

VF

EARLY HISTORY OF HOT SULPHUR SPRINGS.

We do not know how long the Indians had been spending their summers in the vicinity of Hot Sulphur Springs, and taking advantage of the cures obtained from the "Medicine Bowl", or as we know them, the hot sulphur springs. Stories are told how the Indian bucks would lead their ponies into the hot pool and let the hot water pour down on their tired, sore backs. The hot pool as we now know it was the original Indian pool which has lately been divided in order to make two separate pools.

It has been said that when the first explorers entered this little valley that over a thousand Ute Indians were camped and had their skin wigwams pitched on the territory that is now the town site.

In 1860, a trapper by the name of Gus Reader built the first cabin here and it stood about where the Section House now is located. In 1863, the second cabin was built on about the site of the Johnson summer home, and Charlie Utter claimed to have built it. In about the same year, Judge Wescott was said to have built a squatter's cabin over a spring near the hot pool.

Mr. W. N. Byers who founded the Rocky Mountain News and was at that time it's publisher, was a civil engineer and entering Middle Park on a surveying trip saw and became interested in the future possibilities of the hot springs, and in 1864, Mr. Byers arranged to buy the property that the springs and the townsite is located on from Susan Boakman, an Indian squaw, by the use of what is known as Indian script.

In 1865, Mr. Byers built his cabin just north of the present bath house.

/

In 1866 Ed Chipman and the Summer boys built a good hewed log house east of the hot springs which was burned the following year by the Indians.

In 1874, Mr. Byers laid out the town site of Hot Sulphur Springs with his son Frank who was then ten years of age, acting as head chain man, and who relates that he will never forget the event as the grass was tall and the mosquitoes were bad.

Mr. M. H. Ganson built the first building on the new town site in 1875. It was a hotel and was called the Ganson House, later the McQueary House. This old landmark afterwards became known as the Metropolitan Livery Stable, then the Chatfield Garage, and stood opposite the Riverside Hotel, and was torn down in 1929. The original building was built of logs and the lumber in it was whip-sawed across the river from where the Sheriff ranch is now located, and floated down the river on a raft.

Mrs. Ganson was the first white woman to winter in Hot Sulphur Springs. The son, M. J., was one of the founders of the Grand County Pioneer Society.

The first completed cabin outside of the hotel was that of the John Q. Rollins Bridge Crew. It was a fair sized and comfortable dwelling and was built on the river bank about where the town pump house now stands.

It was in this cabin or dugout that J. Harrison Mills painted his most famous picture, and also where the first school in Grand County was held.

In the same winter the "Kansas Boys" built their cabins somewhere near where the Davies Filling station is now located.

Mr. John A. Hinbaugh was the only member of the party who remained, and it is from his diary that was written between the years of 1874-77 that

much of our early history has been preserved. Mr. Himbaugh moved to Colorado Springs in 1877 where he has made his home ever since. During a recent visit to Hot Sulphur Springs, Mr. Himbaugh recalled many interesting occurrences, and in 1922 made a copy of his diary and presented it to the Pioneer Society of Grand County.

Mr. John Q. Rollins started to build a bridge across the river in December 1874. The piers are still standing and hold up what is now known as the Red Bridge. Mr. Rollins charged toll to every person crossing his bridge until it became the property of Grand County.

Mr. Himbaugh being a stone mason by trade, superintended the building of the piers. No machinery of any kind was used in the construction. The stone was quarried and rolled to position by hand.

It might be well at this time to read sketches from Mr. Himbaugh's diary which will give us a glimpse behind the "Curtain of Time" into that world known to our pioneers.

"Thursday, Dec. 24, 1874: Thermometer is 17 degrees below zero when I go to work at bridge pier at 7:30. Put in full day on pier. I take supper with Stokes - have lots of company till late bed time, talking over plans to observe Christmas.

Friday, Dec. 25: Up early, then go down to Stokes' store. They make egg-nog enough to treat the entire population of Hot Sulphur Springs; all drink freely, then Stokes, Flagstaff, Hock, and Royer come home with us and all have breakfast at our ranch. Everybody takes dinner at Bridge Company camp - all to Ganson House and dance at night, but have no music.

Tuesday, Feb. 2, 1875: This has been a terrible day, the worst of the season; wind blowing and snow flying, nobody works. Stokes and I found paper and call it "The Middle Park Pleasure Seeker". I write editorials and Stokes personal notes and date it for Feb. 6, 1875.

Wed. Feb. 5: Work on bridge, is fine day. Charlie Royer starts for head of Park on snow shoes to see if he can find Phillips or some mail for us.

Tues. Feb. 9: A snowy day. Royer came in with the mail. I get 19 letters. This the first mail since Dec. 20. It is opened at my house and distributed.

Wed. Feb. 17: Twenty-two below zero. Worked all day on pier. Write letters at night, and take them up to Jim Boen's as he is to start over the range on snowshoes. Len Pollard and Doc Porter came in on snow-shoes looking well. They made the trip of 65 miles in two and a half days.

Sat. Feb. 27: Ute Indians ride into town on ponies.

Sun. Feb. 28: The business of the day was to swap for buckskins with the Indians. Coldest day of the month was 32 below zero.

March 1: Stormy. I draft map of Hot Sulphur Springs town-site on map of Grand County for C. H. Hook, County Clerk and recorder.

July 5, 1875: (The fourth being on Sunday), the main feature of the celebration was horse-racing with the Ute Indians during the afternoon. Dance at Ganson House at night, where 20 men and four married women attended. The dance lasted until about 1:30 in the morning and then the singing boys serenaded the neighbors until daylight."

Skipping to July 4, 1876:

"I am busy all forenoon helping to decorate the hall in H. S. S. for grand ball to come off tonight.

Judge Stone opened the first term of District Court ever held in Grand County today. Stone read the Declaration of Independence. Robt. Morrison makes a few remarks. This concludes the celebration for the day up to 2:00 P. M., when we all go out to watch the races between the boy's ponies and the Indian's ponies. The Utes get away with the purse. Dancing begins at 8:30. Supper at Kinney House at 12:00. Dance stops at 2:00 A. M. At this dance as at all others, the boys wore buckskine suits which was a novelty to the tourists."

Mr. Himbaugh, after prospecting for limestone took up a claim east of town in what is now known as Himbaugh Gulch. There he built and burned three lime kilns and furnished lime for the buildings and chimneys in town.

As Mr. Himbaugh was a well educated man, he also filled a number of official positions. As Justice of the Peace, he performed the first

marriage ceremony in Grand County.

As a reminder to future generations, Mr. Himbaugh states that every bit of cooking, including baking bread for the "Kansas Boys" was done over an open fire place, and every piece of furniture was hand made; most of it out of round timber.

About the last of September, two men by the name of W. J. Stokes and W. N. Brown, who had been summer tourists the year before from Mississippi, brought in a stock of goods and started a store in the building which is now owned by Judge Pettingell. By reading their day book, it seems that they must have sold everything from axe handles and clothes lines to coffee, candies, whiskey, and clothing. This store became a trading post where the Indians swapped meat and skins for goods. A mountain sheep sold for \$6.00 and an antelope for \$2.50. It was also in this store that the first Post Office was located.

Grand County was formed in 1875 and was formerly a part of Summit County. It comprised what is now Jackson, Moffat, Routt, and Grand Counties. The county seat was located at Hot Sulphur Springs where it remained until the mining boom and increase in population north of Grand Lake when it was moved to that town in 1881. When the "boom" subsided and the people left the once thriving towns of Lulu and Gaskill, the County seat was again moved and came back to Hot Sulphur Springs in 1888.

Many buffalo, elk, deer, and antelope abounded in the hills until the year of 1875 when a band of Indians headed by Chief Colerow slaughtered them and set fire to the forests in order to discourage and drive out the whites.

Many tales of Indian scares are related by the pioneers of this

section of the country, which added many a thrill to the life of the early settlers.

Mr. Himbaugh tells a story of an Indian who died and was buried on the hillside east of his homestead. The Indian's comrades then proceeded to kill about fifteen horses that they might accompany him to his "Happy Hunting Ground". Mr. Himbaugh said it was necessary to move his place of residence for a time. The Indians then moved their camp to the hill west of town and the squaws mournful howling all night sounded like a pack of coyotes.

In the spring of 1875, Calvin Kinney started to build the Kinney Hotel which later became a very popular tourist hotel. This spacious and comfortable building was burned in the spring of 1908.

It was also in 1875 that Col. Crawford built a house on the corner of Grand and Hemlock Sts., which is now owned by Mrs. Jones.

In 1876 a Post Office was established and was located in Brown and Stokes store. Bill Kimball carried the mail once a week from Empire. In the winter it was necessary to make the trip on snow shoes with a trail sled. Before that time, the settlers depended on persons going and coming over the range to carry their mail and the person who would not bring the mail for every settler in the Park was considered a very mean character indeed.

December 12, 1875, a man by the name of H. S. Bangs who shot and killed himself somewhere west of here, was brought in by a man on snow shoes and trail sled. That was to start a cemetery. Mr. Himbaugh in his Diary says, "J. Harrison Mills and myself assumed to take charge and select a burying place. Mr. Mills had a book containing an Episcopal burial service

which he read at the grave.

January 3, 1876, a meeting was called at the office of County Clerk and Recorder to select officers for the first school district. The district comprised the whole of Grand County. A school census was taken February 13, 1876 and shows 29 children between the ages of five and twenty-one years, while a list taken in August of the same year shows 39.

At a meeting of School Directors November 8, 1876, Mrs. Nettie Marker's proposition to teach school and furnish a room with a heating stove in it for \$100.00 was accepted, and that she begin school as soon as convenient and continue until the four months had been taught. On motion, it was ordered that the secretary draw an order on the treasurer for the sum of twelve dollars to procure fuel and furniture for the school room.

There were few thieves among the early settlers. Not one ever thought of putting locks on the doors. If a party traveling thru the country came to a cabin when the owner was absent, he felt welcome to enter, use fuel and provisions if necessary, and upon resuming his journey, he would try to leave the cabin as he had found it, but not without a signed note thanking the owner for the hospitality.

In those days the mountains were full of game, the streams full of fish. Many of the settlers as there were then no game-laws, made a living by killing game and catching fish for market in Georgetown, Central City, and other live mining towns. Some was shipped as far east as New York City.

"The Middle Park Times" was first published at Grand Lake and known as "The Grand Lake Prospector" in 1881. Then in 1889, it was moved to H.S.S., and called the "Grand County Prospector. Mr. Pettingell was responsible for suggesting the name of "Middle Park Times" as it is now known, and he was later the editor for several years.