**History of San Juan County**
**Chapter XLI-XLV, 1892-1893+**
**By Albert R. Lyman, 1918**

## 1892-1893 CHAPTER XLI

In the fall of 1892, someone pretended to know the lower San Juan was yellow with gold, and that the secret was carefully guarded by a few. And that pretended secret simply took wings and flew over the United States, and off over the oceans east and west. Men broke and ran like mad from all around, to stake a claim on the river before all the ground should be taken. From New England, the Eastern, Central and Western States they came, they came from Canada and Mexico, a member of the royal family arrived from Norway, and one fellow who heard the call, came all the way from New Zealand.

The vicinity of Bluff, and the river bottoms above and below for many miles were alive with camps and outfits of all sizes and kinds, from the heavy six-horse coach, to the lone tramp who trudged eagerly onward, or bummed his passage from some good-natured teamster.

Quiet little Bluff was infested with men of all grades and stations and colors, thieves and tramps and sharpers and beggars and bums.

They flocked in without any previous knowledge of the country, and without sufficient preparation and equipment to take care of themselves, and some of them left their dry bones on the goldless sands which had lured them to San Juan.

Two different outfits who had lost their way to the Lake country were found by cow outfits who directed them to the way out. A lone tramp was seen in the vicinity of Road Canyon, and though he passed within a stones-throw of two cowboys, he said nothing nor veered from his course, but blundered straight ahead like a loco calf. The hardships of the desert may have unbalanced his mind.

When the eager multitude began collecting at Bluff, with the roadless wilderness defying the further advances of their wagons, they opened the old road up Comb Wash to what was named the Gable Camp, south of Clay Hill on the river. The eager multitude prospected Grand Gulch, Castle Wash and the desert solitudes of the Lake country, penetrating many a silent region from the remote confines of which some of them never returned.

One fellow, depending solely on his legs for his transportation, came in from the east and worked for Hanson Bayles long enough to pay from a grubstake, after which he disappeared along the winding trail leading westward over the sandhills. No one would have known to this day but that he staked his claim and left San Juan with the ebbing tide of humanity a few months later, but that

someone, at a secluded spring near the Barton Range, found a human skull still bearing the short hair of a modern man. Further investigation revealed his withered shoes, more of his bones and fragments of his clothing. Apparently he had died there in solitude, of sickness or starvation, and further than partly placing him as the man who worked for Hanson Bayles, he was never identified, his name was not learned, and none of his friends were notified of his unfortunate ending.

While the boom was on and all the available houses serving as hotels, a young fellow coming originally from Boston, Massachusetts, sought lodgings in Bluff and found them with Postmaster Joseph F. Barton. He had two horses, a rather good saddle, pack outfit and revolver, and gave the name of Clark Field. He stayed bu[t] one night with the Bartons, and started alone across the Navajo reservation for Flagstaff.

With his disappearance among the sand hills to the southwest, his name and face began to fade from memory, and he would never have perhaps been mentioned in San Juan again, but for a young Navajo who came to town carrying a gun which the Bartons recognized as that carried by the stranger who lodged with them. His having the gun looked somewhat suspicious but of course he might have traded for it, or bought it, and the incident was dismissed.

But a letter came after a few months to the Post Master inquiring about a young man named Clark Field. It was written by a Mrs. Field in Boston, who said she ha[d] traced her son as far as Bluff, but had heard nothing from him since he reached that point.

An account of the stranger, along with the woman's letter, and a statement about the young Navajo with the suspicious gun, were placed in the hands of Thales Haskel, who began pumping the Navajos for a clue to the missing man. He found it, h[e] got the whole story.

When Field made camp on the Reservation, a young Navajo came to his fire in the evening. Neither one could understand the other, the white man was suspicious an[d] not disposed to make any com promise; and the Navajo was surely appreciating the stranger's valuable outfit and his helplessness to defend himself. Field had told Grant Elliott when they parted that day at the mouth of Butler Wash that he would take "no lip" from the Navajos, and true to his determination, he drew his gun and drove the surly young Indian out of camp.

His resolve to make no compromise with danger, became the snare of death to his unsuspecting feat. That copper-colored youth returned to his hogan for an ax, and sulked in the distant shadows of that compfire until the white man had retired for the night. Then he came stealthily forward, smote the stranger on the head as he slept, and robbed him of all which his covetous eyes had seen.

The youthful murderer's mother, fearing her son's guilt would be discovered, got another squaw to help her carry the body a number of miles where they threw it from a ledge, and covered it with stones.

Haskel's prying questions penetrated the stubborn reserve of these squaws, they told about the murder, and showed where the body had been concealed. In company with Bob Mitchel, Haskel brought the remains to town, where they were placed in the Bluff cemetery.

With those remains was a pair of new shoes which the Bartons recognized; and ther[e] was a gold ring, a letterhead, and a memoranda which were forwarded to Mrs. Field in Boston. She recognized the ring and she produced letterheads similar to that found in the pockets of the dead man. But still she was uncertain, as was Clark Field's sweetheart, who joined her in the solemn inquiry, waiting in sorrowful suspense for tidings. They asked that the bones be unearthed and examined for certain gold fillings in the teeth. The grave was opened, and the fillings found exactly as the women had described them. He was really Clark Field, their son an[d] sweetheart, lost in the human flood which had rushed for the phantom gold of San Juan.

It may be unpleasant to read, it certainly is unpleasant to record, that the murderer of Clark Field was never brought to justice, and is, so far as is generally known, still living to enjoy the spoil of his foul robbery.

## 1893 CHAPTER XLII

During the first few weeks of the boom, the motly multitude which it carried on its rising tide, seemed never to dream that the flood would ebb, and recede as tamely as any other tide. They believed the gold was actually there in streaks of blessed yellow and the fact that everybody was going in that direction at break-neck speed, seemed to prove it conclusively. Men who had no faith in arriving early enough to stake a rich claim, doted on opening some business near by, with the view of fleecing the lucky fellows who gobbled the bonanza. A rich fiel[d] would demand workmen at big wages, and men who aspired to those wages and nothing else came floating in with the rest of the drift.

A slender negro, six feet and something in the air, traveled with a chubby Irishman whose calibre of overalls was forty-one-sixteen. When they made their bed near Bayles' corral in the evening, behold they had a short canvas and one small quilt only. The canvas separated them from the cold damp ground, and the quilt withstood the inclemency of the winter above. All but the head of the Irishman's egg-like form was snugly covered, but the colored man protruded at least two feet from the foot of the bed, and indefinitely out into the cold from above where his pillow should have been.

A German barber named Shisler, wearing a long patriarch beard, went from camp to camp and from door to door with razor, scissors and comb, offering to shingle or shave whoever had the price thereof.

Carpenters, masons, miners, musicians and mule skinners were present in excess of all demands. Hay jumped to an unheard-of price and was hauled in by way of the old Navajo Spring road from Cortez. There was ever a hungry cry for lumber, and it too was ordered from afar at great expense.

Lumber was needed for rockers, for flumes,sluice boxes, water wheels and boats, especially boats. The rapids, shallows and narrows of the old San Juan were never so formidable as the trails and roads and since the alleged gold lay hidden along the banks of the winding stream, they built and loaded their boats at Bluff and floated merrily off down the river. Again and Again they floated away, but they never came back, that is, in the boats.

When they did return, tramping wearily into town from the west with clothing torn, shoes worn out, and feet lacerated by sharp stones, they had thrilling stories of adventure to relate; they had wonderful prospects of wealth and claims which they longed to sell, but they had always failed by just a little bit or reaching the gold which they were nevertheless sure of loading up with on the next trip.

A leading figure in this hunt for gold, and a man to be remembered for many sterling qualities, was Melvin Dempsey, a Cherokee Indian. He meant business and made it a point to conduct a square deal. When he became doubtful about the existence of gold in paying quantities on the San Juan, he investigated traces of copper and oil and found besides, a ledge of very fair marble.

There was Humphrey the wealthy New Yorker, famous as a hypnotist, there was Brice Mendenhall, Atwood, Henager and Henley, and others too numerous to mention. Most of them departed when the bubble broke, but some of them stayed and are here yet. A; L. Raplee has been a prominent figure on the river since that time, and San Juan can thank the boom for William J. Nix and Ezekiel Johnson.

One of the men who prepared to ambush the finders of the bonanza, came into Bluff with a load of whiskey, expecting to open a saloon. News of his arrival sent a ripple of excitements to the homes of all the old settlers. Would they tolerate drunkenness in their peaceful retreat? After all the other things with which they had been in constant warfare these thirteen years, would they surrender to whiskey without putting up any fight at all? Not a bit of it!

A committee met the would-be saloon keeper who was given a clear understanding of the bad relish with which the people received his proposition. They offered to buy his entire stock on condition that he would bring no more, and he agreed to the offer.

It was the San Juan Co-op who got the booze, and it was locked up inn the old shoeshop which was their only warehouse. Men arrived from all around expecting to ge[t] a drink at the Co-op, nothing doing. That booze was bought to keep, not to sell. Wasn't it possible to get inside and get just a little of it? No sir, not a drop

So the thirsty multitude plotted an attack by stratagem, by assault, or some othe[r] way on those barrls of drink locked up in the shoeshop. One of their civil engineers went to the store for an article which he knew was stored in the shoeshop, and when the door was open, he made a mental map of the exact latitude and longitude of the place of the barrels.

Tidings of this brilliant plot, with invitations to participate therein, went to the cowpunchers of the L. C. outfit, and to camps up and down the river. On the night appointed, with tapering plug, with brace and bit and empty jugs, they crawled under the shoeshop, got the latitude and longitude of the place, and bore[d] a hole up through the floor into a barrel of whisky. The plot worked like a charm, and before morning, more drunken men wallowed in the streets than Bluff ever saw before or since.

It must not be implied that this particular load of whiskey bought by the San Jua[n] Co-op was all of the stuff that ever arrived. It filtered in in small quantitie[s] for the possession of which men sometimes fought desperately.

Two fellows going by the names of Bonnell and Arnold, disagreed as to which one of them should drink the remaining cup of one of the installments of the blessed stuf[f] and after a few preliminary words, fell on each other tooth and toenail. They were in what was known as Lumpkins cabin, and a great crowd collected to watch the fuss. But it progressed from bad to worse until every movable thing in the house was used as a weapon. Sheriff Willard Butt was notified, and when after a hard struggle, he and his deputies brought the bloody belligerents into subjection and led them out, they looked like game cocks that had gone the limit. Too bad after this much of the story no one knows who got the drink in question, it may have been upset and spilled in the scuffle, or some of the onlookers may have regaled themselves with it as they watched the fight.

With mechanics and workmen hunting jobs, the Bluff School District decided to buil[d] a school house, and the people appointed a committee who let a contract for the erection of a church. The buildings were of stone, and J. R. Lumpkin figured prominently as a mason and stone cutter for both of them. Charles Sitzer, Alfred Gordan, and W. J. Nix were the main carpenters. The school house was completed first, and the meeting house was not dedicated until February, 1894. The sound of a new bell in town had quite a novel effect, and when the boys wanted to make the occasion particularly impressive they rang both bells at once. Those two buildings may not have a very imposing

appearance now, but they looked like veritable steps toward the erection of good homes in every corner of the isolated little town.

## CHAPTER XLIII

The gold hunters who tramped the hills of San Juan, made it a point to have plenty of beef in camp, for if they were not on a stock range, they found it worth while to go with their pack outfits to such range and return loaded. It cost them nothing, if they were careful, and if an arrest should be made the chances were all in their favor.

On one range, whose cattle were somewhat wild, they killed the blooded yearling bulls which were more tame, having just been brought in. In several cases they were found with beef in their possession, and one arrest was made. But the preliminary hearing of that case was conducted principally before their own officials and proved to be a ghastly farce. It established such a precedent in favor of robbing the range that the business looked like a good thing and was indulged in more freely than ever.

Dick Knight and the notorious fighter, Arnold, figured that since range cattle were free for all, they should, besides enjoying the beef, lay something for a rainy day. Accordingly they began rounding up small bunches of cattle and selling them to the Navajos at reduced prices near the mouth of Comb Wash. The Navajos, elated at the prospects of thus easily building up herds, began talking of the enterprise, and the little scheme leaked out before the two thieves had made their preparation to leave.

Sheriff Willard Butt and certain of his deputies, surprised them near the lime kiln in Butler Wash and brought them to town. When they left for the north, each one heavily guarded and both of them looking like dogs caught with the bait in his mouth, and especially when they failed to return, it gave the free beef industry a less hopeful countenance.

But lawlessness was not then, nor at any time since banished from southeastern Utah. Its wilderness is so wide, its natural defenses so inviting, that guilt sought within its rugged borders a safe retreat from all around.

One day a fellow loaded with guns and giving the name "Murray" straggled into Bluff, apparently relieved that he had landed so blissfully far from nowhere. He was accompanied by a lesser personality who was also armed, and in the isolated village they felt inclined to relax for a breathing spell.

But two other fellows, also armed to the teeth, came in on their tracks, causing the first to dodge fearfully about with their hands on their guns preparatory to going on. The second two, with suave assurance, pretended to be on the run, and offered to pool their fortunes with the first. The four were from the same

vicinity, but the last two,contrary to their pretensions, were resolved to get the reward offered in Arizona for Murray and his companion.

The pooling position carried, and the four moved camp to Rincon. But Murray still held to his mistrust of these old acquaintances and aimed to give them no advantage whatever. As for the acquaintances, they watched for the "drop on" their intended victims, and were all but to despair of realizing their hopes. In fact they resolved, if they failed before leaving Rincon, to give up the chase and return to Arizona.

Having thus decided to loose the trip or take their men at this camp, at a mutual signal each pushed his gun into the face of Murray and his companion, calling, "Hands up quick!" And their hands went up, in spite of their anger at being thus deceived, they were taken back across the Reservation to answer for their offens[e] in the State to the south.

At another time three men came in from the north with a band of horses, crossed the river and plunged into the wilderness of the Reservation towards Arizona. Ho[t] on their trail in pursuit, came Henry Knowles and John Duckett, reporting to Sheriff Butt that the horses were theirs. The Sheriff joined them in the chase, in which he also enlisted several Navajos, and came back the next day with the three thieves under heavy guard.

Besides the enterprises and the men who may be mentioned in a story of San Juan County, there are other men and deeds and events which are doomed to remain, at least for the present, as inseparable parts of the rocks, and hills where they were enacted.

A man named Joe McCoy took refuge in San Juan, and with his guns and his donkeys lived a hermit's life until the time of his death.

Once when visitors arrived at his camp, he warned them first thing to refrain fro[m] hurting his friend, to whom he called their attention. It was a great green lizard lying in the shade of a stone ledge, but it ran to McCoy's hand with every indication of having been the familiar companion of his solitude. McCoy held always to his guns, sometimes referring in anger or fear to certain old troubles in the distant state of Kentucky. Especially at the time of his death did he make reference to these things, muttering about them with his last breath.

In the early nineties two men named Dutch and Day made their summer headquarters in Dark Canyon. Their winter range, northwest towards the Colorado River, completed the remote world of their operations which might furnish materials for stories of the wild west, but cannot enter extensively at present into this account.

Another cow outfit, deserving at least to be mentioned, was the H H T Herd which came in from Grand Junction, Colorado, stopped at Red Canyon and other places in the west of the County. Jim Jones and Henry Knowles figured prominently in the handling of this herd and left a good impression wherever they came in contact with other stockmen of the country. That the coming of such a herd at that time was a mistake from every angle, disastrous to its owners and everybody it crowde[d] into, may not be made to reflect on the men in charge. The keen wholesome wit of Jim Jones in many a cow-camp, will be remembered as a rest from toil and hardship. While the crowded range was of course relieved by the departure of the H H T cattle, no one rejoiced in saying farewell to Jim Jones.

Most of the cattle interests of Bluff were pooled, and Fletcher B. Hammond and later Francis Nielson were appointed foremen. The Bluff sheep, in a co-op herd, occupied North Elk, and the country east of there in the summer time, the herding was done by Mexicans under the direction of J. B. Decker and L. H. Redd.

Before the boom, McLoyd and Graham, from Colorado, began excavating cliff dwellings in San Juan, and after disposing to good advantage of several big collectio[ns] of ancient relics, the business became quite popular. When the gold bubble burst half a dozen relic-digging outfits came into existence, going into most of the regions where the oborigines of San Juan had lived and built. One of thee collections is now in the Museum of Denver, another in the Deseret Museum in Salt Lake City, and still others in California and the Eastern States.

## CHAPTER XLIV

The stone meeting house and school building had no modifying influence on the contrary antics of the old San Juan. Instead of cowering from their august presence on the far side of the valley, the foxy old stream chuckled to itself, and began whittling away the section of the ditch known as The Flintlock. It cut its way on foot by foot until it struck the cliff at The Jump, obliterating the road and the ditch which ran side by side. Wagons had to wend their way out over the sand and rocks to the mouth of Recapture, and the flow of water through the ditch had to be postponed. All the positions of advantage which had been held by the ditch on that front were occupied by the river which roared the glory and might of its current and its quicksand.

Matters looked bilious indeed. A similar situation had been met ten years before when uncompromising resolution separated the cliff from the river by the famous and costly cribs.

But these are labors which hue so near to the limits of human courage, that they are never undertaken twice in a lifetime. The second generation were not yet ready to consider more cribs, and the situation grew darker as they studied it.

Someone proposed that a channel be cut in the rock for a part of the stream below The Jump; that a wheel be placed therein to raise the water into the now hopeless ditch; it looked like a good scheme, and some folks took courage, but others contended that the current in this artificial channel would be too dead to move a wheel, and that the river might not stay there long enough to justify the effor[t.]

The old question of the propriety of holding Bluff crawled out of its shallow grave and wormed its way into most of the homes in town. It had been settled once by special visits of the Church Authorities who had founded the Mission; and it had been settled again by the killing of the bill which proposed to make a Ute Reservation of San Juan. But now it had to be settled still again, and the situation was reported to the authorities of the Church, who promised another visit in the near future. To that visit and its outcome the people looked as eagerly forward as to that other visit ten years before, and numbers of them attended Conference in the east of the Stake, where the promised visitors expected to arrive from Salt Lake City.

Brigham Young, Jr., Anthon H. Lund and George Teasdale,of the Quorum of Apostles arrived at Bluff with the returning Conference folks, and met the people in the new meeting house. Everyone awaited eagerly the decision. Brigham Young had been with some of the men to look at the ditch, but had not betrayed his opinion of the situation.

When the other two had spoken, touching on the crisis in a general way, Brigham Young took from his pocket a book, and proceeded to ask each man individually whether he was willing to remain, writing in the book as he did so, the promise of each one to stay. There was scarcely a dissenting voice, though each one was given to understand that he could go or stay as he pleased.

The question thus settled, the people again felt assured that the Providence whic[h] found a settlement in San Juan, had still a purpose in maintaining that settlement. And again the situation had to be met at all cost, a ditch had to be devised and built, and men had to forget their discouragement and weariness while the renewed the war of defense with the river.

They blasted a way in the cliff face for the ditch along The Jump, and a precarious road was made on the bank thereof, with the restless river boiling by at uncomfortably close proximity. They built rods and rods of new ditch, scraping cla[y] and sand and roots, where a scraper would load no more than a pocketful of dirt a[t] a time. Peter Allan, with his surveying apparatus, had to ascertain how many thousands of an inch fall there would be in each fifty rods, for everybody knew the water, if it moved at all, would ooze lazily along in the new channel, fillin[g] it presto with sediment from bank to bank.

And they hauled loads and loads of brush and stone to rip-rap the raw edges of the eating sore where the river held sway. Forests of new cottonwoods were gnawed away, and rugged rocks of the ages shattered with dynamite to supply the hungry demand.

The story of the past repeated itself; water came in the ditch, the ditch broke, a crew was mobilized to repair the break, the water rose, the river fell, it went always in those places where it ought not to have gone. A superstitious people would surely have come to believe that The Old Nick lived in the murmuring stream inventing and directing its wonderful didoes.

It is disappointing to consider how little that ditch accomplished, even at its best. It produced an abundance of fruit for the little community, and it made possible the crops of corn and sorghum for rich batches of molasses every fall. But hay, though it grew rank, and sometimes yielded four cuttings to a season, supplied but a small percent of the demand.

Saddle horses had to hunt grass on the bench north of town, and milch cows browse[d] the greasewood along the river and in the nearby canyons, requiring to be hunted from their hiding places every evening.

The water of that ditch was ever of doubtful quality for house use, and the peopl[e] depended on ground wells, whose sparking draught,though slick enough to slide dow[n] any throat, was yet a hard combination, and had to be soaked in ashes for weeks before it became sufficiently pliable for washing clothes.

How the settlers could thrive on such unwholesome drinks, how they could live and rejoice in their hard work, and their poor log homes, which kept out neither falling rain nor flying sand, is a secret of the time which passed away with it. Another mystery of that period, is the forests of stink-weeds which grew ten feet high in the streets, supplying rich honey to the swarms of bees which were ever buzzing among them.

As for the multitude who came in the boom, they straggled away again. leaving the wilderness as quiet as they found it. Few indeed were the new settlers who joine[d] the fighting ranks at Bluff to stay and contend with the river. Among this small number is D. John Rogers, who married a Bluff girl, and has risked all his fortunes in San Juan ever since, entering with rough and ready willingness into every fight which the growth of the country has required of its people.

## CHAPTER XLV

San Juan County ranks in size with the small states of the Union and if its broad area were dotted as those states are with cities and towns, the combined areas of many places would hardly claim space for more than a paragraph in its history. But when in its rugged millions of acres there were but two small settlements

struggling for existence, those settlements rank in importance with two tiny lone human beings operating in the magnificent stretches of that solitude become prominent in the story, if only from his isolation from the throngs of mankind in more populous centers.

Like the boy who had been promised world-fame if he lived long enough, and then told his fame would come from his being the oldest man alive, Bluff was an important center, being the only town within a radius of fifty miles. Monticello was of equal moment for the same reason.

Institutions, businesses, industries, men and women, came through these peculiar conditions into the limelight and must be immortalized in the annals of San Juan where a more populous country would find no room for their names in its history.

Thus James B. Decker, though he was cow-man, sheep-man, farmer, and freighter; though he engaged in manual labor on the ditch and in his splendid orchard; and though he acted as one of the Board of Directors of San Juan Co-op, and figured as a valuable diplomat in dealing with the Indians, was yet the greatest choir leader and Sunday School Superintendent within fifty miles. The efforts he foun[d] time to make in these latter lines, in spite of other urgent duties, hold him prominently in the memory and esteem of his contemporaries, as a man who filled an important place in the development of the country.

Later to this work with the Bluff choir, came David Edwards. The melodies of hi[s] quiet practices and unpretentious singing schools are still echoing in many home[s] inspiring harmony and cheer to sweeten lives which would otherwise be intolerabl[y] strenuous. Not only with his voice and his tuning fork, but with his violin who animated strains transformed the old log meeting house into a ballroom of charming elegance.

Another figure prominent on that horizon, is "Joe" Nielson, who could pilot six horses and two wagons along any ordinary burro trail and who, before he became heavily interested in cattle and sheep, had the reputation of moving freight wit[h] wholesale ease and profit. Not only a freighter but a merchant, he opened the first private store in Bluff, and was known besides for his wholesale generosity to all comers.

For a number of years Miss Ann Bayles was the only clerk for the San Juan Co-op and will be remembered as a plucky woman who met and traded with Utes, Navajos and all kinds and classes who drifted though the country. As a side business she hunted with her shotgun for choice birds which she stuffed and mounted. But with her gun or without it, she was ever known to have what is worthy in man an[d] majestic in woman; courage. In cases of distressing sickness and accident she would proceed calmly to set limbs and minister wise relief.

In memory of that stage, too, John Allan the venerable old Scotch naturalist still lives like a pleasant dream. His unusual knowledge of birds, and his skill as a taxidermist deserved more favorable recognition that he ever found in his isolated retreat. Though he was stooped and gray and withered with age, his soul was attuned to the sweetest song of the blithest warbler among the green leaves. He knew its name and its habits, and he lived, not in the hard toil which claimed his strength, but in the world of songs and blossoms, he was always delighted to tell about them, though his listener was but a little child.

Just north of Bluff, in the mouth of Calf Canyon, was a reservoir, a place where waterbirds sometimes swam, where lithe frogs hid among the rocks on the bank; but more important still, where the young lads of Bluff splashed and ran and leaped for joy; free from all cumbering raiment of any kind whatsoever. Among them were Monticello's new attorney, F. B. Hammond; Monticello's ex-Bishop, Henry Wood; Blanding's banker, L. H. Redd, and other men now less prominent, but who were none-the-less in love with that "ole swimmin' hole." They claimed it was "up to Jense Nielson's neck," in the deepest place, for they could go down over their raised hand without touching bottom.

But beyond these things of the peaceful interior, stretched the sunburned wilderness in all directions, where horse-thieves, prospectors and doubtful creatures wended their way in pairs or alone among the hills.

"Old Moustache", the Navajo, declared that "yellow" was his horse brand, and he watched his chance to replevy every yellow horse in the country. His writ of replevin, however, was read to the horse after its pretended owner had gone out of sight. He made matters tremendously disagreeable until he happened to "replevy" a horse belonging to Paddy Soldiercoat, who, as we may remember in the case of Grasshopper, was the wrong man from whom to replevy horses. The angry Ute met the old horsethief in the store in Bluff and began at once to point out the impropriety of getting horses in that way. Moustache had nothing to say, and tried to keep a safe distance between him and the Ute, but Paddy hopped like a cat on to him, bore him to the ground and dragged him around in the street to his heart's content, jerking his long black locks left and right. He stomped, kicked and slapped him, and called him "skane spirit" and other terrible names in prefect Navajo eloquence. It is not known that Paddy received any reward for this good work, though he deserved to be mentioned.

In the solitude of Elk Mountain and White Canyon, a gray bearded hermit appeared every now and then, always alone, always armed to the teeth, and always in rags and dirt beyond description. He gave the name of Charley Frye, and while he lived, good horses, especially stock horses, disappeared in a very remarkable way No One suspected "old Charley", and not until he died somewhere in his silent retreats did it become known that he had been building up a band of horses. And in that band, with the plain brand of the true owner

barred out, were the missing broodmares bearing a huge A, to indicate they belonged to Charley Frye.

Another wanderer of the hills, though harmless and honorable so far as anyone knows, was an aged gray-beard known as "Old Rocky". He trapped beaver along the river, he dug for relics and for gold, and coaxed his burros over many a dangerous trail in the cliffs. But what the charm of his lonely life, or what banished him from the haunts of men, no one knows.

There was another hermit called "Posty"; but whether the name referred to his being deaf as a post, or to the fact that one of his legs was perfectly stiff, is not clear. Some of the cow-men started him to work on a small stream in upper Comb Wash at the mouth of Mule Creek, and in the lonesome silence of that remote region he built a ditch and raised juicy melons and other garden stuff.

There was generally one or more camps along the San Juan and the Colorado. Sometimes after a long stay, these solitary watchers floated on down the river, and other times, though it is supposed they went on down, there is nothing to prove what became of them.

All the harmless old hermits, innocent prospectors, and individual thieves who pilfered the flocks and herds of San Juan, who were faithful to their task of robbing camps and killing gentle claves, were never noticable circumstances to the systematic band of robbers, who extended their mysterious chain across the County in the early "nineties". They became known and notorious as the "Robbers Roost Gang."

Just who belonged to that slippery order was not known then, nor have their names ever been ascertained. It is certain they had confederates among the permanent residents, and it is certain too they refrained from sending a man back very soon over his newly traveled trail. The particulars of their exploits would fill volumes, but those particulars could not be collected from all the men who rode the range, though every man could supply a long list of interesting details. The gan[g] was kept posted as to the whereabouts of every cow-outfit, especially as to their horses and their unprotected camp supplies.

The promptness and accuracy with which they could appear from the seemingly dead solitude, to nail a horse as soon as its owner rode safely out of sight, indicate[s] their secret service was more far-reaching and effectual than was generally supposed.

It was not uncommon in those days, when a man had an extra good horse, for someone to warn him he better turn it in a good trade before it went without being traded at all. More than one such horse went quietly away never to be heard of again. Every cowpuncher knew this unsavory element skulked in the breaks and the shadows, and when he found a fresh shod track crossing the country, or a

camp hidden away among the rocks, he knew it might not be healthy for him to follow the track or make too much investigation. And sometimes when he happened to meet men unexpectedly, and they motioned for him to go out from the trail around them, he knew he better take the hint and go out around. Charles B. Land and Company happened on such a meeting in Dry Wash, and in spite of the precipitous nature of the country on each side of the trail, they went around as directed.

Probably the biggest single haul the roosters ever made in the County, was from Twin Spring, on the Elk Mountain, where the H H T outfit and the Scorup Brothers had their headquarters. Their horses and camp supplies were such they had preserved special vigil all summer, and felt sure no one knew enough about their affairs to take advantage of a few days absence in the fall. But when they returned after the expiration of those few days, the gang had pounced on their defenseless camp and departed with several hundred dollars worth of choice horses and supplies.

They made hurried investigations and scoured the country for tracks, but a dashing thunderstorm came up and obliterated all marks from the dust. Still bent on catching the thieves, Jim Jones and Jim Scorup rode madly over the trails towards Brown's Bottom, Dandy Crossing, Red Canyon and other places to where the Colorado could be crossed, but no clue could they find of the mysterious outfit. Its disappearance seemed to be as inexplicable as its knowledge of when and where to strike for a rich haul. What the two Jim's would have done had they once scented that trail is an attractive subject of speculation for all who knew them.

But the robbers of Twin Springs, as subsequent events proved, ran straight for Clay Hill and crossed the Colorado at Hall's old ferry on a raft of their own construction. In their hurry to reach the west side they left one horse which Monroe Redd found there the following spring, and returned it to Jim Jones.

In spite of the reduced herds of the Bluff people when they first arrived on the San Juan, and in spite of the dozen different elements which plundered the range regularly, they found the country filling up with cattle and horses. The opening of the Elk Mountain and the coming of the Texas herd resulted, before fences could be built, and before anyone was aware, in wild horses and cattle in many a rough quarter.

The up-to-date cow-hand had to be equipped with dashing horse, strong saddle, long rope and heavy chaps, ready to "bust pinions" and plunge down the roughest mountain side at the heels of a retreating steer. Before the riding force completed their preparation to lasso and drag these wild ones back from their resorts among the rocks and trees, those rocks and trees became lousy with mavericks and with vicious old steers as big as elephants. More than one splendid horse had his entrails gored out by them, and for years every departing

herd contained a decreasing percent of aged mossbacks with huge boney frames and ponderous corkscrew horns.

Some of these wild horses sprang from rather choice stock, especially the Redd band which ranged around Wooden Shoes and on Deer Flat. Other parts of the range, however, were infested largely with diminutive cayuses of Navajo ancestry, and by their prolific tendencies they gradually reduced the once high price of horses. During the descent in values, L. H. Redd bought a hundred head of horses of Hanso[n] Bayles for four hundred dollars. And the prices dropped lower still, until fairly respectable mustangs changed hands in Bluff for a consideration of fifty cents.

However hard it may be to imagine them dropping still lower in price, they droppe[d] and dropped again, going indefinitely below zero. A force of fifteen or twenty men and boys armed with guns of large calibre, and mounted on good horses, began a clean-up of the range by rounding up the benches on each side of Cottonwood Was[h.] Oh, what a slaughter! The snorting little broomtails, mares, colts, and all wer[e] cut off from every retreat, crowded down on the rocky points and shot as long as they were seen to kick.

Though it was necessary too, to kill some of the wildest horses in the Wooden Sho[e] region, the best of them were pursued in thrilling relay races and compelled to do service for men. When a few men and book undertook to corral a fine brown stallion belonging to Samuel Wood, the chase finally attracted the whole crew of the Bluff pool. The reeking creature went unwittingly into Peavine Corral, but when he found himself ensnared with two lasso ropes, he bounded over the log fenc[e] and left a cloud of dust reaching to Deer Flat. The trail of those ropes was followed until the ropes wore out, and the hunt became a thing of days and weeks, but the brown horse learned at last how to behave under the saddle and in the collar.