. Bross, on north bank of Grand River (Colorado River), 1874

— W. H. Jackson photograph
U. S. Geological Survey

There was good natured rivalry between Jimmy and Mr. Byers. Since Jimmy had the most help, he got his roof nailed on first. That roof, spruce bark covered with dirt, was to prove satisfactory in dry weather, little better than a sieve in wet weather.

Now Maggie had a house. The one room could be curtained off for a bedroom on each side by hanging a wagon sheet down the middle. The floor was the ground. The carpet was elk skins with the hair all turned the same way for ease in sweeping. A split-pole table nailed to the wall, bedsteads crudely fashioned of raw pine, a chair similarly made, and a bench comprised the furniture. A rough stone fireplace offered the only means of cooking. If she thought of the comfortable farm house she had left in Missouri, with its thirty yards of homespun turkey-red carpeting and softly rubbed walnut furniture, she said nothing.

Grandpa Bourn whittled for his daughter two cedar cream skimmers and a butter paddle. He went fishing in the river a few times, helped Logan drown out a hole of gophers in the front yard, and pretty soon started back across the range in company with some tourists who were returning to Empire City. But Fred stayed.

Hot Sulphur Springs would be the Crawford home for a while, but the country beyond still beckoned. After he had built a corral for his stock, Jimmy went exploring farther west. With him went Fred Bourn, Hute Richardson, Cy Bone, and Bill Gilmore (Missouri boys); and Hazen Cheney, a lawyer from Jefferson County who wanted to see the country. Jimmy took one saddle horse that could be ridden by turns as the travelers became weary. To carry bedding and provisions through rough mountains, he had taken the front wheels off one of the wagons and made a cart to which he had hitched Jack and Jim.

Early one morning when the flood was lowest the men forded Grand River. Traveling the back hills, they came out beyond the canyon, followed the river some miles, and looked for a way to cross the heavily timbered range to the next water course west. From Mr. Byers they had learned of a road that had been cut by Sir George Gore, an Irish nobleman who had hunted through these parts with a great retinue of servants in the early 1850's. Jimmy and his friends found and followed the ghost of Sir George's trail, now grown up to new timber. The trail ended in what is today known as Egeria Park.

There they happened on a wandering prospector from Utah who, with two pack horses, was cutting through the mountains to Breckenridge. Eager to talk to someone, he waded a stream to visit with them. Questioned about the region he had traversed, he said he had chanced to ford Bear River where it made a big bend to the west.

"Seen a bubbling spring there," he told them. "It was real wonderful. Smelt awful, but it was sure fine to look at. If I thought a wagon road could ever be built through this Godforsaken country, I'd go file on that place!"

The prospector recrossed the creek and with a friendly lift of the hand, disappeared toward Breckenridge. Jimmy and his companions drifted down country where a network of small streams soon formed Bear River. It was easy to see why the river was so named. Bear seemed to be everywhere—black, cinnamon, and grizzly—lone animals, and watchful mothers with cubs. Owners of this land. Sometimes they lumbered away briefly; sometimes the intruders walked around them.

The season was early enough that the creeks could be forded, some with difficulty. The explorers might have continued northward for a look at the prospector's big bend and smelly spring if the going had not grown increasingly rough as the river dug in to another canyon. Instead, they struck west through more open hills covered with oak brush. Here, and in a number of places farther on, they noted outcroppings of coal and burned samples in their evening campfires.

After winding up and down gulches in the Oak Hills for most of a day, they found a way into a park which Jimmy named Twenty Mile Park because it looked to be about twenty miles from east to west. Leisurely, the men crossed it, marveling at the plentiful wild game, admiring the luxuriant meadows, pointing out good locations for a house or barn, field or pasture. They were always on the lookout for Indians. So far they had encountered none though they had seen signs of them.

Jimmy often dug into the soil with his belt knife to examine it. Seeing frost on the grass almost every morning, he feared grains would not mature here, but noting wild timothy and clover, he thought such tame forage crops would succeed.

The explorers struck Bear River again about where the town of Hayden now is. The farther they went, the more beautiful and exciting were the vistas ahead. Near the present location of Craig, they camped for several days while they prospected west, north, and south.

The Craig site had strong appeal. Here Jimmy staked a claim and would no doubt have made his home eventually if he had not been curious to see the big bend of Bear River that had been skipped on the trip down. He and his companions traveled back up the river till they reached the canyon below the place where the town of Mt. Harris once flourished. So rough was this canyon that they could not haul the cart through it. Jimmy and Hute decided to continue afoot up the stream. The other men with cart, mules, and saddle horse would return on the trail they had made coming down and camp at Chimney Rocks in Egeria Park until their two companions came to them.

Back in Missouri Jimmy and Hute had been neighbors from birth, had hunted possums and coons together many a night. They took some biscuits and a little salt, no bedding, and one gun between them, and plunged into the canyon.

By the end of the first day they had struggled as far as a tributary to the Bear, later known as Elk River, which they had trouble wading since it was running more water than the Bear. Gathering some large pieces of dead cottonwood bark, they made a kind of hut

to shelter them from the rain that fell that night.

The next day about noon, the 24th of June, 1874, they walked up to a big bubbling spring on the north bank of Bear River. They had smelled the sulphur from it long before. The blue-green water looked boiling hot, but fingers gingerly thrust into it found it comfortably cool. Indians or early mountain men had removed boulders and piled them around the edge to make a pool deep enough for bathing. Jimmy and Hute thought they needed a bath and then and there stripped off their clothes and availed themselves of the luxury.

After bathing, Hute slept in the warm grass, but Jimmy waded across the river about where the depot bridge is now to look at the numerous springs in the strange white formations. Climbing the high rocky ridge, he sketched a plot of the country, drawing in the streams and naming Soda Creek. On that paper he wrote the word "Eureka!"

His notion of going into the cattle business went glimmering, replaced by the exciting idea of founding here in this beautiful valley a community that would grow into a splendid city at no far distant date. He mentally canceled his unrecorded filing at the Craig site. Splashing back across the river, he shook Hute awake and told him, "This is the place for me!" He described the springs he had seen and the mouth of a cave he had found. Stretched in the shade of a cottonwood, he shared with his friend as eloquently as he could his vision of developing these springs, which he had no doubt were of great medicinal value and which he believed would be visited by health seekers from every nation of the earth.

"How will they get here?" inquired his footsore companion. "Walk like we do?"

"They'll ride the railroad!"

Hute snorted.

Jimmy ignored his friend's disbelief. "Come on, let's stake squatter's claims now and get title as soon as we can."

Hute shook his head. "Not me, Jim. I've seen all I want to. Missouri's good enough for me."

Jimmy looked about for the most prominent place to post his notice and decided on the noisy spring south of the river that sounded like a steamboat chugging. With his pocket knife he peeled a square on a quaking aspen tree near the spring and on the white inner bark wrote in bold pencil:

THIS IS THE CENTER
OF MY 160 ACRE CLAIM
JAMES H. CRAWFORD

Wading again to the north side of the river, he walked several hundred yards back under a shallow bluff and with Hute's aid laid up a wall of flat rocks to make an enclosure fourteen by eighteen feet and about three feet high, leaving an opening for a door. Beneath one corner stone Jimmy placed another elaborate claim notice written on sheets torn from his pocket notebook.

The next morning the two friends headed up the valley on a game trail. They were so used to wild life bounding out of their path that they hardly paid attention to it any more. Suddenly, beyond a clump of willows, they had to pay attention. Hute in the lead stopped short. Not twenty feet away a monster grizzly reared on his hind legs.

"He's gonna eat us up!" Jimmy gasped, foolish-like. "Gimme the gun, Hute!"

"No, I won't. If that fellow 'll let me alone, I'll let him alone!"

Not daring to move, the two stood whispering. They could see the glitter of the brute's little eyes and the slobbers running out of his mouth. A grizzly was said to be the most dangerous animal in the mountains. It seemed a mighty long time till that bear lowered himself and padded heavily by them.

That evening Jimmy and Hute paused in what is now Pleasant Valley to examine a camp site evidently deserted by a large band of Indians only that morning. Cooking fires were still smoldering beneath the ashes. Tracks showed that the Indians had traveled westward toward White River.

The Missourians went on above the abandoned camp about a mile into a thick grove of cottonwoods and stayed that night. Next morning they struck another canyon and had a very tedious time going through it. They did not dare leave the river, for on its banks they were to meet their friends, and their knowledge of the country was meager.

On the third day from the springs they sighted the Chimney Rocks and walked into their friends' camp in a patch of alders, tired and hungry. They had eaten their biscuits long since but had had plenty of grouse.

None of the friends who accompanied Jimmy on the trip settled in this part of the West.

But Jimmy's mind was made up. Back in the arms of his family, a two weeks' growth of whiskers on his face, he was jubilant. "I've found it, Maggie! Just the place we've been hunting for! Prettiest valley you ever did see! And mineral springs—dozens of them. We'll have to stay here this winter, but next summer—!"

Excited beyond containment at having staked his claim, Jimmy sang as he set about improving his cabin. Mountain sheep and woodchucks on Mt. Bross were treated to MAGGIE BY MY SIDE and other ballads. The cabin needed a lot of improving. The cracks between the logs were so wide that even John called attention to the "bright shine" coming through. Jimmy's booming voice reached to the tent community that had mushroomed in the sagebrush in the short weeks since the passes had opened to travel. Quite a few tourists and would-be settlers had drifted in, attracted by the glowing advertisements in Mr. Byers' newspaper. Most were adventurers—a restless breed looking for almost anything gold, land, game, or just excitement.

Jimmy began to wonder if he had talked too much. Some of the loafers from Georgetown seemed so interested that he took the precaution to hire a man named Luther (Lute) Carlton to go down to Bear River and stay the rest of the summer and hold the claim. Lute was a husky young frontiersman who, Jimmy felt, could be depended on.

While Jimmy and his companions had been exploring the region to the northwest, Maggie, in her new home at Hot Sulphur Springs, had been getting acquainted with her neighbors—some she would rather not have got acquainted with. Jimmy had left his brother Henry to look after the family, but Henry was down in the swale cutting slough grass for mattresses the day Maggie needed him most.

She had swept her elk skin rugs, put John on the bed for a nap, and had her eye on the other children playing on the chip pile in the yard. She had just punched down her bread dough and set it to rise again in a bowl on the split pole table when she sensed someone right behind her. She never did hear Colorow till he stood there at her shoulder as close as he could get.

"White woman swap money for pony."

"I don't have any money."

"White woman Denber City got heaps money."

"Yes. Me—heap poor."

Colorow's attention fastened on red-haired John on the bed. "Swap papoose for pony!"

"No!" Maggie jabbed at her dough. It was all she could do not to show fear.

Lulie and Logan had run to get their uncle Henry. When he came, Colorow grunted, "Goodby," and rode off.

Most of the time Maggie did not mind the Indians much and got used to them peering through door or window. Her first Ute visitors had been three squaws on ponies who called to her in squeaky voices, "Beescuit! Beescuit!" Maggie had smiled at her unsmiling guests and offered a generous plate of biscuits, expecting each squaw to take a handful. Instead, the first squaw poured the whole lot into her blanket. Maggie had to find more for the others. Then the visitors begged, "Beescuit for papoose!" Maggie raised up their blankets and saw three tiny, red faced babies only a few days old.

More than the Indians, Maggie minded some of the campers. At first, Hot Sulphur Springs had seemed at the very end of creation, but she soon learned it was not too far for rowdies to ride horseback from Georgetown or Central City or Boulder and "shoot up" the town—especially after a visit to one of the tent saloons recently opened, or to the Missouri Applejack Saloon housed in a cabin hastily built by a man named Moss.

Though she tried to keep her children near the house out of range of stray bullets, she would soon see them far afield playing hide-and-seek in the sagebrush or romping with Spy. Something had happened to the other puppy, Sport. It was supposed a coyote had got him.

One day a young man named John H. Stokes drove a wagon into town and in forty-eight hours, with the help of a number of men, had erected a store, which advertised "Wholesale and Retail Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware, Drugs, Boots and Shoes."

Substantial citizens were the Kansas Boys, a group of five young men originally from Butler County, Kansas, but recently from the new community of Colorado Springs. They had come down the Blue River seeking gold. With a much larger party, they had explored westward clear to Morgan's Trading Post on the north side of Bear River near the road from White River Indian Agency to Rawlins, Wyoming. Not finding the gold they had hoped to, the Kansas Boys had split off from the group and about the middle of August had arrived in Hot Sulphur Springs, where John Himebaugh, the oldest and the leader, a stone mason by trade, had begun at once to make a lime kiln and burn lime. He had built a cabin up Himebaugh Gulch in which he had made a fireplace of stones put together with lime mortar.

Luckily, John Himebaugh was not too far away the morning Logan fell down and ran a spike of greasewood through his wrist.

When Maggie could not pull out that spike, she sent Lulie for John Himebaugh who came, and with a pair of pliers worked the greasewood between the small bones.

It was a great day for Maggie when another woman came to Hot Sulphur Springs in the person of Sarah Ganson. Sarah's husband, William H. Ganson, a Pikes Peaker from New York State, put up a two story, squared-log hotel on the east bank of the river and in no time at all was in business. Sarah and her two children, James and Ida May, were as glad to see Maggie as Maggie was to see them. The women visited while the children played together, though the Ganson boy and girl were considerably older than Lulie and Logan.

Ida May had some calling cards decorated with pretty colored pictures. These were "all the go" in Denver and fashionable points east. Unfortunately, the printer had spelled Ida May's name IDEA MAY, which was too bad, but really did not make much difference since there was hardly anyone to call on in Hot Sulphur Springs.

Soon after Jimmy had returned from Bear River, a saddled horse trotted in to town without its rider. The horse was known to belong to Sam Wilford, a young man from Georgetown. Sam had gone hunting that morning. It was not till next day that searchers found the unfortunate fellow, victim of an accident from his own gun.

Apparently, Sam, without dismounting from his horse, had tried to raise his gun, which was carried in his left hand with the muzzle upward and forward, when the hammer had caught on the skirt of the saddle and discharged the weapon. The ball had struck him at the lower point of the left ear.

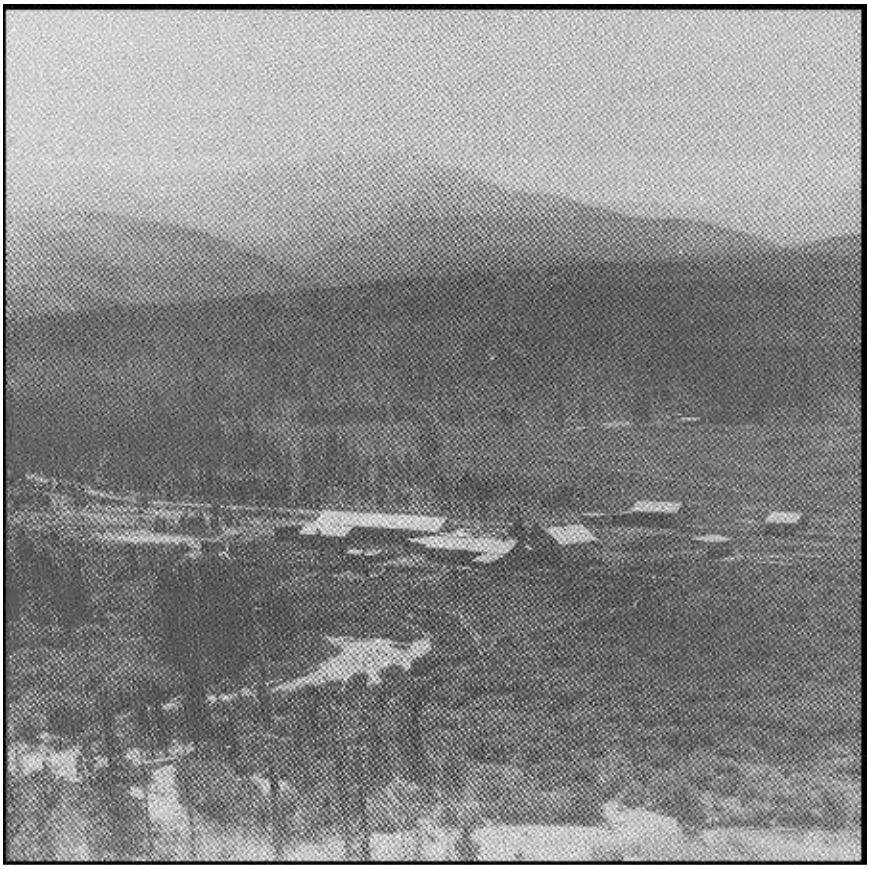
Jimmy and Henry took care of Sam in a camp on Muddy Creek. Most of the time the injured hunter was conscious, answering questions by signs, but he never spoke. A man on a fast mount went for a doctor, who came as speedily as he could horseback over the range. When he finally arrived, there was nothing he could do. After twenty-eight days Sam died and was buried near Hot Sulphur Springs. The mountain where he had been hunting was ever afterward called Wilford Mountain.

Maggie sent a letter to his sweetheart, whose picture Sam had carried in his pocket. She wrote, "I want you to know that Sam Wilford was given Christian burial. Scripture was read, and there was a prayer." She received a grateful letter in response.

The inhabitants of Hot Sulphur Springs soon settled back to their normal pursuits of prospecting, hunting, and fishing just as if summer were not about over. A few red leaves on the low bushes, and blackbirds congregating in the cottonwoods were signs they chose to ignore.

Now almost every afternoon the sky darkened, lightning crackled, thunder boomed, and rain poured down. Water soaked through the dirt and bark of the Crawford's roof and dribbled muddy rivulets on Maggie's clean coverlet, on freshly ironed clothes.

Jimmy declared it was high time his house had a decent roof. In Missouri he had learned how to rive shingles. Mr. Byers told him of Cozens' ranch on the Fraser River at the western foot of Berthoud Pass where there was a blacksmith. Jimmy drove to Cozens' ranch and hired the blacksmith to make him a froe. From suitable timber nearby he cut boards, shaved them, and hauled a load of shingles back to Hot Sulphur Springs.

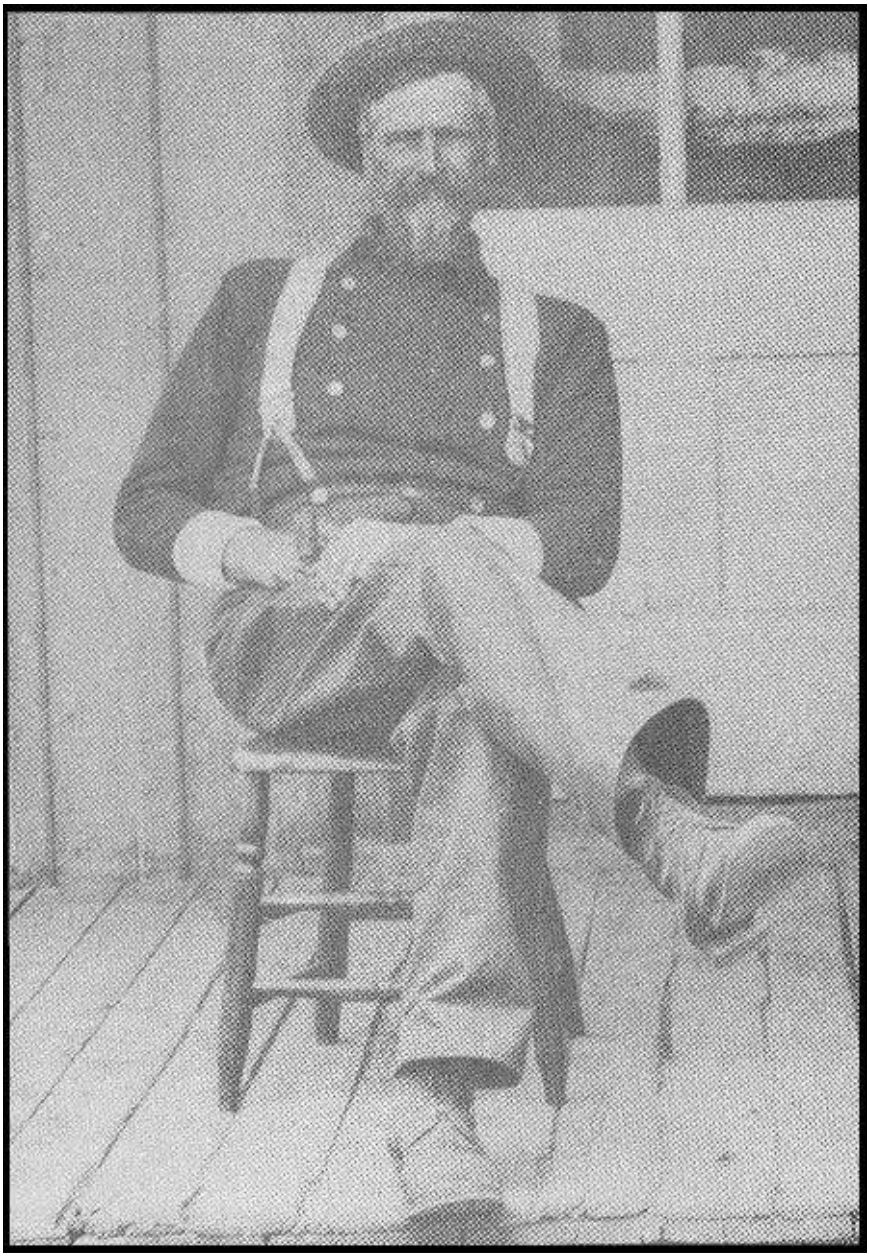


Cozens' Ranch in the valley of Fraser River. Picture taken in 1886 by Henry S. Pritchett

To Maggie's delight he also hauled in a cookstove he had bought from Mr. Cozens. It was used and somewhat rusty, but Maggie thought it the most beautiful thing she had ever laid eyes on. Jimmy set it up in the cabin, wired the stovepipe through a hole in the roof, and was ready to get at his shingling.

But it was a long time before he nailed on those shingles. The delay was unintentionally caused by Maggie's twin, Jim Bourn, who with his friend Sandy Campbell came riding in from Empire City. Tired of prospecting the Eastern Slope, the two were bent on discovering riches in Middle Park.

Jim Bourn brought disturbing news. "All Sallie's children are sick with scarlet fever. There's a regular epidemic Outside."



William Zane Cozens, pioneer sheriff of Gilpin County, who, in the early '70's, established a hay and cattle ranch at the head of Middle Park beside the Fraser. Picture taken by Henry S. Pritchett

Maggie was worried to hear this, but glad her three were out of range of the epidemic. They were a happy, rosy cheeked trio, outdoors from dawn to dusk except when they came in for meals or a handful of raisins. Logan, especially, loved the big sugary raisins that came packed in a wooden box, and he ate too many of them. At least that is what Maggie accused him of doing when she found the box half empty. Logan's stomach hurt, and he was so cross Maggie put him to bed.

"I didn't!" Logan kicked the covers. His skin was hot, his eyes bright. "Look, Ma, there's an old pack rat running along that log. Betcha he stole those raisins!"

Maggie found the rat's nest in a nitch above the door, and sure enough, there were the raisins, a cache of dried beans, and her silver thimble.

Next day Logan's throat was sore, and he broke out in a red rash. Lulie and John also broke out and were put to bed, burning with fever.

Scarlet fever! What frightening words! Evidently, Maggie's brother had brought germs on his clothes from Empire City. Far from any doctor, the Crawfords took care of their children the best they could, using the simple remedies at hand.

With three desperately sick young ones in the cabin, Jimmy dared not replace the bark roof no matter how the rain leaked through. He rigged a tent with the wagon sheet over the small sufferers, and Maggie caught the worst drips in pots and pans.

What long, anxious days and nights till the fever subsided! First to recover were Lulie and John. After they were outdoors playing again, Logan was still moping about the cabin. Every day Jimmy carried him over the new narrow swinging footbridge and bathed him in the hot spring. At present the spring was crudely enclosed, but Mr. Byers had plans to build a fine bath house.

When the children appeared to be all peeled off, Jimmy burned the old elk skin rugs and put down new elk skins. Maggie scrubbed, cleaned, and boiled everything she could. Fortunately, nobody else in Hot Sulphur Springs caught scarlet fever.

The shingles Jimmy was so proud of still sat in the wagon box. They would have to wait till he took care of more urgent matters. Heavy frost each morning on the trampled wild asters in his dooryard warned him that he must locate winter range for his stock since the grass around town had been grazed close by Ute ponies and by horses of campers.

Eighteen or twenty miles down the river he found meadow lands rich with "red top", wild timothy, and wire grass. With a long scythe he cut and put up about six tons of hay near the mouth of Muddy

Creek.

His next important job was to bring in provisions. Mr. Byers had warned him that once winter set in he could not haul anything over the range till spring. Early one morning he loaded his two wagons with elk meat to trade for supplies, and with Ed Hatten driving one wagon, started Outside.

When he and Ed returned without incident and unloaded thirty hundred pounds of flour, together with cornmeal, dried beans, sugar, molasses, dried fruit, and salt side, Maggie declared her family plus everybody in Hot Sulphur Springs could never eat all that!

She was mistaken.

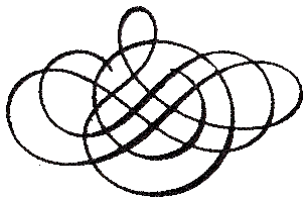
Jimmy hung quarters of elk and mountain sheep on pegs on the back of the cabin. The deer had already migrated to lower cedar country, and buffalo were scarce though a small herd of them still roamed the Park and a buffalo calf had once come in with the Crawford cows.

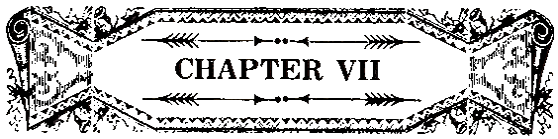
It was now November. Leaves were gone from chokecherry and quaking aspen. Long, yellow lances from the cottonwoods were the last to eddy in lazy pools of the river. Song birds had flown. Coyotes and foxes raised a lively chorus each night, responded to by all the dogs in town.

Lute Carlton, who had been holding Jimmy's claim, returned to Hot Sulphur Springs since not even a claim jumper would be fool enough to risk going into the mountains this near to winter. He reported that he had been followed by gray wolves, and when he had camped on Gore Range had had to keep a fire all night to scare them away.

At last Jimmy found time to work on his cabin. He looked high and low for his nails and finally had to borrow enough to shingle his roof and put down a floor of half logs.

Next spring when freezing and thawing heaved the soil, a crop of rusted metal sprouted all around the yard where someone had pounded nails into the ground. Suspicion settled on John!





As long as trails had been dry and days sunny, campers had enjoyed life, and Ganson's Hotel had done a thriving business. When wind whistled down from the range and ice froze every night on water pails, summer visitors evaporated.

Jim Bourn's partner, Sandy Campbell, went east of the Divide where he could work in the mines and build up a grubstake for next season, and Jim had to find a new partner—another Sandy whose last name was Mellen.

Sandy Mellen had cut ties at Fort Steele, Wyoming, panned gold at Hahn's Peak, Colorado, and most recently cooked for the crew that was building the Berthoud Pass wagon road. He and Maggie's twin went to hunting meat for the market. They lived with the Crawfords most of the time, but also had a camp on Troublesome Creek.

John Stokes, the storekeeper, stayed in Hot Sulphur Springs. There was little on his shelves and there were few customers to buy what there was, but he had dreams of next summer.

Rollins' road crew bunked in a large dugout near the river. The crew were waiting till the Grand was at its lowest so they could construct a bridge. John Himebaugh had contracted to cut stone and build the abutments and piers. With only three tools—a pick, a shovel, and a stone hammer, he had already started work and was glad to have the occasional help of Jimmy and his strong teams to move the rock.

Fur was prime. Two old mountain men, Gayton Kimball and Al Hanscomb, who headquartered in Hot Sulphur Springs, caught one white beaver among others, and several fine martens, but complained that Middle Park was trapped out. They were going deeper into the mountains. Could they leave their catch at Crawford's till they returned? Jimmy made a place for the furs on the poles at the peak of the cabin.

While the tourists were scurrying eastward to warm winter quarters, a strange group appeared heading west. Several heavily loaded wagons pulled into Hot Sulphur Springs flanked by a straggle of men on horseback. The strangers camped for the night and the town folk went to see who they were and where they were going. The leader, Peter Shirts, called by his followers "Father" Shirts, explained that he and his friends had organized in Chicago and were on their way to plant a colony near the junction of the Grand and Green Rivers. Father Shirts was not an ecclesiastic but a visionary,

his purpose to people in the wilderness.

Al Hanscomb and Gayton Kimball, who had not yet left for new trapping territory, warned of the vast country to be crossed and big snows that were sure to come any day, and tried to dissuade the easterners from going farther this late in the year.

Father Shirts, eyes agleam, maintained that he and his followers would soon get beyond snow country to a welcoming land where they would plant the wheat they carried in their wagons and start the first of a chain of settlements all the way from Denver to Salt Lake City. He declared, "Five hundred to a thousand families will follow me next spring! Ten thousand people will settle in western Colorado in 1875!"

A much larger group had left Chicago, but all had dropped by the wayside except these. He lost one more colonist at Hot Sulphur Springs—a boy by the name of Charlie Burns, who said he was eighteen and had been a bootblack. He was small for his age. There was an oldness in his face born of scrambling for a living in a big city. He was sick of mountains, his shoes were worn to shreds, his feet blistered, his eyes swollen with sunburn. He begged so hard to stay with the Crawfords that Maggie could not turn him away.

Among the colonists was one family, and as the expedition rumbled on west next morning under a leaden November sky, Maggie saw a woman looking back.

Goodness knows, Maggie had no room for Charlie. The small cabin had been crowded even before Jimmy had stacked provisions in every available spot. To add to Maggie's problems, Mr. Moss, the saloon keeper, who was one of the last to leave for the winter, asked to store a barrel of peach and a barrel of apple brandy and a keg of each with the Crawfords till next spring. Maggie had no use for Mr. Moss or his wares and told him so.

He explained apologetically, "You folks are the only ones I can trust. You never patronized my saloon."

Because Mr. Moss offered to pay him and money was scarce, but mostly to be accommodating, Jimmy agreed to keep the brandy. There sat the barrels and the kegs where Maggie had to walk around them all winter long. She burned with embarrassment. Liquor in her house!

Now the snow that had been predicted blew into Middle Park. The high country had been white for several weeks. Jimmy dared wait no longer to drive his stock to the Big Bottoms. The horses and cows did not want to go across the river and up the hill and tried to turn back.

Maggie and the children, who knew them all by name, waved them a sad goodby. "Goodby, Snip! Goodby, Brin! Lil... Pink...

Goodby, Star—even if you did chase us...."

Jimmy had promised, "I'll come home often."

Hot Sulphur Springs seemed a forlorn place to Jimmy's family. Even the dog, Spy, had gone with the cattle. Of course, Jim Bourn and Sandy Mellen were often at the cabin, and two or three of the Missouri Boys who had remained in the Park and slept at the road camp, generally appeared at Maggie's table at meal times.

At present, Jim Bourn and Sandy Mellen were packing elk meat to Georgetown over the new Berthoud Road. They had left their greyhound, Doc, with Maggie because the dog had been hugged by a bear and could barely drag around. By the time his masters returned, Doc was able to run again though at a lopsided gait.

Charlie Burns was one person who was always around. Maggie wondered what had made this unhappy pilgrim join Father Shirts' expedition. Charlie carried water from the spring and chopped wood with an awkward hand.

One day as a storm was brewing Maggie sent Logan to bring in kindling. He was picking up chips in the dishpan, and Charlie was flailing away at a long log of pitch pine when the axe slipped and the blade flew around and hit Logan in the back of the head.

Maggie heard his scream and rushed out to find him on the ground kicking and thumping like a chicken with its neck wrung. Terrified, she grabbed him up. Charlie, as white as a sheet, was no help. She who always grew sick at the sight of blood, pulled the wound together, held it tight against her till it quit bleeding, got her needle and thread out of her work bag, and sewed up the gash. By that time Lulie had brought John Himebaugh.

He said, "Lucky that axe didn't go any deeper!"

Maggie sat down on the floor. She could not find the chair because the cabin was spinning around.

Charlie grew more glum than ever. Maggie finally interested him in sewing some elkhide moccasins for himself. Hunched in the corner by the stove, he worked at them doggedly when he was not staring out the window.

Deep winter was still holding off. Horses could travel, and several of them remained in Hot Sulphur Springs, including John Himebaugh's blaze faced sorrel.

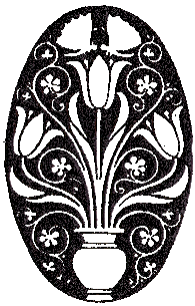
While Maggie and the children were at Ganson's one morning, the sorrel disappeared, and with it Charlie Burns, the white beaver pelt, and several marten skins belonging to the trappers. Maggie guessed the boy was heading for the Berthoud road.

She could forgive his stealing the skins. She wanted him to escape this frontier for which he was unsuited. But he was so thinly clad she was afraid he would freeze to death. She was glad when

John Himebaugh, on a borrowed mount, took after him.

Later, when John Himebaugh returned, Jim Bourn and Sandy Mellen were with him, and also the blaze faced sorrel. But not Charlie. Maggie's twin said he and Sandy, returning from Georgetown, had met Charlie not far from Cozens' ranch and knowing for sure the pelts did not belong to him, and recognizing the sorrel, had taken both away from him. They had returned with him to Cozens' place where Mr. Cozens had promised to see that the boy got over the mountains in a wagon the rancher himself was driving to Empire City the very next day.

Maggie was greatly relieved. She was glad, too, that her brother had given Charlie enough money to get him back to civilization, where she was sure the former bootblack could look after himself.



CHAPTER VIII

Eighteen or twenty miles away in his cow camp Jimmy was not uncomfortable for he had built himself a dugout in a point of hill and had made a stone fireplace. He even had neighbors. Two trappers had come down the Blue River and "holed in" near him—one grizzled, the other younger with black stubble.

Once a week Jimmy's long legs took him home to Hot Sulphur Springs. Now that the river was low and many of the pools frozen over, he could shorten the miles by traveling through the canyon. When he came within hailing distance, he always gave his special shout "HOOOoot!" and the children would run to meet him. Each trip, he carried two large flat molasses cans full of cream.

Spy was always with him except when Indians were around. As long as the winter was open and ponies could travel, the Utes were occasional visitors to the Big Bottoms. Spy was afraid of Indians, and whenever they came, she hid in the dugout. One afternoon, finding the door blocked by several of Yarmonite's band and not daring to squeeze past them, she ran up the hill where the chimney top was almost level with the bank and jumped down the chimney right on the embers of a fire. She was really not hurt—just a little scorched, but her feelings were hurt when Jimmy laughed at her, and it was some time before she made up with him.

Indians also called on Maggie. Some had left for lower country to the west or had gone to sheltered "holes" or valleys known to them, but Colorow's band remained and lived on buffalo and elk. They killed the buffalo till there were none left in Middle Park and slaughtered many more elk than they needed. John Himebaugh said Colorow and his Utes were trying to exterminate the wild animals so the white men would not have them.

Maggie got along very well with the squaws. When they came to see her, she gave them something to eat and traded lengths of calico for buckskin. Jimmy had brought in two bolts of calico on his trip for provisions. The squaws loved the cotton material, and Maggie was glad to get the buckskin, which was soft and white. The Utes showed her how they grained off the hair and used animal brains like soap to make the skin white. With her three-cornered buckskin needle Maggie sewed and fringed pants, shirts, and coats for her men folks, including Sandy Mellen.

One squaw could speak a little English. She was a Piute who had been raised by a settler somewhere to the west. With the Piute one

day came an ancient squaw—the only one Maggie ever saw with white hair. The old woman was especially fascinated by the stovepipe and the fireplace. Talking through the Piute, Maggie asked how old the white-haired one was.

"I was in Middle Park many snows before you and the young squaw were born."

"How many children did you have?"

The old squaw held up seven fingers.

"Where are your children?"

The old squaw pointed up.

The days were so much alike for Maggie that she lost track of time. She was reminded that the month was December and Christmas was almost here when certain gnarly citizens of Hot Sulphur Springs came to her door.

"Please, ma'am, here's a twenty dollar bill. We'd like to buy some of that brandy you've got there and some cream to make eggnog."

Maggie slammed the door in their faces.

Various ones tried all sorts of excuses to wheedle her out of that brandy, lingering in the doorway to sniff the shameful fragrance the barrels and kegs emitted in the warmth of the cabin. Maggie never relented.

The Missouri Boys and several of the young adventurers who hung around the road camp struck out horseback for Empire City and Georgetown to celebrate the Holidays.

So far, at the Springs the snow barely covered the rocks. Maggie would rather have had snow than the arctic cold that seeped into her house, well chinked as it was. She marveled how John Himebaugh could work at his stone cutting.

But work he did. The day before Christmas, on his way to the quarry, he stopped by to say it was seventeen degrees below zero.

Maggie was sure Jimmy would come home for Christmas. By dark on Christmas Eve he had not arrived. She and the children finally ate their supper. At Stokes' store some kind of celebration was going on—largely liquid, she surmised.

Her children were too young to appreciate the Bible story, which she read to them anyway. Lulie could remember Christmas on the farm—roast turkey, popcorn, presents, cousins to play with.... Her dark child eyes were asparkle with anticipation. Though Maggie explained that Santa Claus could never find Middle Park, Lulie insisted on hanging her stockings on the foot of her bed, and Logan and John hung theirs, too—very small, very much darned.

After the children were asleep, Maggie stirred up the fire, took a kettle off its nail, and was just dipping her cup in the sugar sack to

make a little candy when she heard a knock. She opened the door and saw a figure bundled against the bitter cold. In the lamplight she recognized Charlie Royer, a young Kentuckian who had been in the group leaving Hot Sulphur Springs a few days before.

"Howdy, ma'am." The man's chapped face cracked into a grin. He held out a gunny sack. "Here's some oranges. Hope they're not froze. And some candy and nuts and a few trinkets for the young ones. And I picked up a little mail for you."

Maggie stood there like a ninny, grasping the sack, unable to speak. Through blurring eyes she watched Charlie stump away on wooden feet, leading his horse toward the dim yellow windows of the Ganson house. He had left the gaiety of the mining camps and ridden sixty miles across a lonesome winter wilderness just so a handful of children at Hot Sulphur Springs could have a Christmas treat.

On Christmas day Jimmy did come. Since the stock were doing well and his neighbors, the trappers, had promised to keep an eye on them, he stayed several days past New Year's.

He was at home when the weary Missouri Boys rode back from Outside. They reported the snow on Berthoud Pass was two feet deep. A strange looking bunch they were. They had rubbed burnt cork around their eyes, and Jim Bourn had one of Sallie's dark veils over his face. Even so, the men were almost blind from the intense reflection of sun on snow.

As he bathed his sore eyes, Maggie's twin remarked, "Hey, Jim Crawford, everybody in Georgetown knows about your Steamboat Springs. You must have done an awful lot of talking last summer."

"Well, I guess I did. But my claim is staked. It's mine. Nobody can take it."

"Wouldn't be too sure. Even I know enough not to advertise gold if I find it."

"Nobody's going to bother Steamboat Springs."

"Maybe not—as long as winter lasts. Don't forget, spring is coming one of these days."

"I'm not worried."

When snow began to fall in earnest, it did not stop till Mt. Bross was solid white and the sagebrush flats were buried under a thick cover. The path to the spring, kept open by constant tramping, was the only place Maggie and the children could walk till the men broke trail to town.

Storms were so severe that Jimmy could not come home again for sometime. When he did come, he too had charcoaled around his eyes and let his whiskers grow to protect his face.

Uncle Jim Bourn (James H.), Maggie's twin brother

With not much to do but eat, sleep, and chop wood, Maggie's boarders consumed unbelievable amounts of her good cooking. One flour sack after another was emptied. The row of sacks along the wall served another purpose than to contain flour, sugar, and cornmeal. From the printed words on their sides John learned his letters. By the end of the winter he knew most of the alphabet.

For John's second birthday, February 8, Maggie cut up her cochineal flannel petticoat to make him two dresses.

Snow drifted so deep that it covered the windows and had to be pushed back time and again. It had to be shoveled away from the door, and steps had to be hacked in the ice so a person could scramble up to the trail. It wrapped the cabin like a wool blanket, making the room so warm Maggie left the door open most of the time.

On stormy days she had trouble keeping the children busy. She taught Lulie to knit. It was hard for a seven-year-old to sit still, but after much raveling out and starting again, Lulie finished a pair of red yarn stockings for John.

Logan could find nothing to do but stuff dried beans up his nose.

When the sun burst through and rabbits, coyotes, and weasels began to move about again, leaving their tracks on the unwritten snow, the children could get out, too. As soon as a trail was broken, they made for the road camp, where the kindly old German cook gave them dried codfish. The codfish came pressed in one-pound cakes. The children thought they had never tasted anything so good.

Maggie began to notice that Lulie and Logan were scratching a lot. She discovered that they were crawling with "graybacks". The Missouri Boys, who also hung around the road camp, were scratching too. Maggie scrubbed the children and boiled their clothes. She turned the Missouri Boys out of the cabin, sent them over to the hot spring to bathe, and threatened dire things if the graybacks got on John.

The same wind that had drifted snow so high around Maggie's cabin had swept the Big Bottoms almost bare in spots, and the horses and cows had not yet had to eat the stacked hay. Jimmy put in his time keeping track of his herd, exploring his immediate surroundings, and making great plans for next summer when he hoped to move his family to Steamboat Springs. He was getting sick of his own cooking and tired of winter.

His neighbors, the trappers, were not tired of winter, but they were heartily tired of each other. They had been cooped up together so long they had even come to blows.

"We're agoin' to fight a duel!" the grizzled one announced.

"Nonsense!" said Jimmy. "You've just got cabin fever. One of

you must go away."

After long argument he persuaded the trappers to divide their furs, and the younger man, still muttering threats, departed up the Blue River.

In February came a thaw. The noon sun was warm enough to melt the surface of the snow, which froze at night to a crust a man could walk on. But it was not yet spring. A blizzard swept the Big Bottoms, causing the stock to "hump up" and try to find shelter under the creek bank. The blizzard was followed by another thaw. This time in Byers Canyon the ice began to melt. Chunks of it broke loose as run-off from the hills started Grand River to rise.

Jimmy stuck to the shorter canyon route on his weekly trips home until one evening he reached his cabin to find Maggie beside herself.

"I thought you were in the river," she sobbed. "I heard a terrible scream and I was sure you'd been swept under the ice." She was so overcome she could say no more.

Lulie told him, "It was a mountain lion screaming. Some men saw it walk out of the canyon."

Through the month of March Jimmy used the longer hill route, timing his trip to the crust on the snow. Airways were open long before earthways. Winged travelers sent down word that spring was near. The honking of hundreds of wild geese lifted Jimmy's heart and lightened his steps.

By April, patches on south hill slopes were bare and turning green. Restless men began to trickle back to Middle Park from Outside. The "break-up" was the season old timers dreaded most. Newcomers, with no better sense than to try to rush Nature, often met tragedy. Maggie and Logan watched a stranger on a horse try to cross the river. The current dragged him under and he was drowned. There was nothing anyone could do.

Now word reached Hot Sulphur Springs that certain persons living in Georgetown were preparing to jump the Crawford claim on Bear River.

"I told you so!" said Jim Bourn.

"I'm not worried," growled Jimmy Crawford.

But he was. He decided to take Lute Carlton, who had been working with the bridge crew, and go immediately to Steamboat Springs. Since most of the country was still covered with deep snow, the two men started on snowshoes. Blankets, provisions, guns, and an axe and small shovel they hauled on a trail sled. The going was very rough. Sometimes they had to wallow through mush as sticky

as boiled cornmeal; other times they slid and stumbled across a sea of jag ice.

The second night after leaving Hot Sulphur Springs they camped on Gore Range in a storm so blinding they were obliged to stay one day and two nights. Sheltered by a big rock, they kept a fire going and cooked flapjacks in their frying pan. Two or three burned ones they tossed away.

When the storm subsided, they found their narrow snowshoes (now called skis) were of little use in the deep soft powder. On the hills in sight were elk. Jimmy shot one, skinned it, and slashed the hide into long strips. He and Lute cut big willows, heated them so they would be limber, and bent them into round shapes over which they wound the elk leather to fashion crude web shoes.

Without those web shoes they could never have managed. Slogging down through Egeria Park, they traveled any way they could—sometimes shifting to the narrow snowshoes, sometimes walking on bare ground and dragging the trail sled over mud.

They were constantly wet from wading or swimming creeks that were rapidly widening to rivers with the spring jam of ice and snow. By the time they reached Roaring Fork in the Oak Hills both were "done in". For a while they were too exhausted even to break off dry willows to make a blaze. Lute took cramp colic. Severe pain doubled him over till he thought he would die.

Jimmy, whose habit was to carry cayenne pepper to use as a stimulant if necessary, built a good fire, made some scalding pepper tea in a tin cup, and poured it down his companion. Though it "like to burnt him up," it cured the colic, and Lute, wrapped in a blanket, went to sleep.

By and by Jimmy saw a couple of wild geese floating down the water toward him. Grabbing his gun, he shot one. He had to shoot right over his friend, and there was no time to explain. Poor Lute was startled almost out of his recent cure. Jimmy jumped in the creek, grabbed the goose, and got all wet again. He had trouble flailing out of the swift water. But that goose tasted mighty good when he roasted it on a spit for supper and it gave Lute and him strength to go on next morning.

The season here was more advanced. The two soon had to cache their narrow snowshoes as well as their web shoes and abandon the trail sled in favor of back packs.

That last day from the Oak Hills to Steamboat Springs Jimmy's long stride outdistanced Lute Carlton. In Bear River Valley the winter sleep was well broken, snow gone from the game trails, bear tracks slewy in the mud.

And no man tracks!

The final mile beyond the Big Bend, Jimmy almost ran. This was the valley and these the hills he had dreamed of all winter. He plunged through Soda Creek, made sure the rock foundation he and Hute Richardson had laid up last summer was still intact and his claim notice still under the stone in one corner. He drank great dripping handfuls from the bubbling sulphur spring and splashed his face. To the exuberance of redwinged blackbirds in the greening marsh and the clamor of waterfowl on the pond, he added his shout till Lute, plodding down the path, could not doubt that all was well at Steamboat Springs.

When the travelers had rested, they went to work to improve the claim by cutting logs and adding walls and a roof to the rock foundation. Last fall on his trip Outside for provisions Jimmy had purchased seeds for early spring planting and had brought an assortment with him. Near the new cabin in the damp sweet earth he dug a garden, made straight rows, planted his seeds, and put up little signs: Radishes, Lettuce, Turnips... all conspicuously bearing the date.

The first garden! The first planting in all this unstirred land that heretofore had known only wild seeds sown by the wind!

Satisfied that he had made his intentions clear to any would-be claim jumpers, Jimmy headed back to Hot Sulphur Springs. He and Lute found traveling even more difficult than on the trip in. Creeks were higher and footing more treacherous. Moreover, their stomachs were grumbling from lack of food. The two still had salt—and pepper—and could always get meat, but they were so starved for bread that when finally they came to the place where they had camped on Gore Range during the bad storm, they groveled around in the snow and were glad to find the burned flapjacks they had thrown away twenty-two days earlier. How good those flapjacks tasted!

And how delicious Maggie's cooking when Jimmy sat down to a real meal once more in Hot Sulphur Springs!

"Our claim is all right, Maggie! Nobody's been there—so far." He told of the cabin that he and Lute had built and of the garden he had planted. He described the bluebells and buttercups and "salt and pepper" flowers no bigger than his thumbnail.

As he talked, Maggie peered about her present cabin, that had come to feel like home. It was rumored that at least two other families with children would settle in Hot Sulphur Springs this summer, and there would certainly be a school and soon other advantages of civilization. She wanted no more winters like the last. She was out of sugar and using the last of the thirty hundred pounds of flour. She was out of soap. Out of almost everything to eat and to

wear. As long as she lived (over ninety years) she was to remember this year as the hardest of her life.

And to go seventy five or eighty miles farther....

While Jimmy had been away, the season had rapidly advanced here in Hot Sulphur Springs. The sun that drew the frost from the ground caused John's nails to sprout in the dooryard. Gayton Kimball and Al Hanscomb appeared again in Middle Park with their winter's catch, took the furs that had been stored in the Crawford cabin, and packed the whole lot to market. The Utes of Yarmonite's band trailed back from their winter camp to put up tepees near town, and squaws came again begging for "beescuit."

Mr. Moss returned to claim his applejack and peach brandy. He rolled the barrels and kegs to his saloon, opened them immediately, and he and his friends loudly celebrated the start of a new tourist season by drinking the contents.

Someone went to see what had become of Father Shirts and his colonists. The family that had been part of the expedition was found near the present site of Hayden, alive only because they had ground their seed wheat in a coffee mill and lived on it and easy-to-catch porcupines. Father Shirts and the other men were located farther toward Utah, eating the last of their mules.

As soon as the passes were open to travel, most of the Missouri Boys went back to Missouri after a long, lazy winter in which their greatest concern had been running out of tobacco. They had turned their pockets inside out to glean a few brown crumbs. Those pockets held no money, and Jimmy, who had little himself, had to give the boys enough to get home on. Henry Crawford also went to Sedalia to marry his sweetheart, Nanny, but planned to return with her and establish his home somewhere in this new land. Jim Bourn renewed his partnership with Sandy Campbell and disappeared into the mountains beyond Grand Lake, sure he would find what he was looking for this season. Sandy Mellen was not interested in prospecting.

Jimmy drove his stock back to bountiful summer pasture in the Hot Sulphur vicinity. New calves frolicked beside Snip, Brin, and Star. At milking time the children could take their cups to the corral and their pa would squirt a white stream into them. How they loved that warm, fresh milk! And how it drew the neighbors and strays in Hot Sulphur to Maggie's door! Everyone was hungry for bread and milk and clabber and whey.

"Now I must get some men to Steamboat Springs to hold our claim till we can move in," Jimmy said.

Sandy Mellen was one who volunteered. During the winter at Crawford's he had heard all about Steamboat Springs, and he reckoned he might like to stake a near-by claim himself.

Charlie Mayo, a likeable young adventurer from Vermont, also volunteered.

With Sandy Mellen and Charlie Mayo entrenched at Steamboat Springs, Jimmy made tracks to the surveyor general's office in Denver to learn how he could transfer his squatter's rights to a permanent claim. He wore the buckskin pants and shirt Maggie had made.

He soon returned with a very welcome load of provisions, mail that had accumulated for several months, and the word that a survey would have to be completed before any claim could be valid. The surveyor general, Mr. T. B. Seawright, and his chief clerk, Mr. Jacobs, had been kind and interested and had assured Jimmy that if he deposited a substantial amount, his claim would be protected till a survey could be made.

"The buckskin suit did it, Maggie," Jimmy declared, swooping his helpmate off her feet. "They all wanted to know who was my tailor!"

Jimmy said he had wired kin in Sedalia for the money. He could choose his own surveyor, and therefore hired Fred Ingersoll, a young engineer who was running some lines in Middle Park. Fred promised to start the job as soon as he finished the survey he was now engaged in.

Chomping at the bit, Jimmy hardly knew how to put in the time. Probably it was a good thing the letter arrived from Sedalia when it did. By train, by stage, by horseback, it had found its slow way at last to Hot Sulphur Springs, and it contained such news as to knock all thought of the survey out of mind.

Jimmy got the letter first when the horseman stopped at Rollins' camp. He read it and came leaping up the trail shouting, "Maggie, everybody in Missouri is coming to visit us!"

She met him outside the door. "Jimmy, don't joke!"

"I'm not joking. Here, read this letter from brother John." (John

was Jimmy's oldest brother.)

Maggie sat down on the chopping block and read with care:

"We hear you have gone out into the mountains and got lost. Several of us are coming to see what has happened to you. Paw and Maw Crawford and Mrs. Bourn are coming first. They will visit Sallie Yankee's family in Empire City on the way. Mr. Bourn would like to come but he was there last year and the farm needs him. Annie and I are coming, too, but will have to come later as I have some business that will delay us...."

Maggie's eyes grew as round as the children's. "How will they get over the range? And where on earth will we put them?"

"We'll manage. This letter has been so long coming I wouldn't be surprised if Paw and Maw and Mrs. Bourn are already at Sallie's. I'll ride out to meet them and show them the way in."

"Can I go with you?" begged Logan.

"Could you ride behind me and hang on tight?"

"Jimmy—" protested Maggie.

"I could hang on real tight," Logan said stoutly.

"Me too!" begged John.

"You and Lulie shall have your turn some other time," Jimmy promised. "The horse can't carry but two of us."

So Logan, against his mother's better judgment, went with his pa.

As soon as Jimmy and Logan were out of sight, Maggie turned the cabin inside out, cleaning and scrubbing everything she could and washing bedding. Lulie and John helped fill the hay ticks with fresh grass, newly cut and dried, and sweat with wild peppermint. They combed the mats out of Spy's hair.

Maggie had supposed, of course, that the elder Crawfords and her own mother would come in a wagon borrowed from her brother-in-law, Will Yankee. She was mightily surprised when they arrived horseback, Grandma Crawford and Grandma Bourn each perched on a side saddle.

"The road is so rough we decided horseback would be easier," Jimmy explained.

Such hugging and kissing and laughing and crying!

Why people should cry when they were happy, Logan could not understand. He told his mother, "When we got to Empire and Grandma Crawford hugged Pa, she cried. She said it was because she was so glad to see him."

He bragged, "I fell off once, and Pa didn't know it."

"Didn't hurt him," Jimmy hastened to assure Maggie. "We were going over a swampy place and the horse plunged. I didn't miss the little fellow till I'd gone 'most a quarter of a mile."

"I got all wet," said Logan.

"And muddy," added his father. "We had to stop and make a fire and dry you out. Never did get all the mud off."

"And that's the way your grandparents saw you," Maggie sighed.

"They didn't care, Ma."

"No indeed!" Grandma Bourn hugged Logan tight. "That was a small matter."

The problems of housing and entertaining these most special guests also became small matters. Maggie need never have worried. The little cabin seemed to stretch to accommodate all. Jimmy's parents and hers had been pioneers in Missouri. They made light of discomforts while they listened to Jimmy's talk of Steamboat Springs and Maggie's tales of the long winter. They had adventures of their own to relate: How the train coming across Kansas had had to stop because buffalo crowded in the way. How Grandpa Crawford, being used to candles and coal oil lamps, had done the wrong thing at the hotel in Denver.

"I blew out the light," he said wryly. "The grandmothers were sleeping together, and they began to smell something like old cabbage. Pretty soon the hotel man knocked on the door. I thought he was going to break it in. He said I should have turned off the gas instead of blowing out the light."

When the grandparents had rested, they were shown the sights of Hot Sulphur Springs, which did not take long. Then they were treated to a bath in the steaming mineral pool, which did not take long either because no one could stand the temperature more than a few moments.

Grandpa Crawford went with Jimmy fishing and to look at the cattle. The grandmothers helped Maggie churn, stirred whatever was cooking, plumped the hay ticks, loved the children, and talked and listened and nodded and smiled. There was so much to catch up on! One day they all rode in the wagon across the new bridge, a high wooden trestle resting on the piers John Himebaugh had built, up the hill to where they could see over the top.

"Yonder lies Steamboat Springs!" Jimmy said with a grand motion. "Some day you must all come see us there."

"Yes," the grandparents said, knowing that for them, some day might never come, but glad to share this much in the excitement of their young folks' dream.

All too soon the guests had to start home. This time the tears were not happy ones, but they were bravely brushed away.

"We must go so you'll have room for your next set of visitors,"

Grandpa Crawford said. “Annie and John will be out in August.”

After the grandparents left, the family at Hot Sulphur Springs would certainly have died of lonesomeness if they had not been able to look forward to seeing more kinfolks. Early in August Jimmy, who was still waiting for Fred Ingersoll to finish his surveying job in the upper Park, hitched the mules to the wagon and drove to Empire City to meet his brother and sister-in-law. His family counted off the days till he would return.

At last Maggie announced, “I think he’ll be back this afternoon with the Missouri folks.”

She baked two dried apple pies, and the children gathered a bouquet for the table. Every little while all day long Lulie, Logan, and John looked to see if the wagon was in sight.

Logan was first to shrill, “Here they come!”

Maggie ran out, dishrag in hand. When she saw that the wagon was not Jimmy’s and the people in it were strangers, she almost cried. Logan did.

By supper time Maggie had given up. She could see rain squalls in the direction of Berthoud Pass, and she decided the travelers must have stopped for the night at Cozens’ ranch.

But just about dusk, across the sagebrush came a familiar “Hoooo-ooot!” No mistake this time. A moment later Jimmy was shouting, “Anybody home?”

Almost before the wagon clattered to a stop two dear figures jumped over the wheel. Then everybody was hugging and kissing and talking while Jack and Jim, the mules, shook the harness and wanted to be unhitched, and Spy leaped about, barking.

Now there were two Johns—Big John and Small John or Johnny—all mixed up together amid squeals and laughter. And Logan in the middle of everything, jabbering a blue streak though nobody listened. And Lulie hanging on to her Aunt Annie.

All Maggie could say was, “Oh, Annie——— John——!”

A whole year she had not seen these loved ones. Annie’s eyes were still blue with a spark of mischief in them. She and Maggie had grown up together and been sweethearts of brothers during the Civil War. Perhaps because John and Annie had no children of their own, they were doubly devoted to Lulie, Logan, and Small John.

Finally, Maggie had sense enough to usher her guests into the cabin. While she put wood in the stove and slapped venison steaks into the frying pan, Annie opened her satchel and took out presents for the whole family.

Something sticky was all over everything. “The jelly!” Annie moaned. “I brought some glasses of jelly, and they’ve broken. I had no idea the road would be so rough.”

Aunt Annie (Annie Eliza Crawford)

"Rough!" snorted Maggie.

Everybody began to laugh.

When Annie could speak again, she said, "Maggie, you'll have to loan me a chemise. I got soaked to the skin in a rain storm a few miles back, and there's jelly on everything in this satchel."

Maggie's face turned red. She hated to admit she had no decent underclothes. The ones she had made of flour sacks still had the printing on them. Boiling had not even dimmed the letters. However, what she had, she divided. Such giggling behind the curtain till Annie emerged in dry unmentionables and Maggie's other dress!

Uncle John (John D. Crawford, Sr.), brother of James H. Crawford

The days that followed were happy ones. What stories Annie could tell the children—about her yellow headed parrot and her pet crow, and "possum up the big gum tree...." Maggie and her family had much to tell, too. And much to show. The visitors bathed in the hot sulphur spring and came out looking boiled. They drank from the little cold sulphur spring and wrinkled their noses.

Jimmy proposed a trip to Grand Lake on recommendation of Jim Bourn, who had just come in from prospecting. Maggie's twin said the lake was only about twenty miles away and was "sure something to see."

All the world looked rosy to Jim Bourn right then. He and his partner had filed on the best claim yet, which they had named the Wolverine. It was certain to make them rich.

Leaving Jim Bourn to look after the children, Maggie and Jimmy, Annie and Big John set off horseback. After a long, hot ride under the August sun, they found the cool expanse of blue water and were greeted by the hermit, "Judge" Wescott. Patiently, they listened to the long, original poem he read to them about a legendary battle between the Utes and their enemies, the Arapahoes and Cheyennes. They took a ride in a leaky boat on that lake, which their host said had no bottom. When, on the third day, they returned to Hot Sulphur Springs, the women were so stiff and saddle sore they could hardly sit down. Or get up.

Jim Bourn, with a supply of grub, hurried off again for the Wolverine mine.

"Anyhow, I'm glad we went to Grand Lake," Jimmy said. "I wouldn't have missed seeing old Judge Wescott. It was the article about him in the Missouri newspaper that made me want to come west."

"I'm just glad we got out of that leaky boat," Annie murmured.

"Now I'll take you to Steamboat Springs!" Jimmy said.

Steamboat Springs! The Promised Land!

"We'll chuck a few things in the wagon and make a picnic of it. We'll drive the mules and take one riding horse."

Maggie, who knew the trip would require much more than chucking a few things in the wagon, cooked and packed and cooked some more, and with Annie's help finally had bedding, provisions, cooking pots, and children as ready as could be.

As the sightseers started out, the weather was fine and the country beautiful—more beautiful the farther they joggled. Flowers for which they had no names splashed hills and meadows. Mountains without end... valleys stretching on and on... and the wagon so small....

The "rough road" became a daily joke. Here there was no road at all—just a game trail. Sometimes one front wheel was in it, sometimes the other. Mosquitoes and horse flies, chapped lips and faces, rubbed heels and skinned toes were small inconveniences cheerfully borne by the travelers for the larger privilege of admiring the wonders of the country unfolding each day.

Maggie and Annie jolted till they were tired, then walked. The children did not seem to mind the jolting. They rode, or walked, or sometimes all three sat on Frank, the horse. In the worst places the travelers soon learned to lean on the upper side of their conveyance to keep it from tipping over.

They came to a hill so steep and sidling that all the passengers climbed out of the wagon except Small John, who was comfortably settled and had no notion of moving. His uncle was hanging on to the tilted top side, and his pa was urging the mules, and it seemed the wagon would surely topple over.

Annie crawled into the back far enough to reach Johnny's head, and twisting a lock of his red hair around her finger, pulled. Johnny had to come!

Jack and Jim dug in their hoofs and held that wagon till it righted itself. They were the best mules in the world. After several days of plodding progress, they brought the travelers at last to the Big Bend of Bear River.

"We're almost to Steamboat Springs!" Jimmy announced. "Just a little farther—"

Though it was long past noon, he kept on driving. Nobody

mentioned anything about eating. Lulie and Logan thought they would starve. Finally, Johnny said he wanted some gravy.

"Can't you wait just a little longer?" Maggie tried to persuade him.

Johnny could not.

The wagon had to stop while Maggie mixed a little flour, water, and salt in a cup and fed it to her youngest, who thought he was getting his gravy. After that, travel could resume.

For the last several miles the trail had roughly kept to the river's course, but now there was not room to squeeze a wagon between a steep brushy hill and the stream. Jimmy braced his feet, gripped the reins with strong hands, and turned the mules straight into the channel, heading them down river. Big John followed on Frank.

"Steady, boys! Steady!" Jimmy talked to the mules.

Luckily, at this season the water was low. The passengers held on to the wagon and to each other as the iron clad wheels grated over boulders. Jack and Jim slipped and snorted and stumbled. Trout flashed away in the riffles... ducks scattered... a doe deer crashed through the alders....

As the wagon box wrenched and tilted, sometimes water splashed onto its occupants, who were so busy trying to stay in the wagon that nobody said a word. Even Johnny had nothing to remark—perhaps because his aunt had such a tight grip on him that he could hardly breathe. The mules' coats shone slick and wet, their long ears flopped. When one mule slipped, the other held.

"Good boys—" Jimmy kept talking to them.

Quarter of a mile... maybe half a mile....

"That-a-boy, Jack! Good boy, Jim!"

Now the channel grew wider, shadowed by long-leafed cottonwoods. A bank beaver clawed out of the way. From a limb above a pool in the crook of a fallen log a kingfisher flew with rattling call.

Jimmy's hands on the reins spoke to the mules, headed them toward the south bank. "Jack! Jim! Up, boys! Dig in your heels!"

With a lunge the team lifted from the river, and the wagon careened after them and came to a dripping stop.

Jimmy's shout brought an answering halloo from a small camp in a cottonwood grove a few yards down the river. Two men came running—Sandy Mellen and Charlie Mayo, the helpers Jimmy had hired to hold his claim.

Lulie, Logan, and Johnny forgot their hunger. Unkinking themselves, they spilled out into a grassy flat.

The first thing Annie did was to pat the heaving flanks of the mules. "Good boys! Good boys!"

Maggie, generally quick to unpack and start to make camp, to-

day climbed slowly over the wheel and stood peering about, where white woman had never stood before. She saw sagebrush and willows bounded on one side by Bear River, on two sides by a hill, and on the west by dark green hummocks of a marsh. Beyond the marsh humped a white hill, and beyond that a far mountain.

Steamboat Springs!

The children were already taking possession. Johnny had found a friendly garter snake and walking astraddle of it chortled, "Nakey, Uncle Non, nakey!"

Lulie and Logan ran toward the hill where woodchucks barked at them from the cover of sarviceberry, chokecherry, and spruce. Ran to the edge of the marsh to peer through the mat of reeds and rushes where disturbed killdeer cried and waterfowl took noisy flight. Ran back toward the river to cup a drink of clear sweet water in their hands and stare across.

Maggie stared, also. Beyond tangled cottonwoods and alders she saw mountains clothed with green, warm and sunlit this August afternoon. She could not see what she was looking for.

Jimmy, standing beside her, gestured. "Our claim cabin is north of the river about a mile down. We'll go there tomorrow. Oh, Maggie!" He caught her in a bear hug.

Big John wanted to know, "Where are all those mineral springs you've been bragging about?"

Jimmy waved an arm toward the marsh. "Dozens of 'em right there, bubbling up everywhere. And dozens more across the river."

"Where's that wonderful Steamboat spring?"

"I'll show you! Just hold your horses!"

"I don't hear any chugging."

"You will! Tomorrow you'll hear it when I take you down to the cabin site. Right now, Johnny and I need some nourishment."

So Maggie cooked her first meal in Bear River valley where white woman had never cooked before. Sandy and Charlie provided firewood and fresh venison, and pretty soon biscuits were browning in the Dutch oven and steaks sputtering in the frying pan, and there was real gravy enough to satisfy even Johnny.

Squatting on his heels, Sandy said no one had been around to disturb the claim. He and Charlie had seen so many bear they had quit counting—among them an unusual light brown cinnamon bear. They had been visited by only a few Utes. Apparently most of the Indians were in camp several miles down the river gathering wild fruit that ripened there sooner than it did here in higher country. A horseman named Louis Westfall, riding through the valley, had killed a cow elk with one horn and had given them the skull. Jimmy and Big John examined the oddity with interest. After dinner Jimmy

said, "Now I'll show you something that will make your eyes pop!"

"What, Pa?" cried Lulie.

"Just follow me."

Everyone trailed after him toward the marsh. In a few yards he stopped. "What do you make of that?"

"A wall!" exclaimed Annie. "Sod bricks. What's a wall doing away off here?"

"Part of an old fort, I think." Jimmy paced off measurements. "I can still make out the shape—about twenty feet square. Most has weathered away; but this side is high enough to show portholes to shoot through."

"Wonder who—" puzzled Big John.

"Whoever it was, dug the adobe right over yonder in that mineral bank. You can still see the hole. And this isn't all." Jimmy led the way back toward the river and pointed to something in the top of a big dead cottonwood. "A scaffold. A place to watch for Indians."

Also, on the lower trunk of the old tree were two pegs, evidently places on which to hang things. They had been made by sawing an ox bow in two and inserting each end into an auger hole. The tree had grown around the auger holes, showing that it had been living when the pegs had been driven in.

By hunting around, the explorers found pieces of a log chain fragile with rust; several weather-pocked ox shoes; a plumb; an awl with a leached wooden handle that had been gnawed by rodents; a shoe last the shape of a human foot, its wood fiber eaten with age and as weightless as cork.

"Whoever was here must have stayed quite a while," commented Big John.

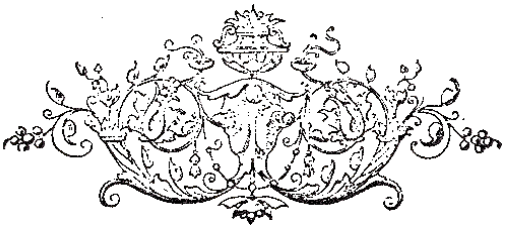
Sandy Mellen volunteered, "There's been an old log cabin half a mile over there in the edge of the spruce trees. It's on a grassy bench this side of that white hill. You can see burned rocks of a fireplace and a few rotted logs."

That night in the flicker of the campfire the Crawfords speculated on who their predecessors had been. Maybe Sir George Gore. Or Spanish padres. Or French trappers. Had the same people built cabin and fort? Only the ancient cottonwood knew.

Later, Yarmonite shed possible light on the mystery. In broken English and sign language, he harked back to the time he had been a little boy—so high—and his father had been chief. The big Ute camp was on the south bank of Bear River, and three white men lived in a mud house at the lower end of the camp. The white men had goods to trade with the Indians. One day a war party of Arapahoes sneaked over from North Park and attacked the Ute camp. Since the invaders were on a hill and could shoot down into the

tepees, they had the advantage. The Utes fought back. The battle raged three days. Yarmonite's father was killed, and the Utes were getting the worst of it. Under cover of darkness on the third night they took the chief's body and moved down the river, and the three white men moved with them. Yarmonite remembered this well because every year he made a ceremonial journey back to the spot where his father had been killed.

Reckoning that Yarmonite was now sixty-five years of age and had been perhaps eight years old at the time of the battle, Jimmy figured the adobe fort could have been built around 1818. A long time ago....



Next morning Jimmy hitched up the team and drove across Bear River and down the valley through redtop grass as high as the mules' backs. The children, with freshly scrubbed faces, felt like Sunday or something special in the clean clothes their mother had put on them.

The wagon bumped over brush and old beaver workings. Jack and Jim followed a well-worn game trail that was also being traveled in the dewy cool of the day by some of the rightful owners of this valley—a buck deer, a badger, and two antelope. And something big and black that wallowed into the willows.

Frank, the horse, did not like bear, and a few days ago would have taken the bit in his teeth and showed Big John how fast he could swap ends. But here on Bear River he had had to get used to the creatures, and so he gave only a token performance of shying. Jack and Jim, never easily excited, took a brief detour. Spy stayed close to the wagon, tail at half mast.

The deer and antelope ran a short distance and turned to look at the intruders, who were now being announced by a sharp eyed, sharp tongued woodchuck somewhere in the rocks, and a raucous blue jay in a lodgepole pine.

Maggie and Annie peered with uncommon interest at this new land where Maggie's home would be. They saw meadows fingering back toward sunlit peaks. They saw the ever present sagebrush and willows, but here the sagebrush seemed more silvery, the willows greener because they grew on Jimmy's claim. Wild flowers starred the grass on either side of the wagon. This was a lovely valley—not too broad, not too narrow. Just right.

Jimmy was saying, "When there's a town here, we'll make a street—a good wide street—right down the middle, and that long mountain yonder in the west will always be at the foot of town." Actually, the mountain was miles away.

Across the river the visitors noted a white mineral bank with water purling over it. But on ahead where their eyes searched most eagerly they could not see any cabin.

"Pa, how much farther is it?" asked Logan.

"Just a little way."

White Mineral Formation, Steamboat Springs. Picture taken in 1888 by Henry S. Pritchett

The mules snatched bites of redtop as if they were starved. They forded several small streams in less than a mile, followed the trail through a grove of scattered pines, and splashed across the last and largest creek, which Jimmy said he had named Soda Creek.

He already spoke of Soda Creek with affection. It dashed over boulders with sociable chatter, bringing the best water in the world from the high country to his cabin.

And there, beyond alder brush, some yards above the west creek bank, stood that cabin!

Jimmy drove up in front with a flourish. "James H. Crawford residence!"

Though his tone was bantering, there was a depth of feeling in the announcement. That cabin was going to be the very first home in Bear River Valley. Whoever had been here previously—trapper, trader, prospector—had come and gone and left little sign. He intended to stay.

Maggie and Annie and the children jumped out. Big John dismounted.

"A good location," he approved. "Creek handy for water, and plenty of room toward the river for a corral. And that little hill behind for shelter."

The hill was only two or three times higher than the cabin—a

bench extending back in a sagebrush mesa to a bigger hill beyond. It just suited the children, who were already discovering among the bushes the shelving cream colored rocks that would make good play houses. Striped chipmunks, living in those honeycombed rocks, stopped chewing green sarviceberries long enough to flirt their tails and make saucy remarks.

"We'll add to the cabin as soon as we can," said Jimmy.

Maggie walked through her front door. Nothing to see inside except dirt floor and a pair of scolding wrens that had built a nest under the eaves. She stepped over raw chips to a window hole....

Outside again, she and Annie sniffed the air. "I smell something," declared Annie.

"It's the big sulphur spring near the river," grinned Jimmy. "I say it smells good! Come on, I'll—"

Chug-chug-chug-chug.... Faintly, the sound throbbed through the morning.

Big John slapped his thigh. "Steamboat!" he shouted. "Steamboat spring!"

"Didn't I tell you?" said Jimmy. "Hop back in the wagon, you young ones and womenfolk, and I'll take you to see it. Lulie— Logan— Johnny——— Come!"

Where were those young ones? No longer on the hill, they were down in a marsh west of the cabin—a wonderful world of rushes and shallow waterways almost as sizeable as the marsh near the Old Adobe. With Lulie in the lead, they were jumping from mound to mound, getting acquainted with little green frogs and bright blue dragon flies, with muskrats that made trails through the scum of water plants. They were finding springs right and left.

"Here's one!"

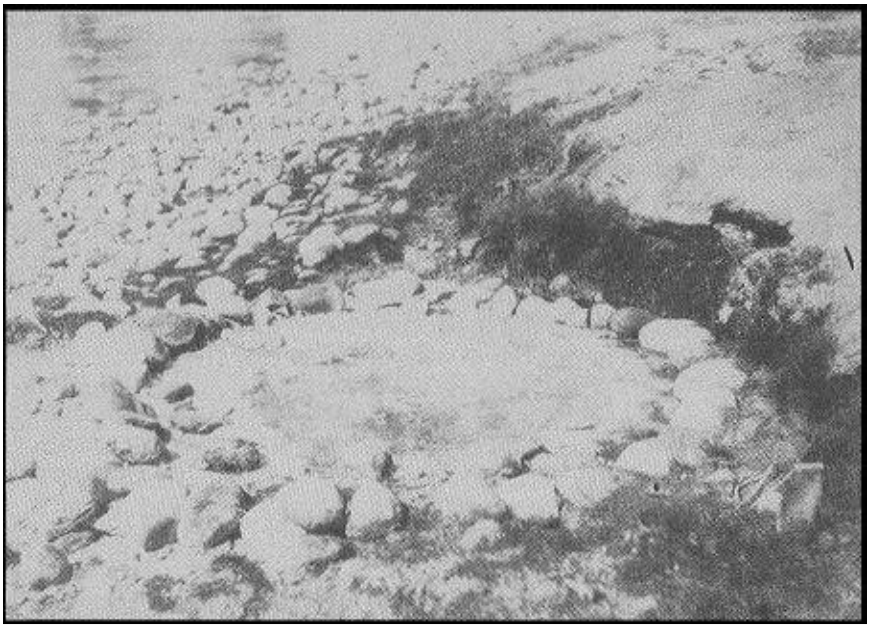
"Here's another!"

Part of the fun was the shaky footing. It was not so much fun when Lulie fell in clear to her waist in ice cold water and thick yellow mud. She had some trouble getting out. In trying to help her, Logan plunked in, too. Johnny, whose legs were short, had already missed his aim several times.

When they heard their folks calling them, the three finally scrambled from the marsh and presented a sorry spectacle at the wagon. The clean clothes their mother had put on them this morning were a sight to behold.

Maggie looked at her draggled offspring and sighed. She did not scold. She was too much a child herself. Annie and she scraped off what mud they could and wrung out Lulie's underclothes and skirt, and they all climbed into the wagon to go look at the Steamboat spring. The children shivered a while but soon dried out.

Chug-chug-chug-chug....The sound came louder and louder. The mules forded the river easily, and the sight-seers were soon on the south bank looking at the source of the chugging. Big John on Frank had beat them there. They saw a small but lively spring that pumped a jet of water every few seconds thirty-five or forty feet into the air. It never missed a beat. Usually, the spurt slanted into the river, but when the breeze caught it, it showered the onlookers, who retreated.



Mineral Spring in edge of Bear River

"Yessir—" (Big John had to raise his voice to make himself understood above the noise of the spring) "—sounds exactly like a steamboat. I'll bet those old fellows who built the Adobe reckoned they'd reached the head of navigation when they heard that sound. In springtime the water could get high enough for a boat."

The grown folks read Jimmy's claim notice on the quaking aspen there by the chugger while the children poked their fingers in a near-by spring as black as ink and fished "pink moss" out of still another pool. They all admired the water cascading over strangely carved white shelves into the river and discovered several springs bubbling in the stream itself.

That day, and in the several days following, they found and sampled dozens of other springs and marveled how Nature had

made so many flavors. They agreed that the big bubbling sulphur pool was the prettiest to look at, but the spring Lulie had fallen in was the best to drink. They named it the Iron Spring because of the rusty flakes that skirled out of the orange-yellow basin. The water was so sparkling and cold that they drank from it often and, since the spring was near the edge of the marsh, they soon made a trail to it.

Every night they returned to their comfortable camp near the Old Adobe. Horse and mules grazed untethered with the horses belonging to Sandy and Charlie. They nipped grass around the springs till they were stuffed. Jimmy laughed at them. "I think the mineral soil must give the vegetation a salty taste," he said. "That must be why so many deer and antelope are attracted to this place."

The Crawfords were seldom out of sight of game. They walked and rode and paused often to look long and far. Each savored this Bear River Valley in his or her own way.

Jimmy and Big John worked on the cabin, hunted grouse and sagechickens, or sat on a rock on the hill where they could see in their mind's eye a town: There the post office... there the school... yonder the steepled church....

Maggie and Annie found the garden Jimmy had planted on his trip last spring and could hardly believe they were seeing radishes and lettuce, carrots and peas growing thriftily with no care at all. Annie popped a pea pod and ate the contents

"Mmmm!" she said. "So sweet! I never ate any peas in Missouri as good as these!"

She and Maggie picked what peas there were and thinned out the beets to make greens for dinner. Fresh vegetables went well with the trout Maggie had caught below a big log in Soda Creek.

The women were delighted to discover gooseberries on the bank just like gooseberries in Missouri except that these were smaller and very sour.

Perhaps the children tasted this lush land most joyously. Their first love was the marsh west of the cabin, presided over by blackbirds and great blue herons, and patrolled by a beaver family that had a house in the pond formed by several large springs. Their special friends were the killdeer that ran on spindly legs at the marsh's edge, or rose in short curved flight, shrilling their own names.

Too soon the sightseers had to start back to Hot Sulphur Springs. Jack and Jim and Frank followed the tracks they had made on the way in. Spy's tail waved again. And under the warm sun of early September, how the travelers did wish they could have another drink of Iron Water!

CHAPTER XIII

The picnic was over.

Back in Hot Sulphur Springs, Annie and John packed to go home to Missouri. They had stayed longer than planned. Early frost had already hung bright flags on the bushes on Mt. Bross. The group that had been so jolly on the excursion to Steamboat Springs was solemn now—except Jimmy.

He was in high spirits because Fred Ingersoll had finished running his line in the upper Park and was now ready to start the survey at Steamboat Springs. "It will keep me humping to get everything done. When I take you folks Outside, I'll haul a load of provisions back. Did Maggie tell you she cooked thirty hundred pounds of flour last winter?"

Maggie turned her back to hide the tears that suddenly stung her eyes. She fumbled with the teakettle.

A long silence broken only by a stick popping in the stove.

Gently, Jimmy tilted her face to him and kissed it. "Maggie," he murmured, "Maggie—"

The teakettle began to dance, but nobody set it back. Jimmy looked at it without seeing it. He observed, "Not much anyone can do here in the winter."

Spy scratched to get in, but nobody went to the door.

Over Maggie's head Jimmy peered through the small square of window. "Could snow 'most any day.... No use sticking around here. Maggie, why don't you and the children go home with Annie and John for a visit?"

"Oh, yes!" cried Annie.

Maggie burrowed her face into a convenient shoulder while the teakettle boiled and hissed and almost danced off the stove.

Said the owner of the shoulder, "When the survey's done, I'll get someone to look after the stock and I'll come, too."

And so Maggie and the children traveled home with Annie and Big John.

Jimmy hurried to Bear River with Fred Ingersoll and his crew. The initial survey turned out to be a tremendous job. Before it was completed the men were working in two feet of snow.

When finally in late November Jimmy was able to return to Hot Sulphur Springs, he found two letters from Maggie. The first letter was punctuated with excitement of the train trip—her first train trip. Logan had leaned out the window so far trying to see the engine that he had lost his cap.... It was so good to visit with old Sedalia

friends....

The second was filled with heartbreak. Her father had been killed in an accident September 21. He had been hauling water and had started to unhitch the team when one of the horses had become frightened and crushed him between the wagon and a tree.... How much her mother needed her!

Jimmy wrote his love and sympathy.

Weeks passed before he heard again: Lulie had started to school and the teacher said she was doing very well. Maggie was sewing the first pair of pants for Johnny....

Jimmy wrote back: It was fine that Lulie had a chance to go to school.... He had not yet found anyone to stay with the cattle....

Then Maggie's letters dribbled out. Her distraut husband blamed uncertain mail service as winter socked in. Whenever he made a trip from his cattle camp to Hot Sulphur Springs to see if there was any word, he built a fire in the stove and was shamed to see the cabin as Maggie must have seen it—crowded, crude, roughest of rough. He squirmed as he remembered how Maggie had had to work too hard. No wonder she had ached to go home to Sedalia! Would she ever want to come back to the loneliness and privations of the frontier?

All he owned in the world was here. His dream of Steamboat Springs still burned within him, but even more hotly now burned a fear.... As he kept his vigil with the cattle, he grew lean and silent.

The season ripened toward spring. Grand River began to roar, and a few patches of mud appeared on the hills above it. Warming sun stirred a new glow in willows, stirred a fierceness in Jimmy that grew day by day till he could no longer stand it.

Leaving the stock to shift for themselves, he crossed the range on snowshoes, waging a grim fight against the sticky footing, till he reached Empire City, where he caught a ride to Denver and took a train for Sedalia.

Spring had already made the countryside around Sedalia beautiful, as only Missouri could be beautiful. Borrowing a mount from his brother John in town, Jimmy rode out to the Bourn place. He was familiar with every fence row, every hollow. In this rolling farmland he had been born and raised, been baptized in Flat Creek, gone barefoot to school, ridden off as a soldier boy.... But today he hardly saw the greening fields or pink crabapple blossoms. Instead, he saw buttercups around his claim cabin on Bear River.

Announced by a clamor of guineafowls, he stood in the doorway of the Bourn frame house. "Maggie," he stammered, "Maggie—"

She went straight into his arms. "I thought you'd never come!"

A thousand things he needed to say, and all he could muster as

he held her close was “Maggie——”

She found her tongue first. “Has the snow melted at Hot Sulphur Springs? Is Yarmonite back? How are the Gansons?”

“Hey———” Jimmy pleaded.

The children clambered over him. How they had grown!

“Did you bring Spy? How are Snip and Brin? And Frank? And Jack and Jim——?”

“Hey, wait a minute!”

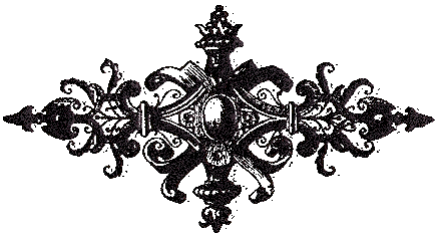
“I can’t wait any longer!” Maggie’s laugh had a catch in it.

Grandma Bourn pushed through the group to give her son-in-law a tremulous kiss. “I’m going to live with daughter Orie, but I’ll come visit you again when you get settled.”

Maggie said, “I miss the mountains. I never thought I would. Last fall I saved a lot of seeds. Do you think pumpkins would grow in Bear River Valley? And couldn’t we try corn?”

“We sure could!”

Jimmy did not know he was shouting. He knew only that the long lonesome winter was thawed from him, and Maggie dear, his own love was once more by his side!



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