

Account of Mrs. John Mear (Mary Nash Mear)
transcribed Sept. 11 and 16, 1931.

I was born Feb. 19th, 1851. I came from Waterloo, Iowa, leaving there on May 19th, 1866. We went from Waterloo to Omaha by horse team. The party included my father, Joseph Nash; my mother, Elizabeth Moore Nash; my three brothers, Park, Joseph and Doke; and my two sisters, Cozbie and Maggie. In order of ages, beginning with the eldest we were: Park, Cozbie, Joseph, Doke, Maggie and I. At Omaha we made up party of the thirty-six team train of covered wagons, which the government required as the minimum number that might cross the plains. There were only four teams drawn by horses in the train, ours being one of them. All others were oxen. Our train was known as the "Red Wagon Train", as all the wagons had been painted red. The name of the captain of the train was Clark. My father and three brothers were all in the Civil War. While crossing the plains we were quarantined for small pox at Fort Kearney for six weeks. There were sixteen cases in our party, all of which recovered, but twenty-two soldiers at Fort Kearney died of the disease after we left.

Whenever we camped we corralled. From Omaha we proceeded to Julesburg; thence to Denver. At Julesburg we saw about 500 Arapahoe and Cheyenne Indians. Denver at this time was a very small place. Our train was unmolested all the way.

From Denver on there were but three families in our party: the Royals, Cantonwines and ours. Strange enough, each of these families had three girls and three boys. Of these I believe the only ones now living are two of the Cantonwine girls, who live in Grand Junction, one of the Cantonwine boys, who probably lives near Poncha, and myself. The eldest Cantonwine boy died in Salida about three months ago.

In August, 1866, we entered the upper Arkansas Valley from Denver through South Park and down Trout Creek. Where we crossed the Arkansas River there were about 500 Ute Indians encamped. They were very friendly and helped us across the river. My father homesteaded across the hill from the present Ehrhart ranch. The Ehrharts arrived in this region about two years later.

My three brothers and father placer mined at what is now Cleora. At this time Cleora was a prospectors' camp. The Royals and Cantonwines were also placer miners in the early days. At first there were great quantities of gold around Cleora and placer mining lasted here for about two years. In these days placer mining was done by a rocker. The rocker looked like a cradle. In the top was a little box with a sieve at the bottom into which the black sand was shoveled. Into the bottom of the rocker, which was rippled like a washboard, the quick silver was placed. The quick silver and gold were then taken in a shovel and placed on top of the hot stove. After heating only the gold remained. We sent all the gold to the mint in Denver. At this time I believe gold was about \$20.00 an ounce. The black sand was all obtained from the Arkansas River. I used the rocker while my father and brothers ate their dinner, and usually during this time could obtain about \$15.00 worth of gold during one meal.

In these days all groceries were very high in price. Flour was \$15.00 per sack and sugar \$3.00 per pound.

My family did no farming; they were all placer miners. This region at that time was filled with Utes. Their main encampment was near what was later known as Cleora. The Cheyennes and Arapahoes were the bitter enemies of the Utes and made several attempts to get into this valley, but were always repulsed by the Utes. The Utes were always very friendly to us, and whenever they were going to war with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes they would take the Royals, Cantonwines and us back into the mountains with their squaws and papooses, and then would return to fight. The Utes waged two battles with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes in this region, one at Fairplay where Chief Washington of the Utes was killed; the other at Cache Creek. In both encounters the Utes were successful. Once a year the Utes would receive their annuities from the government on the Mesa, and this was always followed by at least a three-day celebration.

Chief Ouray and his wife Chipeta were very fine people.

The pinon nuts were thick around here in the early days.

The first time I rode an Indian pony, I rode side saddle, and was thrown, much to the amusement of Chief Ouray, who witnessed my humiliation and remarked "Indian pony no savy white squaw".

In 1868 and 1869 we used to go back and forth to Cache Creek for placer mining. In 1869 we moved to Granite. In 1871 I married John Mear. We were married by Hugh Boone, then Justice of the Peace. He called me the belle of the town.

John Mear was born in England December 25th, 1843. He came to this country at four years of age, and his family settled at Syracuse, New York. At the time I came across the plains he was freighting across the plains with a two-horse team. He came from Denver to Central City; thence to Granite. After he came to Central City he went into the cattle business. This was in 1869 and 1870. When I first saw him he was an engineer at the Yankee Blade mine near Granite. After we were married in 1871, he became deputy sheriff, which position he held for about four years. Tucker was sheriff during this time.

One day I went with a group of girls who wanted to go down the Yankee Blade mine near Granite. My mother had forbidden me to go down into the mine; so I stayed at the top while they went down in the bucket. But it was here that I met John Mear, who was an engineer there, and who said that he would not have let me go down anyway.

My husband was also deputy sheriff under Jim Findley for about two years. We lived in Granite until 1880; then moved to Buena Vista. My husband was city marshall of Buena Vista until his death in 1902.

My husband was deputy sheriff at the time that the records were stolen at Granite and moved to Buena Vista. This was about 1880. The Court House was only a log cabin with the court room above and the prison below. We lived across the street from the court house and jail. About midnight I heard a considerable racket at the jail, and remarked to my husband: "I'll bet those men are trying to get out". My husband and I quickly ran to our front door and were met by a point of a gun.

We were forced to hold our hands up for an hour and a half. When we got to the door the track had already been built from the railroad to the court house, and we did not even know that they had done that. There were about twelve men in all. This track was so constructed that the posse could move the safe down it to the railroad. After they had done this they brought it on down to Buena Vista. There was no trouble thereafter about this affair.

Granite at this time had a population of about 800. There were two saloons, a drug store, one grocery store, a hotel run by Morrison, a couple of rooming houses and a brewery. All homes were log cabins. There was, however, no dance hall in town, and such a hall was not permitted. The mines, gold and silver, were at Hawkinsville, near Granite. I was married in Hawkinsville. There was a little town across from Hawkinsville called ^{how Pass} Lopez. All ore was brought from Hawkinsville to the mill at Granite. Only my brothers mined in Hawkinsville. My father, who was a tailor by profession, stayed around the house a good part of the time and worked placer mines whenever he felt like it. Except for making my brothers clothes, my father never practiced his trade at Granite.

In 1880 Buena Vista was a little smaller than it now is. About 1883 there were 36 saloons, two churches, boarding houses, dance halls--a wide open town. My husband was deputy sheriff and jailor most of the time. After my husband's death I worked at the jail.

My father would not allow any of my brothers to take part in the Lake County War. My father was the first one to reach Judge Dyer's side after he was murdered. Dyer was shot at the closing of the preliminary trial of Gibbs at Granite. Gibbs, however, was not present. About five P. M. on the last day of this preliminary trial, Dyer was shot. I don't know why Dyer was shot. My father heard the shots and heard him cry "Oh, God!" We lived just across the street. My father quickly ran across the street and up the back steps. He passed the three men, one of whom had just shot Judge Dyer. They were John Coons, Cy Weston and _____ Kraft. The sheriff at this time was Weldon.

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Haynes
also

Dyer died almost instantly, and never spoke a word after the scream my father heard. Dyer was shot from an ante room. All three of the men my father passed had rifles. There was never an inquest held after the Dyer killing, and nobody was ever arrested. I believe Hugh Boon was Justice of the Peace at this time. Gibbs' wife knew that it was he who shot Harrington, and helped him to load the guns which killed the Boon brothers the night they attempted to fire Gibbs' house in order to get him out. Gibbs's wife was the daughter of a Methodist minister. Her father's name was Gillin. ^{GILLIN} After the Harrington shooting, she lived with her father, and was unmolested by anybody. As a matter of fact, nobody liked her, and left her alone. She went with her father either to Nevada or Washington, or some where in the north-west. This was in 1878 or 1879, four or five years after the Gibbs shootings. Cy Weston was found dead out in the timber. ^{NO} Coons died a natural Death. Kraft was also shot. Eighteen men died in their boots in the feud that followed. A man by the name of Nathrop was hung three times and cut down three times, and finally shot. ^{NO}

My mother put up the first bath house at Hayward Springs. It consisted of four poles and a blanket around a pool for the kids to bathe in. This greatly amused the Indians.

The Ute Indians were always sober. They used to have pony races, foot races, etc. in this region. The Ute Indians left here about 1869. Only a few ever came through after that date. In 1870 in Granite we had an awful Indian scare. Somebody came running through the street hollering "the Indians are coming". The men all got their guns and the women went into hiding. About a half hour later a herd of 50 Jackasses came thru town.

In 1870, however, the Sioux Indians did get in as far as Twin Lakes, but the Utes drove them back. This was the last Indian scare.

Cache Creek in the early days had about 400 to 500 inhabitants. The people were placer miners entirely. There were 2 saloons, a grocery store and a dance hall. All homes were log cabins or tents. The Cache Creek mine belonged to a man by the name of Ritchie, I believe.

I had six children, three boys and three girls.

*This is great. This this was
Tom Shubert's father*