

Hugh Clark Boone

The subject of this sketch comes from true pioneer stock, his grandfather, George Washington Boone, being born in Carlyle, Pennsylvania, in June, 1776. Daniel Boone was also born at Carlyle, thirty years previous, and they were related. Mr. Boone, however, has never traced the relationship. Hugh Clark Boone was born at Fredricksburg, Ohio, October 24th, 1840. His father, James, was of Scotch-Welch descent; his mother, Tamer Truesdale, was Irish. He had eleven brothers and sisters, one brother, William, was the first to die--killed in the Civil War--, and his sister, Nancy, married Frank Mayol, pioneer rancher of Lake County. (Her second husband was Sam Hartzel.)

He enlisted in the Union Army (16th Ohio Militia) on April 20th, 1861, for a ninety day period; later re-enlisting in the 16th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. On December 29th, 1862, he participated in the Charge of Vicksburg and was wounded at Chicasaw Bluffs. The following is his own description:

"That morning as we started to make a charge, I saw a big shell coming directly towards me, and looking as though it would hit me in the breast. It exploded a short distance from me. Before it exploded I saw the sputtering fuse. The flying shrapnel broke both my arms, bruising and cutting almost my entire body. I had fourteen wounds. The fact that I wore my cartridge box on my belt in front, instead of behind, as I should have, according to regulations, saved my life, as the shrapnel hit the box and cut the cartridges in two".

He was then taken to a base hospital in Kentucky and there honorably discharged May 27th, 1863.

When he returned from the war he attended Westminster College in Pennsylvania, and in '64 he cast his first ballot when he voted for Lincoln. In '66 he started for Colorado in company with his brother, David Boone; his sister, Elizabeth Cameron, and her

husband, Tom (the Camerons had been to Ohio on a visit), and Alex Hogue, who later married Mr. Boon's sister. The party traveled to Leavenworth by train, stopping en route at Paola, Kansas, to mark a brother's grave. From Leavenworth to Denver they traveled in covered wagons. The Indians were on the warpath, but the trip was completed without an attack. From Denver they came on to the Cameron Ranch, traveling thru South Park and down Trout Creek. That year the nearest railroad point to Lake County was Fort Riley, Kansas, a station on the U. P.

In '68 Alex Hogue homesteaded a ranch on the South Arkansas above Poncha, and made his home there until 1902. It is now known as the Groy Ranch.

Tom Cameron went to California Gulch in '60, then located on a ranch near Poncha in '65. The first rancher in that entire vicinity was Frank Mayol, who settled near Riverside in '63 and took out the first irrigation ditch the same year. He was the earliest rancher, and the first to raise crops in the upper Arkansas Valley, probably the first in the entire county. He packed seed potatoes in from what is now known as Castle Rock to plant his first crop, which he sold in the adjacent mining camps at three pounds for one dollar.

John Tanassee, an Italian, was the first settler on the South Arkansas, having located there in '63, having taken the first ditch out of the river the same year. In '66 it was the only ranch below the present site of Poncha, and later it became the property of Noah Baer. Nat Rich and Hendricks were located on the present site of Poncha. Peter Caruth was just above the Burnett Ranch. The Burnetts located there in '65; also the McPhersons. Judge Dyer was living on what was later known as the Boon Ranch (now Velotta's). Christison and Mundlein came in '67 or '68 (the latter being the first blacksmith in that vicinity. Chas. Peterson and John McCalmont settled in Adobe Park in '65; also Spaulding and Nolan, but not the same year. The Maxwells settled near the present side of Buena Vista

Ever Velotta?

error - ditch decreed 1866

in '65, then moved to near Poncha in '67. *EW*

Dr. Stewart was the first to locate Haywood and Hortense Springs. Later Haywood, a ^{shop} merchant from Denver, jumped the claim and succeeded in acquiring a title to the springs. Hortense Springs received their name from the Hortense Mine located on Mt. Princeton in '70 or '71 by ^{Murphy} Captain Merriam. The Hortense was the first silver producing mine in that district. The Captain was a great admirer of Napoleon, and named the mine after the great general's step-daughter. A year or so later the Murphy group of mines was discovered in that same district by Abe Wright, a nephew of Silas Wright, at one time Governor of New York.

Baldwin was the first to locate Poncha Springs, and built a cabin and small dam to create a swimming pool. Later he returned to the east to live, and before he departed gave his rights to the springs to Mr. Boone. The springs, however, were filed upon under the pre-emption act by George Nathrop, nephew of Charles Nathrop, who was financially aided in improving the springs by A. B. Daniels and Daniel Witter. The latter was one of the founders of the Colorado National Bank of Denver, and was also registrar in Denver of the first land office in Colorado.

Walled in by the mountains, many miles from a settlement of any consequence, the early settlers of the upper Arkansas Valley lived in a world all their own, uninfluenced by others. The only demand for their products came from the few miners in the scattered mining camps, so the ranchers raised only what they needed for their own use. They did trade with the Utes on a small scale, exchanging vegetables, flour, bread and beef for tanned buckskin and hides, etc. Supplies were bought at Denver, Pueblo and Canon City and freighted into the valley. Prices were high, sugar and coffee selling at seventy-five cents per pound, and flour at twenty dollars per hundred pounds.

Though buffalo were almost exterminated before the settlers came, other game was plentiful. Deer and antelope were numerous, as also

were bear and mountain lions. Wild turkeys were plentiful in the foothills about Poncha Springs, and the settlers staged turkey hunts during the holiday season, the birds being exceedingly fat due to the abundance of piñon nuts. Some of the gobblers weighed as much as forty pounds. Within a very few years wild game became scarce, and when the hunters for the markets began their slaughter the animals were rapidly depleted. Many freight wagons and trailers heavily loaded with wild meat rolled out of the upper Arkansas Valley.

The Utes came through usually twice a year en route to and from South Park and the plains for the purpose of raids on their enemies, the Arapahoes, and to hunt buffalo. They always camped in the vicinity of Poncha Springs for about a month, and during this time staged their war dances. They were quite bothersome with their demands for "medicine" (whiskey), and one day Colorow entered the small store at Granite where Mr. Boone was engaged, in quest of some "medicine", took a bottle from the shelf and prepared to drink it. Although Mr. Boone warned him that it really was medicine and would make him ill to drink it in such quantities, Colorow took a long, hearty draft of the stuff with unpleasant results and he made a hurried exit from the store spluttering and holding his stomach.

In 1867, after a war party of Cheyennes, traditional enemies of the Utes, had raided some of the latter near South Park, war signals were given, and soon the Utes were hurrying into the Valley from all directions. A party of them stopped at the Boone Ranch for the purpose of borrowing guns and ammunition, offering Mr. Boone their personal belongings as security. They Cheyennes made their escape and within a few days the Utes returned the borrowed guns and received their belongings. On another occasion, the following year, the Utes went on a raiding expedition to the plains country and returned with about 500 Arapahoe ponies. The high ridge extending into the valley near Brown's Creek was one of the favorite signaling posts of the Utes.

Dancing parties held in the various homes were the chief amusement. Later, after the advent of the schools, debates and spelling schools were staged. The first school was started at what is now Poncha in '67, the first teacher was Dave Boone. Miss Minerva Maxwell (later Mrs. John Burnett) taught there, and had twelve pupils. Miss Annabelle McPherson (afterwards married to Joe Hutchinson) was also a teacher at the school. There was no church, but Father Dyer, an itinerant preacher, as early as '66, visited the homes and later the schools, and held services.

When Mr. Boone first came to the valley he accompanied Tom Cameron to Dayton, at Twin Lakes, and located there for awhile. Dayton was then county seat and was booming, due to the Red Mountain excitement. Mr. Boone helped to erect some of the buildings there. He also carried the mail from Buckskin. In the winter it reached Dayton about once in two months.

John McPherson established the first post office in the lower valley in '66, naming it Helena after his wife Helen. It was located on the Arkansas a few miles below the present site of Buena Vista. Another one was located in '68 at the Scanga Ranch on the South Arkansas, Ira King being the first postmaster. Mr. Boone was also one of the earliest postmasters, having served at Granite in the early '70's, and later at Cleora.

The difficulties in which these early postmasters would invariably become involved was amusing to Mr. Boone. Though they were honest, at the same time they were careless, and would not keep the government accounts separate from their own, which resulted in considerable trouble when they tried to balance their accounts; and would often call Mr. Boone in to assist them. Instructions and regulations governing registered matter were very complicated and confusing. Upon one occasion, when he was postmaster at Cleora, a man wished to register a letter, containing \$7.50, to the American Publishing Co. of St. Louis, and Mr. Boone had to study for almost two days before he had mastered the rules sufficiently enough to

complete the transaction. Then a thieving mail clerk made away with the money in the letter, which, before it was discovered, caused many more days of complications.

Mr. Boone served as Superintendent of Lake County schools for three years, probably '70-'71-'72. The county then extended to the Utah line, but there were no schools west of the Continental Divide. At the time he took office there were five schools in the county, Ora City, Granite, Brown's Creek, Poncha, or South Arkansas, and Adobe, which was started in '68. School districts No. 6 at Trout Creek, and No. 7 at Riverside were organized during his term of office or soon after.

During the winter of '67 and '68 he and Charles Nathrop (Nachtrieb) freighted the first sewing machine into the country for Halls at the old salt works. They arrived at the Hall ranch in early morning of an extremely cold night. Mrs. Hall was so delighted with the arrival of her new possession that she insisted upon trying it at that cold hour and even before the hungry men were fed. Her eagerness was short-lived, however, as she promptly ran the needle thru her finger.

The first civil case tried before a jury in what is now Chaffee County was held in Granite in about 1870. Two men, Morris and Thompson, took up land near Frank Mayol's ranch, the latter loaning them money to improve their land and to plant a crop. There was a shortage of water that season which led to an altercation between the pair and Mayol. This resulted in them suing Mayol for damages, claiming that he used more than his share of water, the case being tried before Justice of Peace Hooten. ^{Houghton?} It was later summer and most of the men were away at the mines; so it was difficult to secure a jury, but finally six men were secured, including Mr. Boone, who at that time, was engaged in the store and postoffice at Granite. Morris and Thompson were awarded one dollar damages.

The road from Canon City to the valley was completed in 1873. Later, in the '70's, Bales Ranch, at the confluence of the Arkansas and South Arkansas Rivers, was made a stage station of the Barlow and

1873?

Sanderson Line. William Bales settled there in 1869.

In 1874 Mr. Boone and a brother cut the first timber for railroad ties in that country. The A. T. & S. F. R. R. was extending the line from Las Animas to Pueblo, and gave a contract to the Boones to furnish a large number of ties. The ties were cut on the Middle Fork of the Arkansas (South) with the intention of driving them down the South Arkansas to the Arkansas; thence on down to Las Animas. Quite a number of choppers were employed during the winter of '74 and '75, and many ties were cut, but the snowfall was very light that winter, followed by an unusually short high-water period the next spring; consequently the experiment was a failure. Some of the ties were left where they were stacked, others were scatteringly lodged along the banks of the South Arkansas; and the two brothers were unable to fulfill their contract.

Following the admission of Colorado into the Union as a state in '76, the first Republican state convention was held at Pueblo with Mr. Boone and two others serving as delegates from Lake County. He voted for Routt, while the other two voted for Elbert. When the votes were counted Elbert lacked one, and so a deadlock followed. That evening a caucus was held and an agreement reached whereby Routt was nominated for Governor and Elbert for Judge of the State Supreme Court.

In '78 Mr. Boone and a brother met a prospector traveling thru the vicinity by horse and wagon. During the ensuing conversation the two brothers suggested to the stranger that he "try" the Monarch district and directed him to it, later grubstaking him. This man was N. D. Creede, and he discovered the Monarch and Little Charm mines. The Boones received half interest in them.

The toll road to Monarch was built in '79 by the Boyd & Haynes Company, with Mr. Boone foreman in charge of the construction work. The road was completed across the divide to Whitepine in 1880. There was a toll gate above Maysville and another on the western slope at Black Sage. During this time a toll road was also built from Maysville up the North Fork to the mining camp of Shavano.

With the mining booms and the coming of the railroad there was

a rapid influx of settlers and prospectors, and also the riff raff of the country. The territory was new and conditions very unsettled; consequently law enforcement was almost impossible. More than 100 murders were committed during this period without one conviction, because it was almost impossible to get witnesses on the stand to testify.

The big fire in Garfield occurred in '82.⁸³ At the time of the conflagration most of the men of that vicinity had gone to Salida for the purpose of attending a celebration; so there were not enough help there to get it under control.

In 1902 Mr. Boone moved to Salida and later began serving as Justice of Peace and Police Judge, the term extending over a period of twenty years.

He has continued living in Salida where he makes his home with his two nieces, Mrs. Everett Anderson and Miss Una Hogue. He has never married. He will be ninety-four years old his next birthday, but is active and healthy. He takes a daily walk to the business section, a distance of eight blocks each way--all of which points to the advantages of a life well-spent.

In conclusion, it might be added that Mr. Boone is the last Civil War Veteran in Chaffee County, "but he wasn't a soldier died near Grant a couple of months after Judge Brown died"