History of San Juan County
Chapter LI-LV, 1894-1913
By Albert R. Lyman, 1918

CHAPTER LI

The Utes in San Juan and the problems arising from the never ending presence, forms an essential element of this account. Their stay in the country was in defiance of Uncle Sam, who had set apart for them a Reservation in Colorado, and ordered them to make their home there. But for reasons both imaginary and real, the Utes despised that Reservation and its management, and declared their intentio[n] of staying where they were. Mancos Jim and his fathers had slept in Allan Canyon for many generations, and he was resolved to lay his bones with theirs. Poke, Posey and other petty chieftains referred with scorn to the order to move, saying they would fare alright without the advantages of that Reservation.

Every semi-occasionally the question of moving them was agitated but all these agitations went down more tamely than they came up, and the Utes remained. In the early nineties John Q. Cannon and others representing the state of Utah, visited San Juan to investigate and settle the question. They got somewhat of a count on the offending red men, heard the complaints of the settlers, and returned to Salt Lake City with thrilling accounts to the papers of the country and its Indians, al[l] of which made no difference to said Indians. They remained in the country, realizing they had scored a victory over the proposition to handle them.

More than ten years later when Johnny Benlow and some of his fellow braves, drove the Monticello cowboys at the point of their guns from the winter range in Montezuma Canyon, another agitation resulted in another investigation and A. W. Ivins was sent to represent the Governor of Utah at a gathering of whites and Indians at Monticello. The cause of the settlers and the wrongs they suffered were again rehearsed, all to no purpose. The thing died tamely out, leaving the Utes to cheris[h] the country and make themselves even more welcome to its beef, its mutton, and every other available thing exposed to their thieving grasp.

Other causes of complaint and investigation, some of which may appear in this account, resulted in absolutely nothing. Mention of these things, past or future, produced nausea and disgust in the minds of the people.

Yet the builders of San Juan did have faith in themselves, faith in their own diplomacy, their own sand to maintain the country against its enemies within and its indifferent protectors without. And the sand, without it a man could no more deal successfully with Indians, than a tenderfoot could handle wild cattle, or a college-bred man could navigate a bucking horse.

Haskel was released in 1893 to follow his family to San Louis Valley, but he had been with the people sufficiently long to graduate a number of worthy proteges in

Utecraft and Navajocraft, among them, Kumen Jones. In was necessary to trade with the Indians, to employ them every now and then, to preach to them decency and good behavior, and at the same time to discipline them sternly when their behavior became intolerable. Even the little community at Bluff could administer this discipline by virtue of a knowledge of two facts: the first, An Indian will take with good grace a severe whipping when he is caught in the overt act. The second, An Indian imagines silence to mean hidden strength.

Jimmy Decker found Havane and John Soldiercoat riding two horses belonging to Bluff and he whipped them both with a hardtwist rope until Havane crawled up in an ironwood bush and cried and John vomited as he ran.

The Indian imagination is illustrated in the case of George Ute, who came to Plat[te] Lyman pretending to do a very kindly act by telling him of five head of cattle he had found in the remote depths of Bull Valley. But it happened that Platte Lyman had just been there, had found the five head in questions and the carcass of a sixth which had been shot and butchered by a lone Ute and the remains buried in the sand. When George finished his story of the cattle, marking in a map on the ground just where he saw them, and giving an abundance of details, and when he looked up for the grateful word, or possibly the more grateful sack of flour, Platte Lyman pointed with a stick to a certain place on the map saying, "right here you killed my cow and buried her in the sand." George all but fainted as if a spirit had spoken.

Peach orchards and melon patches were raided often, and woe to the man or woman who tried to fasten the guilt thereof on the wrong person. However great the theft, when wrongly accused he would put up a stiff protest. John Soldiercoat was once arrested in Bluff, and his brother Paddy came stalking with furious dignity through Hanse Bayles' house, not that he cared for John who might be guilty, so far as he knew, but his own gun was perfectly innocent, and if had been arrested with his kid brother. He demanded that gun at once, threatening to fire Bayles haystack and do a lot of other things by way of reprisal if the unoffending rifle was not released at once from custody and it was thought good policy to release it[.]

In spite of these things, and in spite of the desire in the heart of the whites to see their red brethren depart in peace for the Reservation in Colorado, they cherished no hatred for these red brethren. Among them were special friends and acquaintances who in some strange way had awakened a rude emotion of endearment. There was old Peeage, Paddy's Grandmother, noted for saying often, "mucho tire", who, when she was really tired to death, received burial at the hands of the Bluff folks in a grave on the hill.

There was old Brokenarm who raised her motherless granddaughter from tender infancy by feeding her food carefully masticated in her own worn teeth. She named the little orphan, Maudy, and the ready growth of little Maudy under these

peculiar circumstances, became a matter of special interest to the whites, softening their hearts to some intangible quality of tenderness in the uncouth old lady.

And there was Baldy's old squaw whose principal article of diet was the milk of two female dogs she kept for that purpose.

There was Mike, wide-mouthed and insolent, there was Cheerpoots, with the loathe-some warts on his hands, there was Whiskers, father of Biglipped Jim, and there was a whole snarl of saucy young bucks and inveterate old thieves, whose ignorance and visious training should always be taken into account before passing judgment.

To be in their camps in the hills and mountains, to nibble their dry hunks of unsalted venison, to hear them sing and see them dance, to watch them milk their goats and trail the wild buckskin among tangles of oak and quaking-asp, was somehow to cherish for them a strong sympathy akin to love. This account is sure to be colored more or less with such a sympathy, in spite of those who fail to relish as they read.

And there was old Frank, stooped and slow and apparently harmless, who was yet the savage executioner of any bad medicine-man. He is said to have helped in the killing of Bridger Jack, mentioned elsewhere in these pages, and he also has the name of killing Kane, a fine young Indian who had married Poke's daughter. The killing was pulled off near Verdure, and Kane was shot though again and again, as is customary in such cases, dragged to a dry wash and covered with stones and trash. His young wife, then in a delicate condition, appealed to her father, who, though he resolved to seek revenge, eventually agreed with the medicine-man who advised him to forget it.

And then there was Posey, always a surly little fice, though he grew more bold and ugly as he advanced in years. He seemed to enjoy being always in hot water, and whether it was a quarrel with some of the little boys in Bluff, or whether he was fleeing pell mell from Victor Gallegos, whom he had threatened to shoot for having killed a rattle snake, it was all real life to the wormy little Posey.

In the spring of 190 he stole a brown mare of A. R. Lyman, who found his boy riding said mare on Long Point of Elk Mountain. But Lyman had a herd of cattle on his hands and he was sore pressed for help to move them. Posey was persuaded to give that help, and the mare was not mentioned until five days later when the cattle reached their destination on Recapture Creek. Mention of it threw Posey into a rage, and departing with his wages over the hills, he promptly sold the mare to the Navajos, who, seeming not to have been informed as to her true status, brought her to town where was was replevied. The affair might have been forgotten right there as but one of Posey's strange didoes, but when the

Navajos came on to him for the price of that mare, he took another fit, and bringing another of the said Lyman horses into town, offered it boldly for sale. It too was replevied with very little ceremony.

Notwithstanding this provoking situation, Kumen Jones and others advised against a complaint and a prosecution, and matters were given a chance to grow quiet, whic[h] chance was not at all gratifying to Posey. He helped himself insolently to gardens and orchards, he spoke with coarse impudence to defenseless women, and threatened to do all kinds of brave things to A. R. Lyman in particular, and to everybody else in general, until those who advised against prosecution, reversed their decision.

A complaint was therefore sworn out before Justice Peter Allan, and a warrant of arrest placed in the hands of Deputy Sheriff Arthur Wood. Word was sent to Posey to come down to town from his wickiup on the hill, but he refused. The Sheriff then took a dozen men, no more than three or four of them had guns, and proceeded to the wickiup to talk it over there. The talk was very formal and included little more than the reading of the warrant before Posey's summer villa became a veritable rough house, and a tangle of men fell out through one of its walls with the struggling, cursing landlord squarely beneath them. Mrs. Posey snatched a gun, only to have it wrenched from her brown fingers. In the melee one shot was fired, only none seems yet to know anything about who fired it. The Utes from the other wickiups ran frantically about, but the boys from town prevented their interference. Nick Lovis was the lucky man who finally clicked the handcuffs on the Ute's writhing wrists, and Mr. and Mrs. Posey were marched down to town for a preliminary hearing.

CHAPTER LII

Three days in excitement and suspense, Posey's case awaited the coming of the prosecuting attorney from Monticello and at the end of that time he sent word authorizing A. R. Lyman to act in his place. Frank H. Hyde conducted the defense, and court was called in the school house before Justice Peter Allan. A snarl of Utes waited eagerly in the room, in the doorways and at the gate outside to know what the decision would be. When told Posey was bound over to appear in the District Court, they stampeded with a yell for their wickiups where squaws and papooses ran crying from place to place, and twenty minutes later they had all disappeared, packs, horses, dogs, and all in the wilderness.

But Posey could not be taken for safe-keeping to the jail in Monticello, it was known that the Utes had prepared to waylay any company who should undertake to move him thither. He waited sullenly under his guard until after a conference with some of his kinsmen who came for that purpose, after which he asked permission to swim in the river, complaining that his body was in an unsanitary condition. In spite of the well known fact that the old thief had never worried his head before about matters of sanitation, his request was granted, he led the way

to the river and plunged in, Jimmy Decker was entrusted at that time with th[e] responsibility of caring for this model of cleanliness, but when the old fellow failed to come duly to the surface, Jimmy became alarmed for his safety. When hi[s] black head did appear again among the waves, he was far down the stream in shallo[w] water, and he broke like a brown cupid for the opposite bank. His guard fired three shots at the retreating figure, but in the first underbrush Posey found friends awaiting him with horses, and they beat a hast retreat into the Navajo Reservation.

The posse which followed as soon as possible, came back telling of tracks which were lost in the maze of trails over the sand hills. The next tidings were from A. R. Lyman's cattle range, from which Posey sent word that he was waiting to fee[d] the prosecuting attorney to the coyotes as soon as he made another trip among his cattle. In that region and around Navajo Mountain he hid two or three years, but constant fear of being caught again preyed on his nerves until he sent a humble prayer for permission to return, and getting no hostile answer he came staggering back. His haggard face proved he had really had a hard time, and no one cared to see the case renewed against him.

Quite different to the fice-like Posey, was his brother-in-law, the wood-like Pok[e] a sombre still figure, but a bad element to meet in a fuss. Poke with others hun[g] around the new settlement on White Mesa, putting his horses by stealth in the fie[ld] late at night and removing them therefrom before the following morning. One of his horses was found in the darkness by A. R. Lyman who, taking it out, tied it to a tree, and seeing a Ute near sent word to the owner of the horse, whoever he might be, to get the pony and take it away. Poke's boy, since notorious as Tsenegat, came for the horse, but when he attempted to put it again in the field, Lyma[n] who still watched, took it from him and tied it again to the tree, leaving the angry young Ute to go muttering off to camp. The owner of the field kept watch and discovered the young Ute in half and hour trying again to put the pony in thro[ugh] the gate, whereupon he marched the cayuse and its master up the street near to where the new school house now stands. Ay this place they came in the darkness o[n] to Poke himself, and the boy drew a big gun from under his long blanket, and thre[w] a cartridge into place from the magazine thereof. He held the muzzle of that gun within sniffing distance of Lyman's nose, while he and his father proceeded in censored words of the Mormon, Ute, Navajo and Mexican language to make their hearer acquainted with their personal estimate of him, and their plans for his di[s]position. His wife and mother, listening just inside the fence, thought somethin[g] mighty unpleasant was about to happen, but the man looking down the dark void of that gun barrel, knew he was being bluffed by two dispicable cowards. When they drew their remarks to a close, for it be known they found in the four languages only a dozen words at all adequate to the occasion, they took that yellow cayuse away towards the field, where they may have pastured him until morning, for the white women would consent to no more interference in the red men's affairs that night.

Next morning, accompanied by his uncle, Walter C. Lyman, the victim of the troubl[e] went to the camp to talk it over. Poke rode out of the camp as they approached, and his boy, crawled back into a wickiup, refused to say a word. Mancos Jim, ho[w]ever, said in substance that the Utes were crazy, and that he was ashamed of thei[r] actions.

From the camp, Poke's boy followed the two white men back to the house, where he sat sullenly on a log amusing himself be leveling his gun at the window and at different objects in the yard. He may have figured it out that the owner of that house with his wife and baby would have to curb his emotions however wrathy they might become. His only respite was to ride to Monticello and swear out a complai[nt] and have a warrant issued for the arrest of Poke;s boy. It is hardly necessary to add, that warrant was never served.

A Ute agent named Spear, from the Reservation and a special U. S. Indian Agent, named Chubbuck, from Missouri, came to White Mesa and took a long string of evidence in the case of young Poke, but that investigation was strictly a perfunctory performance, amounting like other similar efforts to worse than nothing. It paved the way for this outlaw band to cause greater trouble still, amounting as we shal[l] see, in needless loss of life.

This account includes less than a hundredth part of similar fracases with Utes in San Juan, but they were never recorded, and are not accessible. And yet the Utes furnished only a part of this entertainment, for the Navajos were never sitting peacefully with folded hands. In a former chapter, reference was made to the bleaching skulls of milch cows found in the brush along the river bank, and of the Navajo custom of using the Sabbath as a safe day for their stealing. The butchery of milch cows and newly-born calves became so frequent that people turning cattle on the range, turned them away from the river. To correct the resultant scarcity, the Navajos began driving them back, one Sunday afternoon one of them was found taking a bunch from The Pond, to the mouth of Recapture Creek.

It was decided that prosecution of the first clear case would be strictly in orde[r] and when Joe Nielson and Samuel Wood missed a cow from one of the bottoms above town, they began an investigation, going boldly into the hogans nearby in search of evidence. Even into the hogan of Nukki Azay they went without invitation. "Old Nukki", was supposed to be as honest as he looked, and as free from wron[g] doing as his sanctimonious old mug indicated. But in his home they found fresh beef, and followed the clue they discovered tracks and evidence to warrant legal procedure. They drove him down the road ahead of them to town, swore out a complaint and brought the matter up for preliminary hearing. To act as prosecutor on that case, to consider all the conclusive evidence, and then see the long-face[d] Nukki dismissed and exonerated, is to conclude that somebody was struck with cold feet.

No doubt the Navajos were accused of stealing things which they failed in spite of their efforts to get, but as against this there is the probability they got many things of which they were never suspected. They found their way into the stores and into private cellars and they had a prevailing weakness for knowing just where and when to find a well loaded peach tree and when its fruit was just right for transportation.

One Bluff woman, knowing the superstitious horror with which Navajos regard snake[s] mounted the skin of a good sized specimen supplying it with life-size eyes and al[l] the wiley personality of its famous ancestor in the Garden of Eden, and then placed it in the sand near her cellar door. No thieving Navajo ventured through that doorway while the serpent maintained its vigil.

But no charm was ever devised to keep these red people from plundering the range when they became hungry for beef. Worse still, they would bring with them their hungry flocks of sheep and goats, skinning the hills of every green leaf, and frightening the cattle clear out of the country. The outfits of Tom Holiday and Hoskaniny were caught redhanded at this beef game, but well established precedent had calmed all fears they might have had of any prosecution. They could be frightened or induced to hurry back across the river with their sheep, they knew the inability of the whites to patrol the whole length of that crooked stream, they knew that in a few days or hours they could return in safety to the north side.

They too had bad medicine men whom they hunted to the death, and more than once these unfortunate doctors fled into exile in the domain of the whites. In spite of the popular craze among all of them for liquor, the rash acts of the intoxicate Navajo were not excusable by his fellows.

It is reported that Pishleki arrived in a drunken state at his brother's camp above Bluff and when, in his drunken condition, he acted improperly towards his brother's squaw, they threw him on a log and chopped off his head with an ax. Tha[t] report was not definitely confirmed, but Pishleki was not seen again in Bluff. By those who knew him he is remembered as a large genial man of very pleasing appearance, and wholly undeserving of the fate brought on him by his drunken condition caused from the bad medicine of the white man.

Pahlilly, of whom favorable mention was made about the time of the trouble at Hall Ferry, was unwise enough twenty-three years later, to lead his sons and some of hi[s] friends in a fight against certain government regulations made at Ship Rock. He was met at the mouth of Montezuma Creek by a few soldiers who dispersed his following and took him prisoner to the agency. It seems that the stern realities of confinement came nearly breaking the old man's heart, and being convinced of his sincere repentance, they set him free.

Another Navajo affair happening in San Juan, was the case of Zohnee, a youth who murdered a man named Charley Fritz in order to rob a store near Four Corners. The preliminaries of his case came up before officials in Bluff, after which it was handled by the Federal Authorities, and the young Navajo was sent to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for ten years.

Nothing in these chapters must be construed to mean that the people of San Juan have any anitpathy for the Indians. Among the old settlers there are plenty of me[n] who would champion the cause of the red men to the last ditch, but those settlers know that through the sticky sentimentality of Indian Right Societies, and other societies, who know less about Indians than the ordinary Ute about Volapuck, the red men like spoiled children in too many cases have been led to believe themselve[s] beyond the law. While they have been handled roughly, possible too roughly at times, they have suffered the injustice of being encouraged in the wrong idea, where it would have been vastly better for all concerned if they had been made to know from the beginning that the law is to protect the rights of all men, whether white or red.

CHAPTER LIII

Every remote corner of San Juan has its individual thrill and its captivating romance, besides the lure of its solitudes or its scenery. Many a lively incident is crowded out of these pages and others equally charming have never yet been rescued from their steady march to the grave. Start from any given place to make a tour of the country, and each gulch and hill and mesa has its story to tell, stories of Indians and of cowboys, freaks of nature and of humanity, mysterious tracks, strange animals, and unearthly sounds for which mankind have a pronounced weakness to listen or read.

At Polly's Spring are the fossil remains of a prehistoric monster as long as a modern battleship; and up on the Montezuma Canyon stands the cedar to which a boy was found hanging by his neck, where someone has suspended him from a limb with a pair of bridle reins. The mystery of this murder has never yet been unraveled, fo[r] all that the Sheriff resolved to pry it open and make an arrest.

Not far from the sight of this evil tree is the place where Jim Vijil and George Perkins met on a little hill, and racing each other pale as death and wrathy as Old Nick, settled once and for all the dispute between cattle and sheep for a certain section.

At the mouth of Bull Dog a man who married his sister, took refuge from the law forbidding such marriage. The two were protected by John Scott, who, first with a revolver and then with a shotgun, tried to bluff Sheriff Willard Butt out of marching the wrongly married man away to court, but in each case with the Sheriff threat to "cut you right square in two with this gun," John dropped his weapons as if they were hot, and departed with his man.

At the head of Dry Wash is the crag and the dark cliff where Matias, armed with an ax, met and slew a mountain lion. Farther west are the canyon retreats where "Kid Jackson" hid safely a long time from the eager reach of the law; and the mouth of Allan Canyon is still famous as the place where Mancos Jim halted a bunc[h] of steers, refused flatly to let them pass, and keeping a big outfit waiting impatiently to be on their way. When the old Ute had carried this business about far enough, Jim Jones drew his Winchester from its scabbard, threw a cartridge int[o] it and said in very impressive tones, "Get out of the way you black --- of a ---- before I blow your brains out," at which Mancos made a strategic withdrawal, and the herd moved on.

From another corner of the County comes a story calling for a little more attenti[on] to detail. It deals with Charley Botha, the Dutchman, who killed his child-wife, and a man named William Tibbets. Botha and his sixteen-year-old wife, lived east of LaSal Mountains near Paradox in a dugout known as "hole in the wall." But the girl, dissatisfied with her surroundings and her husband, started afoot to return to her mother's home and halted, footsore and weary at the cabin of William Tibbets for food and rest. On learning of her departure, Charley flew into a rage, obtained a gun from somewhere, and overtook her in the evening when she had stop pod to rest. Refusing to hear anything but the mad dictates of his wild rage, he shot "Little May" in the back, then killed the man who had befriended her. An old gentleman named Rose, who was living with Tibbets, called for help from neighboring ranches, and the wounded girl was carried to the porch where she tore her hair in terrible agony until late in the evening, when she died.

Both's case came up in August term of court at Monticello, 1902, before Judge Johnson, and he was sentenced to be shot. This sentence was later changed to lif[e] imprisonment, and more recent reports say that Dutch Charlie has been released to return to Germany.

A place and an industry not yet mentioned in this account, is the Cunningham Ranch at the southern base of the LaSal Mountain. Cunningham was not the origina[l] locator, but coming in the "eighties" from the east, he sought employment at the little ranch, and later, in connection with a Mr. Carpenter, became its owner. Being favorably located between the summer range of the LaSal, and the winter range of Dry Valley, they built up large herds of sheep and cattle, and their ranch became the principal place in the northern end of the County.

Southwest of LaSal, at Indian Creek, where President Hammond once undertood to establish a settlement, Dave Goudelock and others developed a long string of valuable ranches in connection with splendid herds of cattle, which summered on North Elk, and wintered the regions north and west. Dave Cooper and V. P. Martin, who had tended big cattle interests in Dark Canyon since the time of

Dutch and Day, sold their Dark Canyon property to L. H. Redd and sons, and uniting with the Indian Creek interests, formed a very strong company.

Mention has been made before of the Carlisle ranch, six miles north of Monticello which also ranked high in value and possessed herds of cattle and sheep. The dispute over the water between this ranch and the people of Monticello was finall[y] settled by an agreement which stipulated that the water should be divided equally on condition that the people of the town should build a reservoir dam of certain dimensions for the ranch. The building of that dam ended the trouble.

Thus far the drouth and its purifying influence on the human element around Monticello, after the clearing away of clouds which hung over their water rights, after the building of their grist mill and the departure of their gun men, the little town began to enter on an era of growth which was destined to make it one of the important centers of the state for hay, grain and livestock.

Somehow, ever since that boom in the early "eighties", the idea persisted that in the isolated region of San Juan great wealth of some sort lay hidden, and this idea exploded with a boom when word went out that petroleum oil had been found under the Barton range, fifteen miles west of Bluff. A man named Goodridge had been interested in the oil sands along the river near Mexican Hat, and during fou[r] or five years he had built roads, improved machinery and finally penetrated the dry bowels of the earth to a strata of sand from which he brought up crude oil. Reports of this discovery sent a wave of excitement in every direction, and a rus[h] was made to stake claims in adjacent regions. Oil companies galore sprung up like mushrooms into existence, and some of those companies, as subsequent events prove[d] had behind them about as much cash as may be expected in the ordinary mushroom. Mexican Hat became quite a center, a town was surveyed, a store opened, and a Pos[t] Office authorized for weekly delivery of mail. It was planned to pump water up from the river to the dry town, pipes for that system were ordered and freighted in are lying there still in a rusty heap.

The necessity arising from this rush, opened a wagon road down the supposed impossible bluff at Navajo Trail into Comb Wash, at least it was called a road, and will perhaps continue by that name though it becomes impassable to the most acrobatic burro that ever carried a pack. The necessity of that day also resulted in a steel bridge over the San Juan at Mexican Hat, and though that bridge was carried away by a flood, another one stands in its place.

That boom labored hopefully and pantingly onward with drills of different sizes, and put them in operation north and south of the river. A motly population arrived from everywhere, and the eagerness of every man to be first on the best claim sometimes brought them into violent clash with each other.

That oil boom, like the gold boom twelve years earlier, brought into the country men bad and good. Among the latter class, was B. D. Harsh, thin and doubtful, conceived the idea of putting an idle machine to work drilling for artesian water near Bluff. His scheme seemed visionary when first presented to the people of Bluff, but he persuaded them to undertake it, and as he pierced the mysterious formation beneath them, it became apparent his theory was correct. He struck suc[h] an abundance of perfect flowering water, that the people piped it at once into thei[r] houses, and ever since have loathed the very thought of the brackish liquid they used to drink. The water from their wells as quite sufficient for the orchards and gardens, relieving them to some extent of keeping up that troublesome ditch. About this time, too, they took a ditch out of Cottonwood Wash, covering a few acres of lucerne, and relieving the ditch question still more.

CHAPTER LIV

During that spring and summer of 1905, the little town on White Mesa grew to include six families, but two of them moved away before autumn, and the first winte[r] passed with a slim population. White Mesa was still unpopular in San Juan, thoug[h] its merits were winning fame for it in other places.

All the same the settlement had been born to live, not to die, and certain facts accomplished in its sagebrush fields leaped over the barrier of prejudice in the County, to find lodgment in the consideration of home seekers far away. A watermelon seed, dropped on the wild ground below where the town was to be, had develo[p]ed a big vine bearing five melons, two of which were ripe when two horsemen happened to find it. The splendid size and wholesome flavor of those melons, would hardly permit of any adverse argument.

In that summer of 1905, fine melons were raised without irrigation on land which had been broken in April; and wheat which had been planted in ponderous dry clods the previous fall, produced a paying crop. These facts began working on that barrier of antipathy like tropical warmth on an ice bank. Still that bank was hard and slow to melt.

One man who is in the lead on White Mesa today, declared of the first stock he took in the ditch, that it would be a poor investment, that he expected from it small returns or no returns at all, and that he never would have made the investment but for his respect to the men who solicited his help. In spite of all this the capital of that investment has increased in value over four hundred per cent, and has been profitable from every angle.

Jense P. Nielson had a field of ten or twelve acres of corn at the mouth of Recapture on the San Juan, and when he was asked to buy stock in the White Mesa Canal, he affirmed that he wouldn't give his own corn patch for all of White Mesa from end to end. The San Juan, however, annexed that corn patch and took it away to the Gulf of California, and then Jense, like another sensible man,

made straig[ht] for White Mesa and developed a field for which it is not likely they would accep[t] thirty thousand dollars.

In the early days of the town on White Mesa, Billy McCandles, a young man from Texas, claimed a stretch of sagebrush southeast of town, and buying a grubbing hoe began making a clearing. While he worked and sweat, a cow-man from Bluff appeared above the rim of Recapture, and riding up the new-comer called out, "Wha[t] the ---- you think you're going to do with the desert?"

"Why, Walter Lyman tells me I can raise lucerne here," stammered McCandles in surprise.

"Well, Walter Lyman's as crazy as any bedbug that ever crawled," said the cow-man pointing out what he thought was conclusive proof that a lucerne patch there was impossibility.

Billy threw down his how and departed in discouragement for some more promising region. His sagebrush stretch and the little clearing awaited a new claiment, but the wait was not long before another man arrived who was simple enough to believe that lucerne theory, and that ground has been yielding fine crops of hay the last four or five years.

As stated in a former chapter, the Grayson Post Office, which had been authorize[d] at L. C. Ranch, was moved on the mesa three or four miles north of the proposed town, and in the late spring or early summer of 1905, it was moved to the town itself. Thus the place became Grayson.

The public meetings were held in private homes or private tents though when Hans[e] Bogh brought his big log room down from the upper camp, it became the main gathe[r]ing place until the famous meeting tent was stretched, boarded up, floored and opened to the Grayson public. Under that canvas roof, which was flapped and sha[k]en by the chilly winds outside, the public met to sing, to pray, to preach and even to dance. A. R. Lyman was the first, and for a long time the only fiddler, and that his music did not breed despair in the minds of the settlers, is anothe[r] proof of their unfaltering determination to remain.

Under that faded canvas roof, Apostles Francis M. Lyman and George A. Smith met the settlers in a crowded meeting and promised them the necessary rains would fall that the country would develop and fill with settlers, and that the new settlemen[t] would become a desirable place to live.

The little community at Grayson was organized into a Branch of the Bluff Ward, wi[th] Joseph A. Lyman as Presiding Elder, H. C. Bogh became the Superintendent of a gro[w]ing Sunday School, and there was also a Young Men's and Young Women's Association, always well attended.

A store, carrying General merchandise, and owned by Hanson Bayles and A. R. Lyman was opened by the latter in the fall of 1906. It stood on the corner west of wh[at] is now the school house, and though not a pretentious building, it became a favorite loafing resort of the Utes. The white settlers loafed neither there nor anywhere else, and the business of the store did not justify the continuous presence of a clerk.

A school of all the elementary grades was opened that fall in the meeting-tent with Miss Lucretia Lyman as teacher. There were days in the following winter whe[n] the tent could not be made sufficiently warm for the children, and other days whe[n] heavy snows caved in the canvas roof, compelling the school to await repairs.

D. John Rogers, William J. Nix and Edward F. Thompson were called by the Presiden[t] of the Stake to live in the new settlement, and all three came with their familie[s] as soon as they could prepare a temporary home. Later on, Peter Allan and Wayne H. Redd were also called to make their homes in Grayson.

In the fall of 1907, a great improvement was made on the road between the new town and Monticello, when the route was changed to cross Devil Canyon and Long Canyon three or four miles nearer the mountain, both shortening the distance and making travel more easy. This proposition, like others of a similar nature, met with protest from the unprogressive element, who predicted that snows would block the road from December to April. Eleven years have proved them false prophets.

In that fall of 1907, the death of A. R. Lyman's infant son, Mead, necessitated the choosing of a place for a graveyard for Grayson. While the little body await[ed] burial, a committee rode over the hills and fields near town and selected a spot among the thick trees near the road to Monticello. Since then, the place has bee[n] cleared and the little pioneer was been followed to his rest by both youth and prime, the aged patriarch, and people from many walks of life, giving the cemeter[y] quite a size.

In that year, the Grayson Branch became a regular Ward, with Hanson Bayles as Bishop, and D. J. Rogers and Hanse Bogh as Counselors. The new Bishop moved up at once from his fine home in Bluff, and took up his abode in what is now his granar[y.]

Just how settlers began pouring into the new town, so recently brought into humbl[e] existence in the sagebrush waste, is difficult to explain. Ray Young came over from New Mexico to haul logs, and on his recommendations, his brothers, William and Thomas came over to see the place, and later came his uncle, Thomas M. Carrol[l] from Pecheco, Mexico. Mr. Carroll decided rather promptly to go on, and started away with a freight outfit, but something happened to stop him before he got out of town. Twice after that, he started away, only to

be stopped again by some unforeseen accident, and he failed to get away at all. In response to his accounts of the place, his sister and her husband, Arvel Porter came to settle, and Porter had a long string of kinsmen who began to follow him. The numerous Carrolls wer[e] also struck with the San Juan fever, and coming with their wives and their husbands, they began pulling a doze different families towards White Mesa, who in turn pulled other families,and the stream of new arrivals increased continually. Johnson's, Kartchner's, and Lako's, Redd's, Black's, and Brown's came from old Mexico, and people moved up from Bluff until Grayson assumed the appearance of an ant bed whose inhabitants were crawling about in every direction. The wall of prejudice had melted away, and the whole outside were coming to us like a flood.

CHAPTER LV

It is difficult to give the events of San Juan in chronological order, even if they were readily accessible. They happened in widely separated districts, often bearing no relationship to each other, and sometimes deserving no notice until they were ripe, though they may have been quietly maturing for years.

The rapid development of the fields on White Mesa was made possible by the ready help of Utes and Navajos, mainly Utes, however, who grubbed brush and trees from hundreds of acres of wild land. The black volume of smoke from their fires up and down the country, was made visible from afar as a section suddenly stimulated to active life.

While the infant town was still but a doubtful display of tents and wagon-covers, while its future citizens were still camped with their baled hay under spreading cedars, the Utes were given distinctly to understand that their inveterate habit of gambling did not comport with the dignity of the place, and would not be tolerated. Their blanket of cards, cartridges, trinkets and cash was upset where they squatted around it in the street, and gathering up their trumery, they have since refrained from poker and similar games within the growing limits of the town.

The coming of Bishop Bayles to the new Ward, bred dissatisfaction with the old meeting tent, for all that it had been supplemented with another tent into which it opened. Plans were formulated for the building of a meeting house, a real frame house, lined with adobes. Its foundation looked huge indeed, and predictions were freely made by residents and transients alike that it would be unnecessarily large, and too much of an undertaking for the small community. Yet when it was ready for dedication, that community jammed it full, and in a few months they found it entirely too small.

Long before the completion of the meeting house, the swarm of school children could not be accommodated in the tents, and the upper grades met in the back room of the Co-op store. The unexpected coming of so many children made it

impossible to provide books, seats and other accommodations, and besides using second-hand apparatus for Bluff, they sat on boxes and slabs and had a general environment which certainly should have made a lasting impression. A score of those same youngsters, now in the ranks of Uncle Sam's army perhaps bless their school days for innuring them to cold and hardship.

The original store, owned by Bayles and Lyman, was mmerged into a cooperative concern which included the saw-mill.

About the first private dwelling of any importance was erected by Jense P. Nielson and though some folks said it was altogether too good a house for White Mesa, many other houses equally good have since been built.

Having no logical connection with these things is a string of tragic events that deserve a place in the account of San Juan. Mention was made in former chapters of Josephine Wood, commonly known, and everywhere loved as "Aunt Jody." Sometime in 1906 or 1907, her son George, went as a missionary to Texas, and soon thereafter was brought hime in a great metallic casket, made ponderously heavy wit[h] disinfecting layers of cinders, for he had died of typhoid fever. The people of San Juan will not soon forget how that mother met the body of her son, how she and her husband and children journeyed silently and devotedly with it across the County to the family lot in the cemetery on the gravel hill at Bluff.

Nor will they forget how she grieved for that loved one, and his brother and siste[r] who died a few years earlier until on a cold winter day in Monticello she succumbe[d] to a lingering disease which her troubles had brought upon her. A company of peopl[e] traveled with her body over snow drifts, and through a terrible blizzard to Bluff.

Still more impressive after these things, was the moving of the body of the husband and father, Samuel Wood, over the same road in the winter time to his last resting place by his loved ones on that same gravel hill. He died in a hospital i[n] Salt Lake, and is to be remembered as one of the sturdy pioneers of San Juan.

Other tragic events of those years are: the death of Henry Pehrson, whose neck wa[s] broken when his horse fell with him at Butt spring on Elk Mountain. He left a wif[e] and two children, and was the first Bluff cow-man to meet death on the range.

Parley Hunt met a similar fate as he rode with another boy over Bluff Bench. His friend dragged and carried him a remarkably long distance, succeeding in length in getting him to the wagon road. He was the son of Joseph Hunt.

Still more sudden and very distressing was the accidental shooting of Alton Redd in Monticello. The gun, a twenty-two calibre, was in the hand of a boy friend, an[d] the bullet, entering the heart, caused instant death. He was under twelve years of age, and the son of J. Monroe Redd.

A few years before the settlement on White Mesa, the Post Office Department grante[d] the much needed and long-called-for mail route between Monticello and Bluff, and for some time thereafter the service was conducted with ramshackle coaches, harnesses trimmed with bailing wire, and skinny teams having sore shoulders, teams which could generally be relied upon for a hair-raising runaway, or for balking at the foot of every hill whenever it rained. The making of this service into a dail[y] instead of semi-weekly affair, marked a step forward for matters in San Juan.

Another important factor entering about that time in the affairs of the County, was the coming of the Forest Service. It put a curb on the ambitious expansion of big stock owners, made it possible for small herds to find place on the range, guaranteeing against any improper invasion, conserving and improving the range in general.

Another facility still, linking San Juan up with itself and the outside, was the advent of the telephone. In 1909 or 1910, a line was stretched from Moab to Monticello, and soon thereafter another company built in from Dolores, continuing on to Grayson and Bluff, and a private line was continued on to Mexican Hat. This connection from two directions with the rest of the world did much to erase the clanishness of old-time San Juan, bringing it in touch with progress as it was made by mankind at large. Local 'phone systems soon stretched cobwebs over Monticello, Grayson and Bluff, connecting the people not only in general but in particular, an[d] a brand new era dawned on southeastern Utah.

With this era came the Ford car, and the Ford looked greater and more majestic the than the Packard looks now. The people gathered around the venturesome creature stroking its shining fenders, and gazing curiously as its funny entrails, and then going back indoors to that novelty, the 'phone, and began howling after better roads so that the dear thing which had come buzzing into their midst, might never have to go away.

That howl for better roads became so terrific that it moved sand and rocks and shale, it got appropriations from the Legislature, it made new surveys, it put in bridges, made cuts and fills and swept away many a place which had long been frui[t]ful in thrilling adventure. The heavy sand on the Bluff Bench was plastered over with a long straight line of clay, a line which was made slowly but surely by man[y] teams going ant-like back and forth from the hill to the road, receiving and depositing each time a wagon-load of earth, till thousands of such loads had been conveyed into smooth hard road.

A new and better road was opened from Monticello to Moab by the foot of the LaSal Mountains, and the Ford went tooting and honking about like a young king in a new empire.

Into this new San Juan over its reformed roadways, came people from all parts loo[k]ing for homes. Grayson, as has been stated, received its share, but to Monticello and its magnificent stretches south, east and north, came a veritable multitude, lifting its hands in surprise that so splendid a country should lie so long unclaimed.

The possibility of arid crops had been demonstrated beyond all question, and into the business of arid farming the new-comers entered with pronounced gusto. They cleared and plowed the stretches of sagebrush, they fenced up the country, leavin[g] only narrow lanes where travelers had formerly been free to any direction in a wi[ld] wilderness.

Monticello appreciated the meaning of these newly discovered resources, and her people began improving big tracts of land near or adjacent to the town. A high-water ditch was opened to cover the land near Half-way Hollow and other ditches were made where good land and water could be brought together.

There was a general stampede for Dodge Point whose fertile acres soon justified the eagerness with which its new masters had come.

The ditch on White Mesa was enlarged from time to time until it could carry every drop called for in its claim. More important still a great wide canal of huge volume was begun on almost the same survey over which President Hammond had proposed to make a ditch twenty-five years before. Too bad the venerable President could not have seen the outcome of his cherished project, as this new canal carried a flood of water to thousands of acres of valuable land, making it green with lucerne where it had been gray with brush.

Those years of growth to the country in general, brought but little improvement to Bluff in particular. Her people enjoyed the new conveniences but they moved away to Grayson or to Monticello until the place stood in danger of losing its community. The river, cut off as we have seen from its drive against the bank along Walton's Slue, whittled in above and below there, diminishing the amount of land every season.

At one time it was reported, the town would be condemned and bought at a stipulated price to be inundated by a mighty reservoir; and at another time it was reported to be all but sold to the Government for an Indian agency and school. But these reports died away, and a remnant of the original settlers held tenaciously but mainly to make sure no force or element contrary to the original

purpose of the mission, should spring up and thrive in the key position they had held so lon[g.]

L. H. Redd, Jr., succeed Jense Nielson as Bishop of the Ward and in 1909 when he became President of the San Juan Stake, the destinies of Bluff were entrusted to Kumen Jones, who, it will be remembered, was one of the original party sent to explore San Juan in 1870. He was with the first company of settlers, and a continuous resident in all the tight places and unpleasant situations of the mission. Considering his constancy and unfaltering courage for the place in all thos[e] trying years, it is the more interesting to view him still at his post when so many of his brethren have lain their bones on the hill above town, or gone away to the pursuit of happiness in more prosperous centers.